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# Office of the Superintendent

## Updates in Montana Education

### OPI Legislative Priorities

The OPI is advocating for a strong education budget that fully restores reductions from last session plus an inflationary increase for special education. The OPI also has several policy initiatives around school safety, data sharing with the university system, evening out state school payments, and providing school safety grants.

You can see the OPI's full legislative agenda and follow updates on education-related legislation on the OPI website: <http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Finance-Grants/Legislative-Updates>.

### Partial Federal Government Shutdown

The federal government reached a short-term spending deal to fund certain agencies through February 15<sup>th</sup>. The Department of Education has been fully funded through federal fiscal year 2019, however, school nutrition program reimbursements are through the USDA. These funds are distributed to the state quarterly and Montana has funding through March for school nutrition reimbursements. The next quarterly allocation will be at the beginning of April.

If federal families become furloughed, they may be eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Please communicate with families in your district about eligibility. You can visit the OPI's [website](#) for additional information.

### State of Education Address

Superintendent Arntzen will deliver the State of Education Address to the Montana Legislature on February 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm. It can be viewed on the legislature's [website](#).

### 2020 Teacher of the Year

Applications and nominations for the 2020 Montana Teacher of the Year program will open on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Nominations will be accepted through May 3<sup>rd</sup> and applications will be accepted through June 14<sup>th</sup>. This information can be found on the OPI's [website](#). Please be sure to share with your community!

### Superintendent's January Events

- School safety [panel](#) at the Montana Capitol
- Indian Education for All [Rotunda Day](#)
- Education budget hearings
- Press conferences on [education funding](#) and school safety
- Search Committee for Dean of Education at UM
- Various meetings with legislators and attendance at legislative receptions including the 4-H breakfast, Montana University System reception, and Chamber of Commerce reception
- School Choice Week rally
- Meetings with Helena Youth Against Gun Violence, Legislative Pages, and Americans for Prosperity-Montana
- Radio appearances on Voices of Montana, Morning Wake Up Report, KGVO Missoula, and KGEZ Kalispell
- Education Caucus and Tribal Education Caucus meetings
- Recurring [Land Board](#), [Education Advocates](#), [Board of Public Education](#), and [Board of Regents](#) meetings

Follow the Office of Public Instruction on social media:



For more information, contact [dylan.klapmeier@mt.gov](mailto:dylan.klapmeier@mt.gov) or 406-444-3559



- **Family, student, and community engagement**
- **Safety, mental health, and suicide prevention**



- **Celebrating teacher excellence and extending leadership opportunities**
- **Teacher retention and recruitment**



- **Closing achievement gaps**
- **Improving math and reading with a focus on middle school**



- **Expanding industry, military, and post-secondary partnerships**
- **STEM, CTE, and workforce development emphasis beginning in middle school**

## Accreditation and Educator Preparation

### Application Due Date for Variances to Standards: March 4, 2019

The Board of Public Education rule, “Variances to Standards” (ARM 10.55.604), allows accredited schools to implement a variance to standards designed to meet or exceed results under established standards. Implementation of the variances to standards will be in September 2019. Districts interested in seeking a variance to a standard must submit a [Variances to Standards application](#) by March 4, 2019.

The variance to standards rule requires local boards of trustees to produce evidence of local public participation and evidence that the board officially approved the variance to standards application before submission to the Variances to Standards Review Board. For more information, contact [Patty Muir](#), 406-444-4317 or [Linda Vrooman Peterson](#), 406-444-5726.

### Gifted & Talented Education Grants-Intent to apply for 2019-2021 School Years

The Gifted and Talented Education Grants Intent to Apply will open on Friday, March 1, 2019, and close at the end of business on Friday, March 29, 2019. The state-funded grants are made available through funds allocated by the state legislature. Funding for the 2019-2021 school years grants are available pending legislative approval.

The Intent to Apply is in the E-Grant system. Authorized Representatives log in to [E-Grants](#):

- From the menu list, select “**e Grants Access/Select**”;
- Select the host district (elementary, high school, or K12) and click the select button for the page;
- Select the Fiscal Year “2020”;
- Scroll down the page for “Available” to locate the “Gifted & Talented Intent”;
- Select “Create” from the option to the right of the “Intent to Apply” listing; and
- Complete the Intent and submit by March 29, 2019.

### 2019 Montana AGATE Conference

Montana teachers, administrators, and parents are invited to attend the 39th Annual MT AGATE Conference, *Shining a Light on Gifted*, at the Best Western Plus GranTree Inn in Bozeman on Thursday, February 28 and Friday, March 1, 2019.

Follow this [link](#) to register and find additional information.

## 2019 Montana Advanced Placement Summer Institute

[Registration is now open.](#) It is time to make plans for teachers to attend the 2019 Montana AP® Summer Institute on June 24-27 at Montana State University Billings, 1500 University Drive, Billings, Montana. All workshops are fully endorsed by the College Board. Five subject areas will be offered.

- AP® Biology
- AP® English Literature and Composition
- AP® Statistics
- AP® Studio Art
- AP® World History

Important Links Below:

[2019 Montana AP® Summer Institute](#)

[2019 AP® Summer Institute GT Scholarship](#)

For questions, contact Linda Vrooman Peterson at [lypeterson@mt.gov](mailto:lypeterson@mt.gov) or 406-444-5726.

## Career and Technical Education

### February is CTE Month

The CTE Division of the OPI in conjunction with MACTE will be hosting the CTE Capitol Rotunda Day on February 26. There will be more information regarding this event soon.

[Show Your Support for CTE](#): CTE Month® is a public awareness campaign that takes place each February to celebrate the value of CTE and the achievements and accomplishments of CTE programs across the country. Remind your members to celebrate in their schools and communities by hosting an event and [purchasing](#) balloons, lanyards, mood products and more, and participating in the CTE Month-NASA HUNCH video contest.

## CTE Spring Data Collection

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Spring Data Collection begins March 1, 2019 and ends April 30, 2019. This AIM collection asks schools to identify all 12th grade high school students who were enrolled at any point during the current 2018-2019 school year who meet the definition of a CTE Concentrator. CTE Concentrators are 12th graders who have earned three (3) or more credits in any CTE program in any combination during their years of high school. Currently enrolled CTE courses count toward credits earned. CTE Concentrators must have the 'CTE Concentrator' box checked and an 'Area of Concentration' entered into the AIM/Infinite Campus data system. If the student has a child or shares the parenting of a child, the 'Single Parent' box should also be marked. High schools who receive funding from the Carl D. Perkins federal grant program must complete this CTE Spring Data Collection.

Instructions for completing the CTE Spring Data Collection can be found on the AIM webpage located at this [link](#). You can also find the AIM Collection Schedule here: <http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Data-Reporting/AIM-Achievement-in-Montana>

Questions regarding this data collection should be directed to the AIM Helpdesk at 1-877-424-6681 or send an email to: [opiaimhelp@mt.gov](mailto:opiaimhelp@mt.gov). Questions regarding CTE programs and/or the Carl D. Perkins federal grant program should be directed to Christy Hendricks.

## Ag Literacy Tax Check-Off

The State of Montana has a voluntary tax check-off designation for Agricultural Literacy. These funds have the potential to provide materials and agricultural curriculum to teachers and schools across the state providing adequate knowledge of agriculture for students. Learn more on the Montana Farm Bureau Federation's [website](#).

## NASA Opportunity for Students

Montana Aerospace Scholars: A two-part program for high school sophomores and juniors focused on the history and future exploration of space and topics in Earth and Space Science. Follow this [link](#) to learn more.



## Track for Students to Graduate in 3 Years (Local Innovation/Flexibility Opportunity)

1. **Create a track for students to graduate in three years** and use their fourth year to get a full year head start on post-secondary education, tuition free.
  - a. BPE Rule ARM 10.55.904 requires only 20 units of credit to graduate.
  - b. The average school district has between 7-8 periods per day. 7 times 3 years = 21 units of credit. If structured efficiently by the district, students could meet all requirements of the Board of Public Education by the end of junior year and graduate.
  - c. 20-5-101(3) . . . . The trustees may also admit an individual *who has graduated from high school* but is not yet 19 years of age even though no special circumstances exist for waiver of the age provision of this section.
    - i. The district can generate ANB for and continue to serve students who have already graduated but who are not yet 19 and use those resources to expand post-secondary learning, including career certifications and dual credit courses while saving families money.

## Content Standards and Instruction

### Content Standards Updates

Check out the updated Content Standards page on the OPI website

The Content Standards and Instruction division has updated the [K-12 Content Standards and Revision webpage](#). There are individual pages for each of the content standards areas and lots of resource links. Please contact [opicsi@mt.gov](mailto:opicsi@mt.gov) for any questions about these updates!

[Content Standards 101 course on the Teacher Learning Hub](#)

*Montana Content Standards 101* course on the Teacher Learning Hub is for anyone interested in getting a better understanding of how the standards are developed and the history of standards. The course is required for anyone who wants to participate in the upcoming revision process. Visit the [Teacher Learning Hub](#) to learn more about the course.

[Accepting application for committees for the upcoming revision process](#)

The Content Standards and Instruction Division is accepting applications for revision teams to work on revising the following standards during the next two years:

- Technology
- Library Media - Information Literacy
- Computer Science
- Social Studies
- Career and Technical Education

Visit the [Montana Content Standards Revision website](#) to learn about these particular standards. [The application](#) to be part of a revision team is also found on the website.

## Learning Opportunities Portal

The [Learning Opportunities Portal](#) is filling up with upcoming professional development events, both online and in person. It isn't too early to look ahead to spring and summer 2019 to plan your professional development opportunities!

For more information, contact [Colet Bartow](#) 406-444-3583

## MCA 20-7-119: Administration of the U.S. Civics Test

Just a reminder that [Montana Code Annotated](#) encourages the administration of a United States civics exam for high school students. It also encourages the OPI to publish a list of schools who administer an exam. The OPI will check with schools towards the end of this school year.

## Educational Opportunity and Equity

### Census Data Review

In January, the OPI sent out an email to all superintendents, county superintendents, and principals with information regarding the annual review of local Census poverty numbers. These numbers will be used to calculate fiscal year 2019 allocations under Title I, Part A. Districts have until March 4, 2019, to challenge the estimated Census poverty calculations. Please note that Census poverty numbers and free/reduced lunch numbers are calculated differently so the numbers will not be the same. Click on the following link for more information: <http://opi.mt.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=q-W8Dvl32UI%3d&portalid=182>.

For more information, contact Jack O'Connor at [joconnor2@mt.gov](mailto:joconnor2@mt.gov) or 406-444-308.3

## School Finance

### Upcoming Election Deadlines

Tuesday, February 26 – Trustees call for election (send copy of resolution to the county election administrator within 3 days of passage)

Friday, March 8 – File mail ballot election plan with the Secretary of State

Monday, March 11 – Notice of close of regular registration (verify publication with the county election administrator)

Thursday, December 13-Thursday, March 28 – Trustee candidates file for election with the district clerk (verify voter registration and signature with the county election administrator)

[Election Calendar](#)  
[Election Handbook](#)

## Upcoming Election Deadlines

The January 2019 school finance webinar will address school district audits presented by Dan Moody. The webinar will occur on the last Wednesday of the month, January 30, 2019, at 10:00 am and requires you to call into a phone line and use your computer to follow along. This discussion will include risk assessments, what they mean and why we have them, as well as a review of the most common audit comments and resources to assist school districts. To sign up for the webinar, please contact Debbie Casey at [dcasey@mt.gov](mailto:dcasey@mt.gov) or 444-3096.

## Health Enhancement and Safety

### Traffic Education

#### Traffic Education Program Applications Due for Summer Courses

TE01 District Applications must be approved before courses begin. Use the [Traffic Education Data & Reporting System \(TEDRS\)](#) to submit the application. Summer 2019 courses ending before June 30, 2019, are entered in the 2019 school year. Courses ending on or after July 1, 2019, are entered in the 2020 school year. Visit <http://opi.mt.gov/DriverEd>

For more information, contact [Fran Penner-Ray](#) 406- 444-4432.

#### Registration for Montana DRIVE Workshops opens February 1, 2019

Montana DRIVE celebrates 40 years on track in Lewistown since 1979! Workshops begin June 3 and run through August 9. Teachers, school bus drivers, first responders, firefighters, and drivers of all kinds are invited to register for a one-day summer workshop. Adult workshops are \$330. Register by March 5 for a \$10 discount. **Montana DRIVE Teen Week** is July 22-26 and registration begins in March. Visit <http://montanadrive.mt.gov>

For more information, contact [Patti Borneman](#) 406- 444-4432.

## School Nutrition

### **Partial Federal Government Shutdown**

The federal government reached a short-term spending deal to fund certain agencies through February 15<sup>th</sup>. The Department of Education has been fully funded through federal fiscal year 2019, however, school nutrition program reimbursements are through the USDA. These funds are distributed to the state quarterly and Montana has funding through March for school nutrition reimbursements. The next quarterly allocation will be at the beginning of April.

If federal families become furloughed, they may be eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Please communicate with families in your district about eligibility. You can visit the OPI's [website](#) for additional information.

For more information, contact Christine Emerson at [cemerson@mt.gov](mailto:cemerson@mt.gov).

## DOJ/OPI Missing Children Poster Contest

The Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) and the OPI are working together to give Montana students the opportunity to participate in state and national poster contests which focus on the theme of "Bringing Our Missing Children Home." More details can be found on [DOJ's website](#).

## Free Recycle Montana Boxes

Recycle Montana received a grant from the American Beverage Foundation and the Montana Beverage Association to build and distribute 70 of our Recycling Education Trunks to schools across the state. These trunks have been created to help teach people of all ages about recycling. The trunks include a comprehensive guide to lesson planning, visual aids and several hands-on materials. The trunks are FREE, and you can decide how to use them within your school. If you want to learn more about Recycle Montana, their website is [recyclemontana.org](http://recyclemontana.org) or you can call Kirk Treece, Executive Director at 406-461-9106

# Indian Education

## New IEFA Director

Zach Hawkins recently joined the OPI staff as Director of Indian Education for All. Zach was previously the Director of the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) college access program at the Office of Commissioner of Higher Education. He began his teaching career as a middle school social studies teacher in Hays-Lodge and taught in Heart Butte for three years as well. Zach has identified the following priorities for IEFA:

- assessing the impact of existing IEFA resources, activities, and materials;
- determining school needs and developing the appropriate deliverables;
- diversifying the IEFA unit's communication and delivery methods.

Zach can be reached at [zachariah.hawkins@mt.gov](mailto:zachariah.hawkins@mt.gov) or 444-0708.

## New Indian Student Achievement Director

Michelle Mitchell recently took the position of Director of Indian Student Achievement. She was previously an Indian Education Specialist with the Indian Education Division at the OPI and an Academic Achievement Coach for eight years at Great Falls Public Schools. Michelle has identified the following priorities for ISA:

- Improving American Indian student achievement through strength-based practices;
- Supporting schools in the journey to being culturally responsive;
- Ensuring tribal consultation is being done with fidelity in Montana;

Michelle can be reached at [michelle.mitchell@mt.gov](mailto:michelle.mitchell@mt.gov) or 444-3013.

## ESSA Tribal Consultation

The Indian Student Achievement Unit of the OPI, along with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, will host a summit regarding tribal consultation and what it means for tribes and school districts under the Every Student Succeeds Act. This will take place February 7-8 at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo.

For more information and registration, contact Michelle Mitchell at (406) 444-3013 or [michelle.mitchell@mt.gov](mailto:michelle.mitchell@mt.gov).

## IEFA Best Practices Conference

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Indian Education for All Best Practices Conference will be held March 2-3, 2019, at Carroll College, 1601 North Benton Ave, Helena.

- Saturday, March 2 – Mini-Institute Session 1 - 12:00 – 3:30 p.m., with registration starting at 11:00 a.m. The Cultural Continuum and IEFA Advocacy Award presentation will follow, 3:45 – 4:25 p.m.
- Sunday, March 3 – Mini-Institute Sessions 2 & 3 - 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., with registration starting at 7:30 a.m., lunch will be provided.

Registration can be found at this [link](#). For more information, contact Jennifer Stadum at (406) 444-0725, [jstadum@mt.gov](mailto:jstadum@mt.gov), or Joan Franke at (406) 444-3694, [jfranke@mt.gov](mailto:jfranke@mt.gov).

## Measurement and Accountability

### 2019 OPI Data and Assessment Conference

We just held the OPI Data and Assessment Conference in Bozeman, MT at the GranTree Hotel. We served over 225 participants and will post conference presentations and materials before the release of the “[This Month in Assessment](#)” February Newsletter at the following locations:

- [OPI MT Assessment Conference Page](#). We recorded 15 sessions with new test coordinators in mind.
- [OPI New Test Coordinator Academy](#).

Our theme this year was (Get READY for 2020!) or “Re-envision an Equitable Approach to Deploying Your Assessments For 2020!” For more information or questions about the conference, contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov).

## MontCAS

Test security guidelines have been developed by the Montana Office of Public Instruction to be used by System Test Coordinators and Test Administrators to maintain the integrity of all Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS) assessments. Following these guidelines will ensure no student has access to any form of assistance or material that could provide an unfair advantage. **The following activities needed for the 2018-2019 school year are described here with indication of the requirement:**

- **MontCAS Data Privacy Policy:** Ensure authorized school system access to MontCAS online portals. (OPI Required)
- **MontCAS Application Affirmation of Testing Security.** (OPI Required)
- **MontCAS Application Supply Assessment Dates.** (OPI Pilot. Please let us know if the system is not working well for you.)
- **MontCAS Application "Requests for Accommodation Process".** STCs make requests for assessment accommodations beyond those routinely allowed.
- **MontCAS Application Report Non-Participation.**
- **MontCAS Application Report Testing Incident.** STCs report any test security incident immediately to the OPI or based on the reporting periods specified by the severity of the incident.

If you have any questions about the MontCAS Application or the collection schedule, please contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov).

## Access for ELLs 2.0

The test window for the ACCESS for ELLs assessment closes January 30, 2019. All students included in the test delivery platform should have the testing completed by January 30<sup>th</sup>. The OPI cannot extend the testing window. The OPI does not accept shipments past this cut-off date. All materials must be shipped back to the WIDA test delivery contractor (DRC) by February 6<sup>th</sup>. The OPI cannot extend this shipment date. If a school fails to meet the shipment date, the students' materials will be not scored, and no results will be available for these tested students.

If you have questions about the ACCESS for ELLs assessment, contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov).