



OPI Compass

November 5, 2021



## Montana School Law Conference - Register to Join us November 16

The Montana School Law Conference will be held virtually November 16 from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. This year's theme is "Your Rights and Responsibilities." The Law Conference is open to parents, school administrators, trustees, curriculum specialists, teachers, legislators, and all other interested individuals.

Topics include:

- Federal and Montana legislative updates
- Critical Race Theory
- Title IX
- Parental rights, and
- Handling politically and emotionally charged school board meetings.

"Solutions are demanded during these challenging times," said State Superintendent Elsie Arntzen. "Our students deserve an honest discussion around current issues that have legal implications. This offers an opportunity to strengthen our public education system for the betterment of our Montana children," Arntzen added.

The conference will feature two keynote speakers, Dr. Yong Zhao and Dr. Wilfred Reilly.

Dr. Zhao is a Foundation Distinguished Professor in the School of Education at the University of Kansas and a professor in Educational Leadership at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education in Australia. He has been recognized as one of the most influential education scholars and his works focus on the implications of globalization and technology on education.

Dr. Reilly is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Kentucky State University, and the author of the books *Taboo: Ten Facts You Can't Talk About*, *Hate Crime Hoax*, and *The \$50,000,000 Question*. Dr. Reilly has published pieces in *Academic Questions*, *Commentary*, *Quillette*, and several other journals and magazines. His research interests

include international relations and the prevention of war, contemporary American race relations, and the use of modern quantitative methods to test theories such as white privilege.

The Montana School Law Conference registration [link](#) and a detailed [agenda](#) can be found on the Office of Public Instruction's website.

## Update: New Educator Licensure System

This past August the OPI released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new Educator Licensure system. The OPI recently completed evaluating and scoring three responses to the RFP and is commencing negotiations with the highest scoring vendor, a company called RANDA Solutions. RANDA solutions has successfully supplied educator licensure systems to three other states: Colorado, South Carolina and Tennessee. We expect Montana's new system to be operational next summer.

The new system is a cloud-hosted software-as-a-service (SaaS) highly integrated system that is expected to offer educators a modern, streamlined and user-friendly interface to apply for or renew licenses. The system will facilitate paperless processing and guide applicants through the process. The built-in workflow management system will allow OPI to configure modifications to the process without custom development, thus, reducing cost and time for future updates to business processes. More importantly, the OPI expects the system to enable OPI to process and complete applications and renewals much more efficiently and quickly than ever before. Future functionality of the system will allow licensees to seamlessly track and maintain their professional development and renewal units. The advanced analytics and reporting platform will allow OPI to make more informed and targeted decisions based on drill-down reporting capabilities.

The OPI has budgeted \$500,000 of Data Systems Modernization funding for the implementation of the system and expects annual costs to maintain and operate the system to be around \$200,000 per year.

## Purple Star Award Nominations Extended

The **Purple Star Award** is to distinguish and honor schools and champions that are committed to maintaining a military friendly and supportive environment for Montana students and families.

Through the Montana Office of Public Instruction and the Montana Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) this award will recognize our schools and individuals that go above and beyond for our military students and families.

Nominations are being extended to **November 24th**. You can find the designation rules and application form on [OPI's website](#).



If you need additional assistance, please contact Jessica Flint at 406-438-3400 or [Jessica.flint@mt.gov](mailto:Jessica.flint@mt.gov).

## OPI Launches Montana Executive Leadership Academy

The OPI has implemented an unparalleled professional learning opportunity for leaders in Montana education: The Montana Executive Leadership Academy will transform schools through an intensive leadership program designed to enhance learning opportunities. School superintendents, principals, board members, parents, and higher education leaders are all part of the first cohort of 24 members. The Academy's faculty includes renowned scholars and leading practitioners from across the country.

Academy members will learn to collect and analyze school data effectively; assess student needs and design appropriate learning experiences; and create economic value and efficiency to their schools. [Participants](#) were selected on a variety of criteria that reflect a promise to enhance education, including active engagement in their communities, relationship building skills, and innovative problem solving. The first session was October 28-30 in Belgrade.

The Academy brings both Montana and national all-star faculty to facilitate the cohort's learning and capstone project. This enables participants to expand their professional networks while learning from some of Montana's most successful leaders.

For more information about applying for the next Leadership Academy cohort, contact Deputy Superintendent Sharyl Allen at [Sharyl.Allen@mt.gov](mailto:Sharyl.Allen@mt.gov) or (406) 444-5658.

### Montana Teacher Leader Academy

Designed to empower teacher leaders to stay in the classroom, **not move into administration**, the Teacher Leader Academy consists of one cohort of leaders, which include *K-12 teachers, instructional coaches, specialists, counselors, ect.*

Classes are held one Friday (5:30pm-8:30pm) and Saturday (11:00am-6:00pm) monthly beginning in January through June. A Completion Ceremony will be held in June.

January 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>

February 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

March 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

April 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>

May 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>

June 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>

**APPLY TODAY**

Application deadline is December 14<sup>th</sup>

**Additional information can be found in the [TLA FAQs](#)**

## OPI's New Phone Tree

As part of our vision to provide the best possible customer service, the OPI rolled out a new automated telephone menu for calls coming into our main numbers. Formerly, callers were greeted with a longer list of automated options, but during times of heavy call volumes, or if receptionists were unable to answer the phone, calls would roll to voice mail. With the new automated menu, if a receptionist is unable to answer the phone, the caller is presented with some simple menu options to help them reach the appropriate person or unit that can help them.

*Below, you can find links to updates from OPI units.*

*[Click here](#) to see other information and opportunities outside the OPI.*

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## Questions? Contact:

[Anastasia Burton](#), Communications Director

The OPI is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation, require an alternate format, or have questions

concerning accessibility, contact the OPI ADA Coordinator, 406-444-3161, [opiada@mt.gov](mailto:opiada@mt.gov),  
Relay Service: 711.

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