

# The OPI Compass

July 2021



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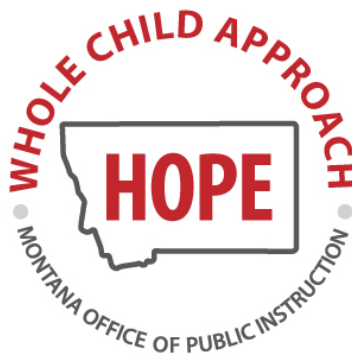
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## RISE Youth Leadership

The Resiliency in Something Else (RISE) Youth Leadership team has requested to maintain their meetings with the OPI and Youth Leadership Facilitator, Sage Golisano. The relationships the RISE Youth Leadership have developed after 30 to 40 zoom meetings throughout the past year has been incredible to witness. These students from across the state will maintain their connections long into the future as they have shared, confronted, and fought through the pandemic together.

For more information, contact Donnie Wetzel, at [dwetzel2@mt.gov](mailto:dwetzel2@mt.gov), or 406-444-4527

## Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) - Results Available

The 2021 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) statewide results are expected to be released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in late July. However, district and school-specific results from the recently completed 2021 Montana YRBS are available now and are located on the [OPI website](#). View your schools' results by selecting "View School-Specific Results" or directly from the [YRBS Data Retrieval System](#). If you receive a message that says you do not have a "YRBS User" role assigned, please contact Susan Court at [scourt@mt.gov](mailto:scourt@mt.gov) or 406-444-3178.

## While Buildings Are Empty, Get Ready for Students to Return

Effective school maintenance protects capital investment, ensures the health and safety of our children, and supports educational performance. Schools can use this summer break as an opportunity to assess their building's environment and make improvements to help reduce COVID-19 transmission while also meeting the requirements in the [DPHHS administrative rules](#) regarding matters of public health in Montana schools. The [CDC and the EPA have resources](#) to help schools create and maintain healthy indoor environments during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.



## Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement

The Regional Summit for all schools and districts in Comprehensive Status will take place on August 3-5 in Billings, MT!

The summit is an opportunity for schools and districts identified in Comprehensive Support and Improvement; attendance is highly recommended but not required. Each day there will be designated time for you and your leadership team to meet, plan, and coordinate efforts before the school year begins. The travel cost including hotel, breakfast, lunch will be paid by OPI and an additional mini-grant funding will be awarded to districts participating to cover stipends, mileage, and evening meals. We need to limit your teams to 6 people so all schools in comprehensive can participate. However, if space becomes available, we will send out an email stating how many spots we have open and more team members can sign up. We also highly recommend you include your business clerk to attend with your leadership team. It will be an opportunity for him/her to hear the overall plans of your district. Each person from your leadership team needs to fill out the registration form by June 25th to ensure a hotel room can be reserved for you.

Register [HERE](#)

For more information, contact [Carrie.Kouba@mt.gov](mailto:Carrie.Kouba@mt.gov), 406-444-0864

## View Webinar Recordings for Renewal Units

The Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education for All (IEFA) Unit has some great options for earning renewal units virtually. Teachers looking for remote PD options over the summer can watch recordings from our Series 2 Unpacking the Essential Understandings webinar, the Essential Understandings Deeper Dive workshops, or our 2021 IEFA Best Practices Conference at their own pace. These opportunities will help educators learn more about the Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians and other elements of IEFA to improve implementation across content areas and grade levels. A short survey must be completed at the conclusion of each recorded webinar to receive renewal units.

For more information, please visit the [OPI IEFA website](#) or contact Joan Franke @ 444-3694 or [jfranke@mt.gov](mailto:jfranke@mt.gov)

## Fall Law Conference

The OPI is pleased to announce the fall law conference scheduled for September 8 and September 9th. The conference is targeted towards school administrators, school board members, and those interested in the current legal issues facing education. Sessions will include current federal topics, uses of federal funds for public and non-public schools, innovative assessment, parental rights, discipline of students, progressive discipline, Special Education be sure to do and much more. There are a number of partners who will be participating to ensure this conference is relevant to the current issues facing educators today. The conference schedule will be available on the OPI website and also sent to districts via email by the last week of July. Be sure to save the dates today for your team. Team registration is encouraged.





## School Nutrition Programs

For School Year 2021-22, schools have the option to operate the new Seamless Summer Option, SSO, or continue to operate the National School Lunch Program, NSLP ([program comparison chart](#)). Montana Office of Public Instruction is currently making administrative and technology changes to the existing systems to accommodate the SSO. The MAPS update is tentatively scheduled to be in place by July 1, 2021.

### Seamless Summer Option (SSO) for the 2021-22 School Year:

- ◇ SSO is a combination of the NSLP & SFSP programs.
- ◇ SSO follows the same nutritious NSLP/SBP meal pattern requirements not SFSP meal pattern.
- ◇ Meals will be free to all kids if schools decide to operate SSO, but NSLP is still an option for schools to operate instead.
- ◇ Reduced Paperwork: Free and Reduced applications are not required for families to fill out to receive free meals if school is operating SSO. The USDA has released a guide with recommendations for [Allocating Title I Funds without School Meal Data](#).
- ◇ The higher reimbursement rate that was offered for SFSP is being allowed for SSO during SY2021-22.
- ◇ All the waivers that allow flexibility in meal service set up are being continued (non-congregate, meal service times, parent pick up, no offer vs serve requirement for high school lunch, and meal pattern flexibilities). However, schools will need to re-opt into waivers again as needed for SY2021-22 via a Google Form available soon.

## IEFA Grant Opportunities for the 2021-22 School Year

The OPI Indian Education for All (IEFA) Unit has opened the RFP portal for 2021-22 IEFA grant proposals in the e-grants system. Districts that have spoken with Zach Hawkins, the OPI IEFA Director, about their proposal ideas are eligible to apply for funding up to \$12,000 to develop and support activities that strengthen and enhance their IEFA implementation efforts. Proposals must be submitted in the e-grants system by July 31st, 2021 if it has already been reviewed by Zach Hawkins.

For more information, please contact Zach Hawkins @ 444-0708 or [zachariah.hawkins@mt.gov](mailto:zachariah.hawkins@mt.gov)



## E-grants Summer Tour

The Montana Office of Public Instruction will be hosting a series of E-grant trainings across Montana during the month of July 2021. These trainings are designed to assist districts in completing the Consolidated Application, IDEA, and CTAE grants. The E-grant training sessions will be held in the following locations from 8:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

- ◇ July 12: Laurel HS -203 East 8th St - Cafeteria  
\*Face masks optional
- ◇ July 13: Glendive HS - 900 N Merrill Ave - School Gym  
\*Face masks optional
- ◇ July 13: E Evergreen ELE - 585 E Evergreen Dr - School Gym  
\*Face masks optional
- ◇ July 14: Glasgow MS - 11 Lasar Dr - Multi-purpose room  
\*Face masks optional
- ◇ July 14: Target Range - 4095 S Ave W - Board Room  
\*\* Face masks must be worn
- ◇ July 15: Fergus HS - 1001 Casino Creek Dr - Cafeteria  
\* Face masks optional
- ◇ July 15: Manhattan PS - 416 N Broadway - Activities Room  
\*Face masks optional
- ◇ A virtual training will be offered in August with a date to be determined.

**Attendees must bring a Wi-Fi enabled laptop.** We will not be using district computer labs for the trainings. As a backup, a district may want to bring a hotspot if it has one.

All sessions are limited to 30 people. Districts are limited to two staff members and must RSVP by emailing [SHarlow@mt.gov](mailto:SHarlow@mt.gov). Reservations will be on a first come, first served basis. If you must cancel, please notify the OPI as soon as possible so districts on the wait list can be contacted.

For further questions, please email Sheri Harlow at [SHarlow@mt.gov](mailto:SHarlow@mt.gov).

## Preliminary Title Allocations

Preliminary Allocations for Title I, II, III, and IV have been posted to the OPI website. They can be viewed at the following URL: <http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Academic-Success/Title-Other-Federal-Programs/Federal-Allocation-Bulletin>.

For more information, please contact Sheri Harlow at [SHarlow@mt.gov](mailto:SHarlow@mt.gov) or 406-444-5660.

## Enrichment Planning Sessions and Webinar

The Office of Public Instruction has been discussing enrichment activities with School Districts and Tribal Leaders during the Tribal Relations ARP-ESSER Enrichment Planning sessions this month. Through these listening sessions, social emotional learning and wellness support has been brought to the forefront. As a result, we are developing guidelines for Enrichment that may be used to provide youth, family, and community members inclusive cultural teachings, community knowledge, and resources. It has been refreshing to connect with OPI stakeholders, share ideas, support each other, and laugh together as we design a template of enrichment support. This will lead to a Tribal Relations webinar series targeted for early to mid-July.

For more information, contact Donnie Wetzel, at [dwetzel2@mt.gov](mailto:dwetzel2@mt.gov), or 406-444-4527

## Meaningful Consultation

Throughout the past month, we have maintained meaningful consultation with our Sovereign Tribal Nations as required under ESSA. Recent consultations have centered around the American Rescue Plan funding and how we can work together for the benefit of our youth and children. Each Nation is unique in their efforts and needs, but the emphasis on youth support has been consistent. Turning a difficult year into positive projects and support for each other is the true definition of resiliency.

For more information, contact Donnie Wetzel, at [dwetzel2@mt.gov](mailto:dwetzel2@mt.gov), or 406-444-4527

## Online Tribal Resource Guide

Stephanie Iron Shooter, OPI's American Indian School Wellness Coordinator, and her Systems of Care team have worked in our Tribal Communities for almost a decade. They provide tiered support for youth; help organize collaborative relationships with the communities and build local capacity through training and mentorship efforts. Throughout the years, resources have been gathered. Over the last six months, Stephanie's team has worked with Carmen Pennington and her staff at OPI to create a searchable online resource guide that is now live on our [TRR website](#). Tauzha Grantham has spearheaded this effort and the OPI would like to recognize all her hard work. The resource guide is a critical piece in collaboration efforts with our school districts and Tribes. Envision districts using the resource guide to identify and build relationships in wellness and cultural support as they collaborate in positive youth initiatives.

For more information, contact Donnie Wetzel, at [dwetzel2@mt.gov](mailto:dwetzel2@mt.gov), or 406-444-4527

## EANS I Grant for Private and Home Schools

Janey Salomon, the OPI Emergency Assistance for Non-Public (EANS) Grant manager, has been working hard to get a brochure around the EANS program out! 2,000 copies of the EANS brochure are being printed and will soon be mailed out!

The publication explains the history of EANS as well as providing answers to the two most common questions:

1. Who can apply?
2. What types of services or assistance may a non-public school receive?

The brochure will also be a guide through the three steps of the grant application process and will be mailed out to the 29 identified Home School groups located across the state as well as all the County Superintendents of Schools.

Be on the look-out! The OPI is excited to share this resource with you.



# Announcements

## American Rescue Plan - ESSER III Montana OPI ARP-ESSER State Plan

On June 7, 2021, the Montana OPI submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) its State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund. This plan recognizes local control, removes obstacles and barriers for schools, and enhances accountability without being overly burdensome. Click [here](#) to see the Montana OPI ARP-ESSER State Plan.

The ARP Act represents the third round of funding to come through the ESSER fund, and Montana's allocation totals more than \$382,000,000. In previous rounds, Montana received more than \$41,000,000 (ESSER I) and \$170,000,000 (ESSER II). Through the Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools (EANS), the state also received nearly \$20 million for home and private schools. Two-thirds of the ESSER III funding has already been released to schools; once USED approves the State Plan, the OPI will be able to release the remaining one-third, or roughly \$126 million.

Please check the **"Find ESSER Information"** [tab](#) on the OPI website for regularly updated information including:

- ♦ Guidance
- ♦ FAQs
- ♦ Allocations
- ♦ Recorded Q & A Sessions and Presentation Slides
- ♦ **Coming Soon:** The OPI will be releasing information about the **uniform template** for the LEA ARP ESSER Plan. The template will open on July 1, 2021 in TEAMS.

**Upcoming ARP-ESSER Key Dates and OPI Technical Assistance Timeline** (view the timeline [HERE](#))

- ♦ **July 1, 2021** - The District ARP ESSER Plan template will open through the TEAMS (due by August 24th)
- ♦ **July 2021** - The OPI will host three ARP ESSER Webinars on District ARP ESSER Plans (see [OPI Website](#) for details)
- ♦ **August 24, 2021** - Districts must submit an ARP ESSER Plan to the OPI through TEAMS
- ♦ **September 1, 2021** - Due date to complete and submit ESSER II and ESSER III applications in the E-grants system

For more information, contact Jeff Kirksey, the ESSER Program Manager, at [jeffrey.kirksey@mt.gov](mailto:jeffrey.kirksey@mt.gov)

## Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT)

During the 2021 Legislative Session, the OPI was assigned the key role of working with districts to secure reimbursement under Medicaid or CHIP for school-based services, including but not limited to school mental health services. The OPI's finance department has been working with DPHHS since May to develop accounting methods and supports to enable districts to track the costs associated with services eligible for Medicaid reimbursement for audit purposes. The OPI has been steadfast that districts and the OPI are audit-proof in the new processes, specifically related to CSCT services. DPHHS was notified in 2016 that the federal government would no longer approve the CSCT (in-kind) process. In February 2021, the OPI was notified of the challenge and the need for a new State plan. Today, school districts are required to provide the non-federal funds match for CSCT services. The current rate of the match is ~ 33 percent of the billing amount for approved services. This dollar match was provided from State General fund through DPHHS from 2019 – June 30, 2021. The legislature and the governor's budget office determined that it was not sustainable and provided just over \$2,000,000.00 of bridge funding to support the cash match until a new plan is approved by the federal government.

**Effective July 1, 2021**, the current rate and benefit structure to school districts and mental health centers will be used. The current process is that the state matches Medicaid dollars with state dollars. The bridge funding provided to the OPI is planned to be used for this match.

When DPHHS has an approved plan by the federal government, more information will be provided.

The next webinar for school districts will be **July 12, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.**



# Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA)

## Seeking Public Comment on a Funding Flexibility Waiver

As part of waiver requirements, the OPI is posting an opportunity for public comment pursuant to §8401(b) requirements within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 from the U.S. Department of Education (USED). The USED requires state educational agencies, when seeking waivers from statutory or regulatory requirements, solicit and respond to public comment on the request and provide evidence of the available comment period.

## Purpose of the Waiver:

The purpose of the waiver is to provide the OPI and its subgrantees with the flexibility needed to continue to support continuity of academic and support services during the recovery period of the COVID-19 pandemic. In seeking these waivers, the OPI will use and ensure that its subgrantees use funds under the respective programs in accordance with the provisions of all the applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications not subject to these waivers, and will work to mitigate, and ensure that its subgrantees work to mitigate, any negative effects that may occur as a result of the requested waivers.

## Funding Flexibility Waiver:

The funding flexibility waiver is on behalf of the OPI and its subgrantees, pursuant to section 8401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), for the requirements outlined below.

- ♦ Carryover limitation in section 1127(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) for Federal fiscal year (FY) 2020 Title I, Part A funds: the requirement that limits an SEA's ability to grant to its LEAs a waiver of the 15 percent Title I, Part A carryover limitation in section 1127(a) more than once every three years.

The period of availability of funds in section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA): to extend the period of availability of FY 2019 funds for programs in which the SEA participates under its approved consolidated State plan until **September 30, 2022**. The programs are:

- ♦ Title I, Part A of the ESEA (Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs), including the portions of the SEA's Title I, Part A award used to carry out section 1003 school improvement, section 1003A direct student services, if applicable, and Title I, Part D, Subpart 2

- ♦ Title I, Part C of the ESEA (Education of Migratory Children)
- ♦ Title I, Part D, Subpart 1 of the ESEA (Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk)
- ♦ Title II, Part A of the ESEA (Supporting Effective Instruction)
- ♦ Title III, Part A of the ESEA (English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement)
- ♦ Title IV, Part A of the ESEA (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants)
- ♦ Title IV, Part B of the ESEA (21st Century Community Learning Centers)
- ♦ Title V, Part B, Subpart 2 of the ESEA (Rural and Low-Income School Program)
- ♦ McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

Therefore, the Montana OPI is seeking public comment on this waiver. Any comments on this waiver should be directed to [essainput@mt.gov](mailto:essainput@mt.gov).

## Timeline outlining the process with stakeholder involvement:

- ♦ **July 2021:** Presentation and discussion with Education Advocates
- ♦ **July 14-16, 2021:** Presentation and discussion with the Montana Board of Public Education
- ♦ **July 24, 2021:** Public comment deadline
- ♦ **July 30, 2021:** Final Draft prepared and submitted to the USED

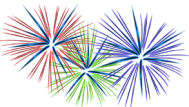
## School Finance Deadlines

The following chart are the upcoming deadlines for school finance.

If you have any questions, please contact Deb Casey (406) 444 - 3096 or [dcasey@mt.gov](mailto:dcasey@mt.gov)

School Finance Deadlines					
Start Date	Due Date	Item	Application	Comments	Staff
	7/1/2021	Montana Highway Patrol performs the first semester inspections of school buses at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the school term. Districts electronically enter bus inspections upon completion.	Transportation		Donell Rosenthal
	7/1/2021	A school district must complete and sign a TR4 Individual Contract (3 copies) for the ensuing year. Send to the County Superintendent and submit electronically to the OPI	Transportation		Donell Rosenthal
	7/1/2021	A school district must submit new and amended TR1 bus routes to the county transportation committee for the ensuing year	Transportation		Donell Rosenthal
	7/1/2021-8/10/2021	District clerk must publish notice of final budget hearing for the purpose of considering and adopting the final budget of the district.	MAEFAIRS		Renee Richter Mari Haefka Nicole Thuotte
	7/30/2021	A county transportation committee (CTC) must act to approve or not approve all bus routes established by the districts. CTC must also act on all applications for increased individual payments due to isolation. Approval of board of trustees for increased payments is required prior to CTC action	Transportation		Donell Rosenthal
	8/1/2021	Trustees must have conducted an election for authority to adopt an over-base general fund budget that does not exceed the general fund budget limitations and to establish a Building Reserve Fund (61) or Technology Fund (28) levy.	Elections		Nicole Thuotte
	8/6/2021	School Bus Standards Revision Committee Meeting	Transportation	OPI 1300 11th Avenue Conference Room	Donell Rosenthal
	8/15/2021	County Treasurer's Report of Countywide School Funds County Data (FP6b). County treasurer will submit this form for the fiscal year ending to county superintendents by July 20th	County		Mari Haefka
	8/15/2021	Trustees submit TFS data to the county superintendent for joint school districts of each county in which part of the joint district is situated.	MAEFAIRS		Nica Merala

# July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 <a href="#">MAPS Update</a> <a href="#">ARP ESSER Plan Template Opens</a> <a href="#">CSCT Rate is Effective</a> <a href="#">Transportation and MAEFAIRS Finance Deadlines</a>	2	3
4 Happy Independence Day! 	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 <a href="#">CSCT Webinar for School Districts @ 2:00</a> <a href="#">E-grants tour in Laurel HS</a>	13 <a href="#">ARP ESSER Webinar</a> <a href="#">E-grants tour in Glendive HS &amp; Evergreen Elem</a>	14 <a href="#">ESSA Stakeholder Presentation w/ BOPE Day1</a> <a href="#">E-grants tour in Glasgow MS and Target Range</a>	15 <a href="#">ESSA Stakeholder Presentation w/ BOPE Day2</a> <a href="#">E-grants tour in Fergus HS and Manhattan PS</a>	16 <a href="#">ESSA Stakeholder Presentation w/ BOPE Day3</a>	17
18	19	20 <a href="#">ARP ESSER Webinar</a>	21	22	23	24 <a href="#">ESSA Stakeholder public comment Deadline</a>
25	26	27 <a href="#">ARP ESSER Webinar</a>	28	29	30 <a href="#">ESSA Stakeholder Final draft DUE in USED</a> <a href="#">Transportation Finance Deadline</a>	31 <a href="#">Proposals for IEFA Grant DUE</a>

# August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <a href="#">Elections Finance Deadline</a>	2	3 <a href="#">Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement Regional Summit Day 1</a>	4 <a href="#">Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement Regional Summit Day 2</a>	5 <a href="#">Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement Regional Summit Day 3</a>	6 <a href="#">School Bus standards Revision Committee Meeting</a>	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 <a href="#">County and MAEFAIRS Finance Deadlines</a>	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 <a href="#">ARP ESSER Plan Submission DUE in TEAMS</a>	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



# September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 <a href="#">ESSER II &amp; ESSER III Plan Submission DUE in E-grants System</a>	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 <a href="#">OPI Law Conference Day 1</a>	9 <a href="#">OPI Law Conference Day 2</a>	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		