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# Office of the Superintendent

## Updates in Montana Education

### DPHHS Rules on School Health and Safety

The OPI wants to ensure that schools have one point of contact and one webpage with resources so that you are not contacted by multiple people. Resources are available at [dphhs.mt.gov/SchoolHealth/SchoolRules](http://dphhs.mt.gov/SchoolHealth/SchoolRules) and you can reach out to Tracy Moseman, the OPI's Division Administrator for School Health and Safety, at [tmoseman@mt.gov](mailto:tmoseman@mt.gov) or 444-3000.

### School Report Cards and ESSA Designations

New school report cards based on 2018-2019 data will be released on March 16<sup>th</sup> along with Comprehensive, Targeted, and Universal ESSA designations. School leaders will be able to view the state report card and ESSA designations at least a week ahead of time.

### 2021 Montana Teacher of the Year Nominations and Applications Open

2021 Montana Teacher of the Year nominations and applications are now open! Please nominate teachers and spread the word. More info can be found at: <http://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Montana-Teacher-of-the-Year>.

### School Bus Safety

The OPI along with DOT, MHP, Legislators, school leaders, and concerned community members held a meeting in January to discuss school bus safety. The OPI has updated our bus safety checklist that MHP fills out with pupil transportation directors after we determined that existing ARM allows for districts to extend bus arms if they want to. Additional meetings are being planned to look at ARM or statute changes along with raising public awareness. Your feedback is welcome.

### 2020 Census

The OPI's serves on the Montana Census Subcommittee on Education & Libraries. It is crucial that schools engage their communities in getting an accurate census count. Federal education funding is dependent on it. Please help spread the word and visit: [census.mt.gov](http://census.mt.gov).

### Superintendent's Office February Events

- Superintendent Arntzen visited school, community, and tribal leaders in northeastern and southeastern Montana as well as the Flathead. She looks forward to additional school visits this spring.
- Recurring Land Board, Education Advocates, State Library, and School Safety Advisory Committee meetings.

Follow the Office of Public Instruction on social media:



For more information, contact [Dylan Klapmeier](mailto:Dylan.Klapmeier@opi.mt.gov), 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**

## Assessment

### MontCAS News

The Assessment Division sends school leaders tailored monthly messages on the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS) via the Assessment 411 electronic mailing system and are posted on the [OPI Statewide Testing page](#) of the OPI website. This month the issue had three reminders on (1) the Smarter Balanced online-only score reports (note: more information available during the April 15<sup>th</sup> live [MontCAS Monthly Webinar](#) at 3:30 pm), (2) reaping the benefits of Smarter Balanced interim (note: view the recorded webinar at [MontCAS Monthly Webinar](#)), (3) the importance and local responsibilities for test security (note: more information available during the March 18<sup>th</sup> live [MontCAS Monthly Webinar](#) at 3:30 pm). As of February 18<sup>th</sup>, 60% of school systems had fulfilled the required MontCAS Application System-Level Test Security Agreement Collection in accordance with the published [MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule](#).

### Assessment Bulletin News

The Assessment Division sends school system test coordinators monthly newsletters via the OPI Assessment Bulletin which are posted on the [OPI Statewide Testing page](#) of the OPI website. This bulletin is tailored to the test coordination responsibilities at each school system. This month the issue had three takeaways including the interim predictive research as shared with school leaders in the Assessment 411. The other two takeaways were specific to gearing up for the testing windows through (1) ensuring student enrollment information and educational plans are updated and locked in AIM/Infinite Campus and (2) reviewing the student eligibility and participation policies as listed on the OPI website.

### ACT

All Montana juniors enrolled in accredited Montana schools take the state ACT with Writing, with the first test date of March 24. School staff can refer to the Montana ACT [Schedule of Events](#) for information about enrolling new students, requesting late accommodations, setting up for online testing, as well as dates and deadlines for activities related to the administration of the assessment.

For more information, contact [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov), 1-844-867-2569.

## Content Standards and Instruction

### Montana Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program Grant Information Update

In fall 2019, [Montana was awarded a 5-Year \\$50 Million Federal Literacy Grant](#). Eligible districts received written notification during the week of January 13. Check the [MCLSDP webpage](#) for application materials, grant workshop information, and sub-grant timelines. March 31, 2020: Subgrant Applications Due to the OPI via US Mail. Contact [MTLiteracyGrant@mt.gov](mailto:MTLiteracyGrant@mt.gov) with any questions.

### Content Standards Negotiated Rulemaking Updates

- The [K-12 Content Standards and Revision Webpage](#) has a wealth of information about [each of the three Negotiated Rulemaking Committees](#). [Minutes, meeting recordings, and all committee documents are posted for your information.](#)
- Responses to Economic Impact Surveys for Social Studies, Career and Technical Education, and Computer Science continue to be open for responses. Additional surveys for Library Media and Technology will be opened in mid-February.
  - [Career and Technical Education Survey](#)
  - [Computer Science Survey](#)
  - [Social Studies Survey](#)
- Interested parties may submit their views and comments concerning the proposed negotiated rulemaking process to Colet Bartow, Director of Content Standards and Instruction, Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, Montana 59620, faxed to (406) 444-3924, or electronic mail to [cbartow@mt.gov](mailto:cbartow@mt.gov).

#### Resources

- Download the [2017 - 2027 COMPLETE REVISION SCHEDULE](#)
- Take the *Montana Content Standards 101* course on the [Teacher Learning Hub](#)
- Watch the [Montana Content Standards Revision Overview](#) video.

### Professional Learning Provider Network Collaborative

On the third Tuesday of each month from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m., the OPI will host a conference call for education-related providers in the state of Montana. The following links contain calendar invites that provide the information on how to log-in to the conference call.

- [Gmail calendars](#)
- [Outlook calendars](#)

You can also connect using the [Zoom link](#) or by calling 1-720-707-2699 and entering in access code 454 817 432 when prompted. Please contact the OPI's Professional Learning Coordinator, [Carli Cockrell](#), for access to PLP Network Collaborative recordings. For more information, visit the [Professional Learning Resources for Montana's Educators](#) webpage.

# Federal Programs

## Regional Private School Trainings

The Montana Office of Public Instruction will be holding five regional trainings for public and private schools across the state. These trainings are to assist public and private schools that participate in federal programs to navigate the confusing rules and regulations that have been established. The sessions will help these schools better understand the consultation process, how to leverage federal funds, and develop, implement, and evaluate effective educational programs. The dates are as follows:

Kalispell-April 15, 2020: Main Conference room at Glacier High School, 375 Wolfpack Way  
Missoula-April 16, 2020: Dickenson Lifelong Learning Center, 310 S Curtis St.  
Hardin-April 21, 2020: Hardin Schools Parent Center, 636 West 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Bozeman-April 22, 2020: Willson School Room 217A, 404 West Main  
Great Falls-April 23, 2020: Paris Gibson Alternative High School, 2400 Central Ave.

The sessions will run from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM.

Districts are asked to RSVP at least one week prior to each workshop with the name of the district and the names of the private/non-public school(s) that will be attending. Contact Sheri Harlow at 406-444-5660 or [SHarlow@mt.gov](mailto:SHarlow@mt.gov) to register.

# Finance

## School Election Deadlines

- Friday, March 6th: Mail ballot plan, timetable, and sample instructions must be received by the Secretary of State's office. Forward a copy, including any amendments, to the county election administrator.
- Monday, March 9th: Verify that the county election administrator has published the notice at close of regular registration.
- Thursday, March 26th through Saturday, April 25th: Notice of election is posted. The notice must be published in a newspaper of general circulation (if one is available within the district), in three public places, and on the district's website (if active) for the 10 days prior to the election. The notice must include the date and voting locations, voting location hours, each proposition to be considered, the number of trustee positions and length of terms, where and how absentee ballots may be obtained, and where and how late registrants may obtain a ballot on election day.
- Thursday, April 2nd (by 5:00 pm): Last day trustee candidates may withdraw from the election and the deadline for write-in candidates to file a Declaration of Intent.
- Friday, April 3rd: Deadline to notify election judges of appointment.

- Friday, April 3rd: Election administrator certifies the ballot. Any resolutions stating exact levy amounts must be passed by this date.
- Friday, April 3rd: The trustees may call the election by acclamation, cancel the election and give notice that the election will not be held.

For more information, contact Nicole Thuotte at [nthuotte@mt.gov](mailto:nthuotte@mt.gov) or 406-444-4524

## FY 2019 Federal Audit Reports Due to OPI March 31<sup>st</sup>

The Federal Audit Reports (formerly A-133 audits and required by 2 CFR Part 200) are due to the OPI by March 31, 2020, for entities that have federal expenditures of \$750,000 or greater, which include USDA commodities. FY 2019 Yellowbook Audits (regular audit) are required for entities with all revenues totaling more than \$750,000 are due to the OPI by June 30, 2020. FY 2019 Reviews (Agreed Upon Procedures) are required at least every four years for entities with \$750,000 or less revenues, are due to the OPI by June 30, 2020.

Please remit audit reports and correspondence to [OPIAuditReports@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAuditReports@mt.gov).

For more information, contact Dan Moody 406-444-0701 or [Dan.Moody@mt.gov](mailto:Dan.Moody@mt.gov).

## Extended Stop Arms on Montana School Buses

The OPI has received several inquiries regarding the installation and use of extended stop arms on Montana School Buses.

The 2018 Montana School Bus Standards [CLICK HERE](#) references FMVSS Standard No. 131; School Bus Pedestrian Safety Devices on page 35 #1. Upon thorough review, as well as information received from NHTSA, we have concluded that the installation of the extended stop signal arms are allowable. FMVSS 131(c) states the stop arm must be a minimum of 9" from the side of the bus, however, it does not state a maximum in length. To review the full standard, you can visit the following link: [CLICK HERE](#)

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For any questions, please contact [Donell Rosenthal](#) at (406) 444-3024.

## Health Enhancement and Safety

### MSU Threat Assessment Conference

This year the conference is called the Western Regional Joint Threat Assessment Training. Their website is: <http://www.montana.edu/police/threat-assessment/JTAT.html>. Contact Brittany Nickolay at MSU for more info (406) 994-5082, [Brittany.Nickolay@montana.edu](mailto:Brittany.Nickolay@montana.edu).

## Tips from the Department of Homeland Security

Working on developing your school's Emergency Action Plan? Do you have questions about what should be included in the plan? There is no such thing as a "one size fits all" when going through the planning process to develop your plan. Although sharing of ideas and concepts from other school districts is highly encouraged, these pieces of information from outside of your school still need to be vetted by your school's safety planning group to ensure the plan input fits in with your school's situation and policy.

The Department of Homeland Security has created a school safety website that is available for public consumption! This website is a clearinghouse for best practices that will allow you to see what is happening across the country in the school safety realm. Please visit the new website at [www.schoolsafety.gov](http://www.schoolsafety.gov) and, as always, please contact me directly if you have questions or concerns. Randy Middlebrook, 406-839-1165, [randy.middlebrook@dhs.gov](mailto:randy.middlebrook@dhs.gov).

## Educator Licensure

### Licensure Requirements – New and Renewal

As you are preparing to fill vacancies with applicants who may not yet be licensed as a Montana educator, specialist or administrator, a quick summary of the minimum licensure requirements for each position are found in the corresponding sections:

[Teaching & Specialists](#)

[Administrative](#)

[Career & Technical](#)

[Renewals](#)

#### **Considering Employing a Foreign National?**

If you are considering employing a foreign national, a vital step for you in this process before offering employment is for you to review an equivalency evaluation of their foreign educator preparation program that has been completed by a US foreign evaluation credentialing agency. This agency determines the equivalency of their foreign educator preparation program to a US educator preparation program. The agency provides the results of their evaluation in the summary section; this information is what Licensure relies on for determining licensure qualification and the appropriate endorsement area. The [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services](#) (NACES) is a great resource for this process. The process for a foreign national to apply for licensure is available [here](#).

#### **Renewing a Montana educator license?**

A reminder that those whose license(s) expire June 30, 2020, may complete the online renewal process at any time after the first of the year in which their license expires.

A minimum total of 60 renewal units are needed (college courses are not required but may be used: 1 quarter credit = 10 renewal units; 1 semester credit = 15 renewal units). There are a multitude of free, online, quality professional development resources available at the [OPI Learning Hub](#). Click [here](#) to renew or find additional renewal resources.

### **Educators to be Licensed in Montana**

The more quickly a potential educator completes the licensure process the better! If you employ educators not yet licensed in Montana, please notify us via email by sending their name to [cert@mt.gov](mailto:cert@mt.gov) and use the subject line of New Employee to be Licensed in Montana. This will assist Licensure in streamlining applications for those who have been employed by our School Districts. Find helpful information on our [Educator Licensure](#) home page, including our [Useful Resources](#) tab!

For more information, contact Kristine Thatcher at [kthatcher2@mt.gov](mailto:kthatcher2@mt.gov) or 406-444-2580

## **Transformational/Advanced Opportunities** **Roundtable Workshops Scheduled for Transformational Learning** **and Montana Advanced Opportunities Act**

Mark your calendar today to participate in roundtable workshops on what is available to your district's students through these two new funding sources. Background and foundational work will be provided along with coaching on the key elements of your district's application.

- March 11, 2020 –9:00 a.m. – NOON      Kalispell at Evergreen School District
- March 25, 2020 – 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.      Great Falls at Paris Gibson Education Center
- March 26, 2020 – 9:00 a.m. – NOON      Billings at Canyon Creek School District
- March 30, 2020 – 9:00 a.m. – NOON      Glendive School District Office
- March 31, 2020 - 9:00 a.m – NOON      East Helena at East Valley Middle School Library
- April 3, 2020    - 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.      Belgrade School District

Further details are available on this [OPI Webpage](#) along with the registration form for the workshop location of your choice. RSVPs are requested for planning purposes.

The roundtable workshops are structured for interactive discussions with district participants. New districts to the application process will have an actionable plan upon completion of the workshop. Funded districts will gain access to new resources and insights into MT flexibilities and opportunities.

For more information, contact [sharyl.allen@mt.gov](mailto:sharyl.allen@mt.gov), 928-288-2650.

## Student/School Opportunities

### USDA Distance Learning Grants

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine program helps rural communities use the unique capabilities of telecommunications to connect to each other and to the world, overcoming the effects of remoteness and low population density. For example, this program can link teachers and medical service providers in one area to students and patients in another. Learn more: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>.

### MSU Montana Rural Teacher Project

MSU in partnership with the OPI received a federal Teacher Quality Partnership grant to create the Montana Rural Teacher Project. You can learn more online at: <http://www.montana.edu/education/grad/mat/tqp.html>. We have admitted our first cohort of grant-funded Elementary Education MAT students and they have begun their coursework. We look forward to admitting our first cohort of grant-funded Secondary Education MAT students this spring. WE NEED YOUR HELP! If you know of someone who may be interested in the program, please recruit and refer them for more information. Interested applicants should reach out to Jamie O’Callaghan for information on the process as soon as possible, [jocallag@montana.edu](mailto:jocallag@montana.edu).

### American Legion Oratorical Scholarship Contest

Learn more about the American Legion Oratorical Scholarship Contest and how your students can participate: <https://www.legion.org/oratorical>.

### Missing Children’s Day Poster Contest

The Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) are working together to give Montana students the opportunity to participate in state and national poster contests that focus on the theme of “Bringing Our Missing Children Home.” Learn more: <https://dojmt.gov/montana-doj-opi-announce-national-missing-childrens-day-poster-contest-2/>

**-END-**