



## OPI Compass

September 8, 2021

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You can also find current and previous Compass issues on the [OPI website](#).

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Click the following links to go directly to updated information from last Friday's Compass. The new or corrected info in each section is bolded to make it easier to find.

- [Law Conference registration link](#)
- [AIM Bulletin](#)
- [Contact information for BinaxNOW COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits](#)
- [STAR training registration link](#)

**We apologize for any inconvenience!**

### **DPHHS Releases Emergency Masking Order**

On Tuesday, Governor Greg Gianforte announced a DPHHS emergency rule to reinforce parental rights regarding masking in schools.

According to the emergency rule, the six opt-out masking factors are:

“(a) physical health; (b) mental health; (c) emotional health; (d) psychosocial health; (e) developmental needs; or (f) religious belief, moral conviction, or other fundamental right the impairment of which could negatively impact the physical, mental, emotional or psychological health of students.”

Last week, Superintendent Arntzen sent a [letter](#) to Education Secretary Cardona and CDC Director Walensky, urging local control and acknowledgment of Montana’s vast rural geography as it relates to masking on buses.

Under Article 10 of the Montana Constitution, equality in education is guaranteed to each person of the state. It is the duty of the government to ensure every student has access to an equal education.

For answers to frequently asked questions about the rule, click [here](#).

## School Law conference Set for November 17-18

The OPI is excited to announce the Montana School Law Conference is scheduled for November 17 and 18. The conference is designed for school administrators, school board members, and those interested in 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, 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.

To register for the Montana School Law Conference, click [here](#).



### Helena OPI Staff Wishes You a Great School Year

The Helena OPI staff wishes everyone a successful start to the new school year, and thanks all stakeholders for the work they do each day to put Montana students first!

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## Quick Links

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## Accreditation & Educator Preparation

### Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) Reporting

The Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) opened September 1 and will close November 1. If you need access for users, submit a [CSIP Security Access Form](#) to [OPICSIP@mt.gov](mailto:OPICSIP@mt.gov). **If you have completed the ARP ESSER LEA Plan, you do not have to complete the CSIP for 2021-2022.**

### TEAMS Security Access

The TEAMS screens opened September 1 and will close November 1. Tutorials, helpful resources, and recorded webinars can be accessed on the [TEAMS Help Page](#). Live Webinars will be held in September and October with a schedule and link coming soon to the [OPI Accreditation Webpage](#).

### TEAMS Help

The TEAMS screens opened September 1 and will close November 1. Tutorials, helpful resources, and recorded webinars can be accessed on the [TEAMS Help Page](#). Live Webinars will be held in September and October with a schedule and link coming soon to the [OPI Accreditation Webpage](#).

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## Achievement in Montana

### AIM Data Collections & Webinars

For more information on upcoming AIM data collections and webinars, click to see the [updated AIM Bulletin](#).

## Assessment

### Clarification on Science Scores

The Spring 2021 score reports for the MSA and AMSA are not available to download at the district, school, or student level. In Spring 2021, the MSA and AMSA were in field test status. A field test is a crucial part of the test development process, as it allows us to verify that the items are well aligned and produce valid data.

Spring 2020 was scheduled to be the field test for the MSA and AMSA; however, due to the pandemic, we were unable to administer it until Spring 2021. We will be receiving data as a state and assessing that data for validity, reliability, and alignment to our standards. This will help us determine which items meet our standards for inclusion on our operational MSA and AMSA in Spring 2022. After completion of the evaluation of the data, OPI will determine which data can be released to support instruction for the Spring 2022 MSA and AMSA.

Questions? Contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1-844-867-2569.

### Contacts Directory Updates for New System Test Coordinators

New System Test Coordinators (STCs) should contact the OPI Assessment Unit to ensure proper access to assessment portals. Confirmation from the district Authorized Representative will be required prior to providing access to student level data in the portals. The [MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule for 2021-2022](#) has been published. STCs should review the schedule and plan for the district accordingly. Direct questions to the OPI Assessment Help Desk or 1-844-867-2569.

### Math & ELA Interims are Live for the New School Year

Interims are available in the [Montana Testing Portal](#). If planning to administer interims, refer to the Smarter Balanced Google Calendar for a list of tasks in preparation to do so. Direct questions to the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1-844-867-2569.

### Open Forum Webinar Series for STCs

During the 2021-2022 school year, the OPI Assessment Team will offer an STC Open Forum for System Test Coordinators (STCs) who are confirmed through the annual designation by Authorized Representatives in the TEAMS Collection. These half-hour sessions are scheduled the first week of every month on Mondays. This open forum series is in addition to the monthly focused webinar the Assessment Team hosts. They are intended to provide the opportunity for STCs to connect with peers, ask questions, and discuss more deeply any OPI updates or testing announcements. Ten webinars will be offered through June 2022 as published in the FY2022 STC Open Forum.

Questions? Contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1-844-867-2569.

### OPI Assessment Monthly Webinar

During the 2021-2022 school year, the OPI Assessment Team will offer a one-hour Monthly Focused Webinar on Wednesdays. This webinar is designed to support educational practitioners, such as district and school-level personnel involved in local assessment and local data-driven decision-making actions and/or continuous improvement processes. These sessions are designed for educational practitioners to learn more about balanced assessments systems and strategies for implementing high-quality local assessment/data literacy practices, including creating local systems around data-driven decision-making. A total of eleven webinars will be offered through June 2022 as published in the FY2022 Monthly Focused Webinar Plan. Attendees are eligible for one hour of renewal.

Questions? Contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1-844-867-2569.

## Is Participation in NAEP Mandatory?

Participation in mathematics and reading in Grades 4 and 8 is required under the re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), commonly referred to as the "Every Students Succeeds Act" (or ESSA), for any district receiving Title I funding. As of 2003, participation became a requirement in all states/territories and school districts receiving Title I funding. Direct questions to the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1-844-867-2569.

## NAEP Public Comment Open

Initial public comment is sought prior to updating the Science Assessment Framework for the 2028 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Click [here](#) for more information.

## Score Reports Available

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted most aspects of education in the 2020-2021 school year, including annual statewide assessment. State assessment results provide information to the public and families which support educational needs and processes at the local and state level. We commend Montana schools for their focus on putting students first and for the manner in which they prioritized the safety, health, and well-being of every child this past academic year. View the [OPI Score Report and Timeline Memo](#) for more details. This memo provides school districts with notice of the:

1. Requirements for reporting at the local level;
2. Access to the 2020-2021 assessment results;
3. Instructions on which data and reports are available in each of the online reporting systems;
4. Available state and LEA resources to support data use and process needs; and
5. Resources that are available to share with families.

Questions? Contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1-844-867-2569.

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## Career & Technical Education

### Approved Montana Career Pathways Now Posted

The approved [Montana Career Pathways](#) for 2021-22 are now posted on the [CTE Career Pathways tab](#). They are approved each spring by the CTE Coordinators based on courses entered in TEAMS. Along with pathway approvals, the TEAMS information is used to determine the State CTE/Vo-Ed allocations.

### E-grants: Carl D. Perkins

E-grants is open for FY 22 Carl D. Perkins grant applications and will remain so until **September 15**. All allocations are preliminary and may be adjusted after the August 10 FY21 Final Reports are submitted. Schools that did not complete Perkins applications need to complete the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) to be loaded into their grant application for FY 22.

The CLNA fillable form and resources are on the [CTE Perkins V page](#) along with tutorials. Schools that applied for Perkins in FY 21 will not need to resubmit a CLNA unless there have been major changes to spending goals. Schools will be asked to share Advisory Committee Minutes instead. The CTAE Unit has experienced some staffing changes; the Perkins Liaisons [list](#) has been adjusted to reflect these changes.

### New CTE Professionals Hybrid Workshop September 21

The OPI's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Specialists will conduct a new CTE professionals hybrid workshop during three sessions starting September 21. Two will be via Zoom; one will be in-person. The workshop focuses on early-career professionals, specifically CTE professionals within their first five years in a Montana CTE classroom.

Additionally, Montana CTE professionals who have participated in the past are invited to attend to enhance their classroom skills and CTE knowledge. School administrators and counselors who may be new to CTE in Montana, or want to learn more, are also invited.

This **FREE** professional learning opportunity will teach attendees about a variety of topics, including: Advisory committees; classroom safety and liability; CTE and program-area standards and guidelines; dual enrollment; instructional strategies for the CTE classroom; managing/marketing local CTE student organizations; Montana Career Pathways; Perkins funding; professional development organizations; State CTE funding/data reporting, work-based learning, and workplace skills through CTSOs.

The hybrid workshop will be held virtually September 21 and October 12, and in-person on October 20 at the GranTree Inn in Bozeman. Up to seven OPI Renewal Units will be offered. Workshop details are available [here](#). Register online no later than September 20 [here](#).

For more information, contact Business Education Specialist Eric Swenson.

### PreACT Availability This Year

The PreACT will be available at no cost to Grade 10 students in Montana schools. The PreACT is provided to Montana schools through funding from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. Direct questions to the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1-844-867-2569.



## Presidential Scholars Nominations Now Open

Nominations are now open for the 2022 Presidential Scholars program. You may nominate up to 10 males and 10 females for a total of 20 students for the general component of the program, and an additional five students for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) portion.

In the **general category**, nominations are encouraged for students who demonstrate outstanding scholarship, but might not otherwise be nominated through the current SAT/ACT, Arts, or CTE recognition processes. All high school seniors graduating between January and August 2022, who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, and who attend public, parochial, independent schools, or home schools are eligible. The 2022 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars and receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion.

In the **CTE category**, all high school seniors who are participants of a CTE program graduating between January and August 2022, who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, who attend public, parochial, independent, or home schools are eligible. Candidates will be reviewed by a committee of qualified individuals experienced in CTE; 60 applicants to be named as semifinalists. The 60 CTE semifinalist applications will then be reviewed by the Commission on Presidential Scholars. All 2022 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars and will receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion.

**Nominations are due November 24, 2021.** Contact the U.S. Presidential Scholar program staff in October for follow-up submissions instructions. All nominees will be announced and invited to apply in January 2022 by the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program Office; therefore, you do not need to contact your candidate(s). Completed applications will be due in February 2022; Scholars will be announced by mid-May 2022.

To learn more about the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, its criteria, and the Commission on Presidential Scholars, click [here](#).

Questions? Contact Executive Director Simone Olson at (202) 205-8719 or [Simone.Olson@ed.gov](mailto:Simone.Olson@ed.gov).

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**Coordinated School Health**

## BinaxNOW COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits Available for Public, Private Schools

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) recently provided [information](#) about available rapid tests for schools and upcoming funding to support COVID-19 testing in K-12 public and private schools. Information regarding applying for these funds will be issued soon.

DPHHS is extending an invitation now for schools to order COVID-19 BinaxNOW rapid antigen test kits. Test kits can be ordered free directly from DPHHS. Prior to initiating a screening/testing program, there are [steps](#) that schools/districts should complete.

**More than 50 schools and districts have successfully used rapid COVID-19 testing over the past year as one of their prevention/mitigation strategies. If you'd like to connect with one of the schools who have used rapid COVID-19 testing, contact DPHHS Epidemiologist [Dana Fejes](#) at (406) 444-5520.**



### Tobacco Free School Signage Available

Please consider replacing your old tobacco-free school signs or adding to what you already have with our most current signage. We have three different signs to offer Montana schools and will mail them to you free of charge. For more information or to complete an order, click [here](#).

For more information about tobacco use prevention resources for your school, contact Kris Minard, Tobacco Prevention Education Specialist at [kminard@mt.gov](mailto:kminard@mt.gov) or (406) 444-0785.

## Tobacco Use Prevention Grant for Schools

The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program has dedicated \$40,000 to the OPI to offer grants to Montana schools attempting to reduce youth tobacco use. Grant recipients will be awarded up to \$10,000 per school, or up to \$20,000 per school district to support student tobacco use prevention. The application period for this grant opens September 6 and closes at midnight MDT on September 30.

For an application preview and more information, click [here](#).

## Vape Detector Company Seeks Montana Pilot School

Triton, an award winning vape detector company created by three tech-savvy college students dedicated to producing advanced vape detection systems for schools at an affordable price, have offered to provide [vape detectors](#) for a pilot project in our state.



Triton will supply all vape detectors necessary to cover restrooms and locker rooms at no charge for **one** Montana school. The pilot school selected will be responsible for installation; an ethernet power source is required.

To learn more, contact Garrison Parthemore at [info@tritonsensors.com](mailto:info@tritonsensors.com).

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## Content Standards & Instruction

### Amazon Cyber Robotics Challenge

Can you code an Amazon Hercules robot to deliver your friend's birthday present on time?

Bring real-world industry to your classroom this fall in this free, three-hour virtual learning experience. Students learn the basics of computer science while uncovering the miraculous ways goods are delivered at Amazon. Along the way, students will hear two Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship winners share a bit about their own personal journeys into computer science.

Amazon Future Engineer is giving free access to CoderZ's virtual robotics learning modules to Title 1 schools. Now, coding adventures can go on. Keep students connected to virtual robotics and each other with CoderZ's highly flexible, engaging, and entirely web-based curriculum. Click [here](#) to see if your school is eligible.

### Code Girls United Registration Now Open

Code Girls United programs where girls create apps are expanding across Montana. The program is open to girls between 10-14 years old (Must be not older than 14 on August 1, 2022). Space is limited and registration is required [here](#). Programs start this month and include weekly 1.5 hour meetings.

Code Girls United After School programs are in:

- o Anaconda, Youth Empowerment Services
- o Columbia Falls, Boys and Girls Club of Glacier County
- o Kalispell/Evergreen, Boys and Girls Club of Glacier County (Late Start)
- o Sydney, Boys and Girls Club of Richland County
- o Havre, Boys and Girls Club of the Hi-Line
- o Polson, Boys and Girls Club of the Flathead Reservation
- o Ronan, Boys and Girls Club of the Flathead Reservation
- o Browning, Browning Middle School
- o Joliet, Joliet Middle School
- o Online Program Montana, Mondays
- o Online Program =Montana, Wednesdays

o Kalispell, Advanced Program by invitation only

More program locations are anticipated; check the registration page for the latest additions.

Questions? Contact Marianne Smith.

## CS is Elementary Offers Free Services to Schools

Formerly Family Code Night, CS is Elementary is a non-profit movement and program for universal K-5 computer science education and family engagement. All services are provided to any school free. View a brief National Family Code Nights Celebration video [here](#) or visit CS is Elementary's [website](#) to learn more.

## Learning Hub News

Teacher Learning Hub Update

Superstar teachers are life-long learners on and off the field. Check out this starting line-up for getting in the groove of the new school year and making your students' year a memorable one! Enrollment opens September 12 for the first three and September 26 for the last two:

- \* [Crosscutting Concepts: Making Learning Real](#) / 20 RUs 10/3 - 10/30
- \* [STREAM: Number Systems & Operations \(K-3\)](#) / 15 RUs 10/3 - 10/24
- \* [STREAM: Transformations and Proofs \(HS\)](#) / 15 RUs 10/3 - 10/24
- \* [Instructional Strategies for Paraeducators](#) / 20 RUs 10/17 - 11/27
- \* [It's Your First Year Teaching, Now What?](#) / 12 RUs 10/18 - 11/26

Looking for a great science series? One that is sequential with lots of opportunity for great learning as well as acquisition of multiple renewal units? Have we got the series for you!

- \* [Montana Science Standards 101](#) / 2 RUs
- \* [Montana Science Standards 202: Three-dimensional Learning](#) / 3 RUs
- \* [Montana Science Standards 301: Phenomena-based Learning](#) / 3 RUs
- \* [Montana Science Standards 401: Project-based Learning](#) / 3 RUs
- \* [Montana Science Standards 501: IEFA and Equity](#) / 3 RUs

The strongest, most successful schools are those in touch with their communities, families, and students. They take a genuine interest in serving the needs of their constituencies in order to achieve optimal academic and social success for their students. Here are some self-paced courses to assist educators with creating positive and safe school environments:

- \* [Building Respect: Bullying Prevention](#) / 1 RU
- \* [Child Trafficking Awareness and Prevention](#) / 3 RUs
- \* [Resilience: Strategies to Increase Optimism](#) / 4 RUs

\* [Run, Lock, Fight - School Safety Preparedness](#) / 2 RUs

\* [But What about Fact Fluency?](#) /2 RUs

\* [Taking Reading Instruction to the Next Level: Strategies for Success](#) / 6 RUs

Hub Tip of the Month: Need to change your email or something else on your profile? Click the drop-down arrow to the right of your profile picture in the upper right-hand corner. Click profile, then the words 'Edit profile' near the top. Make your changes, then be sure to click 'Save' at the bottom.

## NASEM Issues Call to Action

The National Academies of Sciences Engineering Medicine (NASEM) has issued this call to action for science education. Click [here](#) for more information.

## Professional Learning Updates

**Reminder for Renewal Unit Providers:** Please ensure you're returning to the Renewal Unit Provider System after the conclusion of your renewal unit activity to record the number of renewal unit certificates issued. Your events are located under Events > List of Events; you can edit the number of certificates issued by pressing "Edit." For reminders on how to use this system, the "Tutorials" button is a great resource.

**Professional Learning Provider Network Collaborative:** The next PLP Network Collaborative is September 21, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. Professional learning providers and school leaders who develop/provide professional learning are welcome! OPI Professional Learning staff will also be available from 4:30—5:30 p.m. for open office hours. We'll discuss tech tools to make your professional learning opportunities more accessible. Come with your questions, ideas, and successes!

Questions? Contact Carli Cockrell, Professional Learning Coordinator, at (406) 444-0769.

## Social Studies Lessons Aligned to New Content Standards

In response to the recently adopted Social Studies standards, the OPI IEFA unit updated the lessons on its Social Studies [webpage](#) to align with the new standards. Schools are encouraged to review this page and consider using one of the IEFA lessons as you plan your 2021-22 instruction around the new standards.

Questions? Contact Zach Hawkins at (406) 444-0708.

## STEM in the Rockies Opportunity for Teachers

The Montana Learning Center and the MDT Aeronautics Division to offer a unique opportunity to be on the forefront of STEM education, right here in Montana! Come experience aviation-based, engaging hands-on curricula that will get you and your students excited about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in aviation. This STEM in the Rockies workshop on October 1 and 2 includes an introductory flight in one of the

Aeronautics Division's aircraft, tours of military and civil aviation facilities, classroom giveaways, and lodging/meals at the Montana Learning Center.

Participating teachers will earn 20 OPI RUs and return home with an array of aviation-themed student activities.

Space is limited to 18 participants. Applicants must be STEM teachers who work in formal classrooms in Montana. Applications are due September 15. To register, click [here](#).

## United States Senate Youth Program Scholarship Now Open

The 2021-22 United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) Scholarship is now open to Montana Juniors and Seniors who meet USSYP qualifications!

Visit the [OPI Student Scholarships & Student Exchange](#) page for further details and a link to the application.

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## Data & Technology

### Emergency Broadband Benefit Back-to-School Materials Available

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is a temporary Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program to help households struggling to afford internet service during the pandemic. The FCC is mobilizing people and organizations to help raise awareness about the Emergency Broadband Benefit. Outreach materials are available to download for school use.

Eligible households can enroll through an approved provider or by visiting [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](http://GetEmergencyBroadband.org).

To learn more about the program, visit [www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit](http://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit).

### Sketchup Available for Schools

SketchUp is professional and full-featured 3D modeling and design software that is used by various industries and makers to visualize and design everything from buildings to 3D printed parts. Trimble, the company that offers Sketchup, offers two no-cost options for public K-12 schools to use this product.

Option 1: Obtain FREE [Sketchup Pro](#) Licenses by visiting the OPI's School Discount Programs web page and click on the Request FREE Sketchup Pro Licenses [request form](#) and follow the instructions to obtain FREE licenses for your district. Keep in mind Sketchup Pro is a full-featured desktop based application that requires a relatively robust windows or apple based PC to run. Click [here](#) for more information on requirements.

Option 2: Obtain FREE [Sketchup for Schools](#) access If your district uses either Google G Suite for Education or Microsoft Education accounts. Click [here](#) to get started and see if you are eligible. Sketchup for Schools is a web-based application that runs on a web-browser, no computer needed!

Visit the OPI's School Discount Programs [page](#) for more information and other discounts available to districts.

Questions? Contact Michael Sweeney, OPI Chief Data Officer, at (406) 444-4411 or [msweeney@mt.gov](mailto:msweeney@mt.gov).

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## Educator Licensure

### Certification News: New Hires

If your school district has a new hire and you want to expedite the process for a license, have a district official send an email using NEW HIRE in the subject line. Include the necessary information and we will add it to the new hire list.

Remember to work with your teachers and encourage them to continually check their MSEIS account to ensure there are no deficiencies that need to be taken care of prior to issuing a license. This will slow the process down and could potentially impact the December 1 deadline for the Quality Educator payment. Here is a [tutorial](#) on how to check for deficiencies.

### Emergency Authorization of Employment (EAE)

If your school district still has not filled a teaching position, a district may request an EAE for a person who is not the holder of a valid teacher or specialist license as an instructor when the district cannot secure the services of a person holding a valid license. Please review all components of the application and take note of the checklist on the last page. Submit all sections together along with the fee to the address on the [application](#).

Questions? Contact Crystal Andrews at (406) 444-6325.

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## English Learners

### ELC Reopening Schools Award: Support for Screening Testing

DPHHS has received \$32 million in funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act to support COVID-19 screening/testing in K-12 public and private schools across the state through July 2022.

More information regarding this grant may be found on the DPHHS website at ELC Reopening Schools Award Fact [Sheet](#) and on the [CDC website](#).

This federal grant is considered Restricted Grants-in-Aid Received through Other State Agencies. Districts applying for this grant should record revenues received to the Miscellaneous Programs Fund (15) as *ARP - DPHHS - Reopening Schools Grant: Support for screening testing to reopen & keep schools operating safely (7370)* and record expenditures using program code *ARP - DPHHS - Reopening Schools Grant: Support for screening testing to reopen & keep schools operating safely (737)*.

Questions? Contact Budget Analyst Paul Taylor at (406) 444-1257.

## **New English Learner Screener Information**

The [WIDA Screener for Kindergarten](#) is now available to all test administrators in Montana. This screener is designed around a story book to allow for a comfortable and engaging assessment experience. The former kindergarten screening tool, K W-APT, will still be available for the 2021-2022 school year, but it will be discontinued in spring, so the OPI encourages test administrators to switch to the new screener as soon as possible. All training materials and certification quizzes are available in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#).

For all English Learner (EL) students, districts must screen potential ELs within 14 days of enrollment using an approved WIDA screener. For schools or districts with students learning remotely, check the [Provisional EL Identification Procedure During Periods of Remote Learning](#). Mark newly identified students and transfer students correctly in AIM. [AIM Data](#) includes: (1) Home Primary Language (HPL), (2) Language of Impact (LOI), (3) EL identification (within 30 days), (4) Date identified as EL, (5) Date identified as proficient, and (6) two years of monitoring after exiting EL status.

Questions? Contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1-844-867-2569.

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## **Indian Education for All**

### **Advocacy Award Recipient Webinar Series: Contemporary Topics in Indian Country**

The OPI IEFA unit is offering a series of six FREE webinars will feature a different Teresa Veltkamp Advocacy Award for Excellence in Indian Education recipient. Each session will cover current events and contemporary issues facing Montana tribes. Learn how to research primary documents for classroom use and how to respectfully integrate them into your instruction.

Visit the OPI IEFA Upcoming Events/PD [webpage](#) for more information, or contact Jennifer Stadum at (406) 444-0725.

### **Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE) Meeting Schedule**

All meetings will be conducted by Zoom unless otherwise indicated.

September 8, 2021- Informational Session

October 6th, 2021- Working Session

November 10th, 2021- Informational Session

January 5, 2022 – Working Session

February 9, 2022 – Informational Session

April 6, 2022 – Working Session

May 11, 2022 – Informational Session April 20, 2022

July 6, 2022 – Working Session June 15, 2022

August 10, 2022 – Informational Session July 20, 2022

October 5, 2022 – Working Session September 14, 2022

November 9, 2022 – Informational Session October 19, 2022

MACIE is advisory to the OPI and Board of Public Education. If you want to attend the open public meetings, are interested in presenting to the board, or have questions, contact

## **Native American Heritage Day: September 24**

The OPI Indian Education for All (IEFA) Unit asks you to mark your calendars for Friday, September 24, which is American Indian Heritage Day.

In 1997, the Montana Legislature established the fourth Friday in September as a day commemorating American Indian heritage. This year, the IEFA Unit plans to host a live event and coordinate activities around the state with our schools and partners honoring Montana's tribes and Indigenous peoples. A live event will be held at the Capitol Tribal Flag pavilion and will include a Traditional Native Games demonstration for local students. We encourage all schools to join the OPI IEFA unit in celebrating this important day with your students. Watch our [website](#) for links to resources and ideas for celebration activities starting on September 1.

For more information, contact IEFA Director Zach Hawkins at zachariah.hawkins@mt.gov or (406) 444-0708.

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## **Indian Student Achievement**

### **New AISA Gap Funding TEAMS Report**

The new AISA Gap funding TEAMS report window opened September 1 and will close November 1. This report will be required for all districts that receive the American Indian gap payment (MCA 20-9-330) to address the achievement gap. This data will be gathered to support the American Indian student achievement biennial report that is developed for legislators in tracking how districts use their gap payments. AISA has provided evidence-based guidance on how districts should use this funding in order to close the gap and increase American Indian student achievement. You can find this guidance on our AISA Website.

Questions? Contact Lona Running Wolf at (406) 444-3013.

## **School Finance**

### **Audit Letter Posted**

An [audit letter](#) has been posted on the OPI website as a reference tool for auditors who are beginning the FY2021 audits.

## Pupil Transportation

By October 1, the county superintendent must electronically receive all individual transportation contracts and electronically approve individual transportation contracts for which the County Transportation Committee (CTC) has approved increased payments due to isolation. (ARM 10.7.101)

Questions? Contact Donell Rosenthal at (406) 422-0320.

## September State School Funding Payments

The September State School Funding Payments for FY 2022 are posted on the [State School Payments](#) link. The September 27, 2021 payments include: Direct State Aid, Quality Educator Component, At Risk Component, Indian Education for All, Student Achievement Gap Component, Data for Achievement; and Special Education.

Questions? Contact Mari Haefka at (406) 444-9852.

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## School Nutrition

### Free & Reduced-Price Meal Applications

#### ***Should LEAs collect school meal applications if they are operating SSO?***

Per USDA Policy Memo SP-15-2021 (see #29) LEAs must make school meal applications available as needed to certify children for free and reduced-price meals and that information may be used to qualify newly eligible children for SY 2021-22 and summer 2022 P-EBT benefits.

#### **Direct Certification Application (DCA) – Requirement at least three times during SY**

[DCA](#) is up and running for SY 2021-22 and processing nightly updates of AIM, SNAP and TANF data.

Question 22 of [USDA Policy Memo SP16-2021](#) issued on July 14, 2021 relays that LEAs not currently providing meals through the National School Lunch Program (operating SSO instead) during SY 2021-22 are still required to meet the provisions of 7 CFR 245.6(b)(3), which requires that at minimum all LEAs must conduct direct certification with SNAP at least three times per school year.

LEAs electing CEP participation at all schools are exempt from the annual minimum direct certification requirement. However, reviewing DCA direct certification data at least once annually is a recommended best practice for CEP schools that allows review of data trends, track percentage increases/decreases, review and link potential matches, and directly certify additional students in qualifying households due to exten



ded eligibility, thus maximizing Identified Student Percentages and potentially locking in a higher CEP reimbursement rate in future years.

New school staff– Complete the [DCA User Access Request Form](#).

Forgotten or expired DCA password? [Click here to reset your password](#). If you have access to both DCA and MAPS system note that they share the same login credentials.

Contact Alie Wolf at [aliew@mt.gov](mailto:aliew@mt.gov), (406) 459-5394 or your regional specialist with questions.

### **All sponsors to Submit MAPS Verification Report by November 30**

All districts, except for those serving only milk, including districts operating the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), must submit the 2021-22 Verification Report in MAPS. LEAs collecting F/R school meal applications during SY 2021-22 are required to conduct the verification process and verify 3% of approved meal applications on file as of October 1, 2021. Remember all related verification activities, including household correspondence, must be completed by November 15th. LEAs with no applications on file as of Oct. 1, will not be required to conduct verification *activities* but must submit the Verification Report in MAPS to indicate this exception. The [MAPS](#) Verification Report is due by November 30.

#### **RCCI Sponsors**

*Enter the number school sites (RCCIs with/without Day Students), the number of students enrolled as of October 31 and check items 3-1 and 5-1 that exempt your organization from all other sections.*

#### **Districtwide CEP Sponsors**

*Enter 1-1.A Number school sites, 1-1.B Number of students enrolled as of October 31, and check items 3-1 and 5-1 that exempt your district from all other sections.*

#### **NSLP & SSO Program Sponsors**

If your district collected school meal applications during SY 2021-22, please submit the verification report as usual. See the [Verification Instructions](#) for further details.

If your district did not collect any school meal applications, or if all applications were confirmed as directly certified, your district is exempt from the verification process but will need to submit the Verification Report in MAPS with the following items:

- **1-1:** Number of school sites / Number of students enrolled as of October 31.
- **3-1:** Leave box blank if your school normally charges a price for meals. Districts having all CEP schools should check the box. (See directions above for districtwide CEP sponsors)
- **3-2:** Review the auto-populated data count from DCA – SNAP students directly certified as of October 31.
- **3-3:** Review the auto-populated data count from DCA – Includes other sources of directly certified students as of October 31. Other direct certification sources include: TANF, FDPIR, homeless, migrant, foster care & administrative approvals.
- **3-4:** SNAP letter method only students (only count remaining SNAP letters not found in DCA as directly certified).

- **Section 4:** Leave blank or enter 0s if your district did not collect any Free or Reduced-Price Meal Applications as of October 1. Applications confirmed as directly certified should be counted only in section 3 as directly certified.
- **5-1:** If no Free or Reduced-Price Meal Applications were on file as of October 1, or if all applications were confirmed as directly certified, check the box to show that your district is exempt from the verification process.
- **5-6:** Check the box if your district did not confirm any applications as directly certified in DCA.
- Save and finish.

Contact Alie Wolf at [aliew@mt.gov](mailto:aliew@mt.gov), (406) 459-5394, or your regional specialist with questions. Click here for [Verification Instructions](#).

## USDA Food Shipment Schedule

Shipments of USDA Foods to sponsors of the National School Lunch Program began on August 23. Schools are divided into nine routes based on location; actual delivery dates will vary by route. There will be a total of nine delivery cycles in the 2020-2021 school year. School Food Service Directors will receive an email one week in advance of their delivery.

The full delivery schedule is [here](#).

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## Special Education

### Archived CAPS Webinar Available

Courtesy of the VCU Autism Center for Excellence, a recording of Planning your Student's Program Using the Comprehensive Autism Planning System (CAPS) is available [here](#). The OPI Montana Autism Education Project has an Autism Consultant who can provide further training in the CAPS.

Questions? Contact [ddoty@mt.gov](mailto:ddoty@mt.gov) for more information.

### Discontinued: Online Training from OPI's Montana Autism Education Project

Previous online autism/behavior training is no longer available due to contract renewal terms not allowable under Montana law. However, you may find free autism and behavior training courses at [Autism Internet Modules](#) and [AFIRM](#).

#### Benefits of School-Based Social Emotional Learning:



## Implementing SEL in Montana Schools: Community of Practice

Developing social and emotional skills builds a foundation for everyone's success. Social and emotional skills include understanding and managing oneself, relating to others, and making responsible choices. Social and emotional skills are associated with improved behavior, lower levels of emotional distress, enhanced well-being, improved academic outcomes, and more stable employment.

As schools continue to respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the benefits of social emotional learning (SEL) are increasingly advantageous in supporting schools in their efforts to address student learning loss, manage difficult emotions in both students and staff; and reconnect students and families to schools.

This community of practice series will guide schools through their process of reviewing, adopting, and implementing SEL. The series is for school leaders who are taking their first steps to explore SEL implementation and to strengthen their current SEL programs. All sessions include a one-hour facilitated webinar with an optional asynchronous activity for continuing education units. Click [here](#) to register.

- October 13: 4:30 pm—5:30 pm: *Defining Social Emotional Learning*
- November 10: 4:30 pm—5:30 pm: *Strengthening SEL Knowledge*
- January 12: 4:30 pm — 5:30 pm: *Strategies to Cultivate SEL for Adults*
- February 9: 4:30 pm — 5:30 pm: *Learning the Montana SEL Competencies*
- March 9: 4:30 pm — 5:30 pm: *Planning for SEL Implementation*

To learn more about SEL and to download the Montana SEL Competencies, visit OPI's School Mental Health [webpage](#). Questions? Contact Michele Henson, OPI School Safety Program Manager.

## STAR Virtual Autism Training Set for October 21-22

This comprehensive two-day workshop provides participants with detailed examples and practice activities on how to implement the evidence-based practices identified in the National Standards Report (2009). The STAR Program is used to provide examples.

Appropriate content connected to the common core curriculum is presented, and detailed information on the three evidenced-based instructional methods of discrete trial training, pivotal response training, and teaching through functional routines are shared.

Participants will learn how to implement these strategies through structured lesson plans and a curriculum scope and sequence. The workshop will include extensive data collection systems; participants will learn to collect and use data for instructional decision making.

The virtual training will not be recorded and attendance is required on the training dates. It is limited to 60 people. Twelve OPI renewal units will be available. The training is from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each day, and is FREE from the [OPI Montana Autism Education Project](#).

[Register for the STAR training.](#)

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## Title, Federal Programs & School Improvement

### Change in E-grant Timelines

SY21-22 Egrant Consolidated Application timelines have changed. Please review the following deadlines:

**September 1:** Last day to submit an amendment to the previous year's (SY20-21) application without OPI approval. Last day to create/open a SY21-22 Egrant Consolidated Application.

**September 30:** Last day to submit a SY21-22 Egrant Consolidated Application without OPI approval. Final day to obligate SY20-21 federal funds under the Consolidated Application.

**October 31:** Districts must have an approved SY21-22 Egrants Consolidated Application. Final day to expend federal funds under the SY20-21 Consolidated Application.

Districts missing the deadlines must submit a letter to Deputy Superintendent Sharyl Allen, requesting permission to submit/approve a SY21-22 Consolidated Application. This letter must come from the board chairperson and state the reason(s) the application was late and give plans to ensure that it is completed within the application windows for the future.

Questions? Contact Sheri Harlow at (406) 444-5660.

### EANS 1

The final due date for EANS I applications was August 27; at this time all applications have been reviewed and either approved or returned for revisions. All funds will be allocated by September 10.

If you have questions regarding EANS, contact Janey Salomon at (406) 410-1246.

### ESSER Update

More than 75% or 280 districts or systems completed their District ARP ESSER Plan by the August 24 deadline. We have reached out to the remaining districts and communicated a final submission date of September 3. These plans will be reviewed over the coming weeks; Districts and Systems will be contacted if any changes or edits are necessary to meet ESSER funding requirements. Thank you for your good work in meeting a challenging federal deadline!

Egrant applications for ESSER II and ESSER III were due September 1. Your ESSER III egrant submission is the budget that supports your District ARP ESSER Plan. Egrant

applications are being reviewed in the order they are received — first ESSER II, and then ESSER III. Plans will be reviewed within seven days of submission.

We are here to support you in all your ESSER related work and tasks! Please direct your ESSER questions to Jeff Kirksey, ESSER Program Manager, at [jeffrey.kirksey@mt.gov](mailto:jeffrey.kirksey@mt.gov).

## School Improvement Budget News

For the 20-21 School Support budget, districts have until **October 31** to put in any additional cash requests for funds that were obligated on or before **September 30, 2021**. All final expenditures must be submitted on or before **November 10, 2021**. The 21-22 School Support plan and budget are due **September 30**.

For more information, contact Carrie Kouba at (406) 444-0864.

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## Traffic Education

### Traffic Education Data & Reporting System Reminders

These reminders are frequently forgotten Student List entry tasks; all TEDRS users are urged to review these reminders and to complete the student list correctly.

- When you create a student list, only enter the start and completion dates once. You do not need to enter them again once the list is created, or will duplicate it. To open the list, scroll to the right to click on the Select button. Only OPI staff can delete student lists that are accidentally created.
- To enter the Instructor(s), make sure you click the button “Add Instructor” to get the name on the form. Just highlighting it in the dropdown does not enter it on the form.
- Make sure ALL instructors who have any role in teaching the driver education course are entered on the form. They should also have been added to the TE01 District Application prior to the course being taught.
- When you are checking the Confirmation of Completion box, remember to ALSO check the Reimbursement Request. Whoever is completing the Student List should be sure to check all boxes and make sure the red bar at the top of the form is all green. Then the list is complete and ready to submit. Please don't leave the last button unchecked or the list could be overlooked when students are counted for reimbursement.
- Please review the Student List User's Guide that is available for download within TEDRS.

Questions? Contact Dwight Nelson at (406) 422-3944 or [Dwight.Nelson@mt.gov](mailto:Dwight.Nelson@mt.gov).

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## Transformational Learning & Advanced Opportunities

## An Update

- Transformational Learning: Window opens January 3, 2022\* and closes Monday, January 10, 2022 at 5:00 pm MST.
- Montana Advanced Opportunity: Window opens December 6, 2021 at 8am MST. Window closes on January 10, 2022 at 5pm MST.

\*The proposed Transformational Learning Window for FY 2023 applications and annual reports is January 3-10, 2022, due to new language in HB089 (formerly HB351). This change must be approved by the Board of Public Education—anticipated changes will be shared once approved.

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## Tribal Relations & Resiliency

### Message of Hope from Tribal Relations & Resiliency

*“Positive energy to all districts as they work on their re-opening, their budgets, student safety, and all other issues. We are thinking about the communities dealing with fires as well as those suffering from loss.”*

For more information on Tribal Relations and Resiliency, contact Donnie Wetzel.

### Tribal Relations & Resiliency Shared Strategies Document

The Tribal Relations and Resiliency Unit has been facilitating meetings and discussions with school districts and Tribal communities on potential strategies of support through the ARP-ESSER funding. Social and Emotional opportunities, along with self-identity inclusion, is an important piece to the success of all students, which is in our unit’s wheelhouse of services.

Wellness, wrap around, relational, restorative, and cultural support all need the voice and strategies of the people doing the work. Enrichment possibilities provide the opportunity to solidify the “care first” mentality many of our districts hold, with the understanding the grades will follow. We are consulting with our tribal nations, their departments, and their support services to move together into the 2021-2022 school year with a unified vision for our youth. The Tribal Relations and Resiliency Unit, as a result of conversations with stakeholders, has created a shared document of “Recommended Strategies to Support American Indian Student Enrichment.”

### Tribal Relations & Resiliency Unit Update

OPI’s Tribal Relations and Resiliency Unit recently collaborated with the Comprehensive School Support team on their Education Summit. It was an exciting time to get everyone back together, share ideas, and build relationships. Cultural Elders were invited to open up the conference and set the stage for a focused strategy of healing and collaboration after a difficult year of COVID-19. A youth panel provided the teams an opportunity to hear student’s thoughts on the past years’ experience and look forward to solutions and support with student inclusion. Our wrap-around facilitators and coaches brought the heart into

every discussion through their authenticity and skills by sharing the power of circles, communication, and trust.

Thank you to Carrie Kouba, Julie Gavin, and Aimee Konzen for the opportunity to collaborate and support our districts and communities!

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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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