



Superintendent of Public Instruction's  
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**10.55.601 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: PROCEDURES**

- (1) The Board of Public Education adopts standards of accreditation upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- (2) The Board of Public Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction establish procedures and schedules for reviewing the accreditation status of each school.
- (3) To ensure a learner-centered system and establish a plan for continuous education improvement, the school district shall develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate an integrated action plan and make the plan publicly available. To align with local context and needs, the district integrated action plan shall be developed every three years based on a comprehensive needs assessment with meaningful stakeholder input and feedback. The integrated action plan must be evaluated, and progress reviewed annually. The plan must clarify what specific steps must be taken to achieve the district graduate profile and reflect a continuous improvement process.
- (4) Each plan shall include:
  - (a) a school district profile of a graduate as defined in ARM 10.55.602(22);
  - (b) the school district's and each of its schools identified area(s) of need based on an analysis of school level comprehensive needs assessment;
  - (c) the school district's and each of school's desired outcomes that align with the district graduate profile;
  - (d) the educational goals for the school district and each school within the district;
  - (e) a description of the district and each school's evidence-based strategies, action steps, measures, success criteria, and evidence that are aligned with the graduate profile and will be implemented, monitored, and evaluated;
  - (f) a description of how the district and each of its schools will meet programmatic requirements of state and federal grants;
  - (g) a description of planned progress toward implementing all content and program area standards, in accordance with the schedule in ARM 10.55.603;
  - (h) a description of strategies for assessing student growth and proficiency of all content standards and content-specific learning progressions, pursuant to the requirements of ARM 10.55.603 and ARM 10.56.101;
  - (i) a professional development, mentoring, induction, and evaluation component, in accordance with ARM 10.55.714, 10.55.723, and 10.55.724;
  - (j) a description of strategies for family and community engagement, in accordance with ARM 10.55.722;
  - (k) a description of strategies to maintain and enhance a school climate, in accordance with ARM 10.55.801;
  - (l) a description of a learning model(s) aligned to the graduate profile; and
  - (m) a description of strategies for gifted and talented, special education, English learners in accordance with ARM 10.55.804, 10.55.805, and 10.55.806.
- (5) The local board of trustees shall report and submit their adopted integrated action plan with the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- (6) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop and implement procedures necessary

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to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the integrated action plan of each school district and its schools.

- (7) To ensure learner centered systems and continuous educational improvement, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide guidance, resources, and evaluation to assist in the implementation of district integrated action plans to improve learning outcomes for all students.

**10.55.602 DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms apply:

- (1) "Accreditation" means certification by the Board of Public Education that a school meets the adopted standards of the Board of Public Education for a specified school year.
- (2) "Assessment" means the gathering, organizing, and evaluation of information about student learning progression, growth, and proficiency in order to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the instructional program.
- (3) "Assurance standards" means the minimal standards of a quality education program comprised of the following subchapters:
  - (a) Subchapter 6: General Provisions, ARM 10.55.601 through 10.55.608;
  - (b) Subchapter 7: School Leadership, ARM 10.55.701 through 10.55.724;
  - (c) Subchapter 8: Educational Opportunity, ARM 10.55.801 through 10.55.806;
  - (d) Subchapter 9: Academic Requirements, ARM 10.55.901 through 10.55.910; and
  - (e) Subchapter 10: Program Area Standards, ARM10.55.1001 through 10.55.2201.
- (4) "Asynchronous" means not occurring at the same time. "Asynchronous" refers to instruction and communication between participants (i.e., students and teachers) that occur at different times.
- (5) "Charter school" means a publicly funded school that may be exempt from assurance standard(s), or a section(s) of an assurance standard as defined in ARM 10.55.602(3). A charter school operates under the supervision and control of a locally elected board of trustees in an existing school district.
- (6) "Class 6 Specialist" means a person with a Class 6 Specialist license in a nonteaching role of school psychologist or school counselor.
- (7) "Class 8 license" means an educator license as defined in ARM 10.57.102.
- (8) "Combined elementary-high school district" means an elementary district and a high school district, which are combined into a single school system for district administration purposes.
- (9) "Community engagement" means the partnership between members of the community and schools that may share resources and volunteer to support student well-being and learning development.

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- (10) "Comprehensive needs assessment" means a process that is used to identify district and school area(s) of need, the root causes of identified gaps, set priorities, and inform an action plan for improvement.
- (11) "Concurrent enrollment" means the district offers these courses during the school day and they are taught by district high school faculty who have been approved by the post-secondary institution to teach these college level courses. Students receive both high school and college credit for the completed course.
- (12) "Content standard" means what all students should know, understand, and be able to do in a specific content area.
- (13) "Corrective plan" means a systematic procedure and timeline for resolving deviations when a school has an accredited with probation status.
- (14) "Deviation" means a citation of noncompliance with any given standard.
- (15) "Digital content provider" means an entity, organization, or individual registered pursuant to ARM 10.55.907 offering K-12 educational content for distance, online, and technology-delivered programs and courses.
- (16) "Distance learning" means instruction in which students and teachers are separated by time, location, or both with synchronous or asynchronous content, instruction, and communication between student and teacher. This instruction may consist of learning opportunities provided through online (Internet-based) and other emerging technologies.
- (17) "Dual credit" means students receive both college credit and high school credit for courses taken from a postsecondary institution. Students may or may not be taking these courses during the school day. The college faculty member must have an appropriate license and endorsement in the subject taught or a Class 8 license.
- (18) "Dual enrollment " means opportunities for students to be enrolled in high school and postsecondary courses at the same time.
- (19) "Endorsement" means an official indication on a license of the subject area(s) and/or, specialized program area(s), or both for which the holder of the license is authorized to practice in Montana accredited schools.
- (20) "Facilitator" means the individual assigned to monitor distance, online, and technology-delivered learning programs pursuant to ARM 10.55.907. The facilitator may be an instructional paraprofessional as long as there is a licensed teacher providing the instruction.
- (21) "Family engagement" means a partnership with shared responsibility among families, educational staff, and community groups to promote each student's learning, well-being, and development of full educational potential during their entire K-12 experience.
- (22) "Graduate profile" means a learner centered model(s) based on a shared vision of learner

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attributes that students should have when they graduate.

- (23) "Graduation rate" means a calculation based on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students and for each student group.
- (24) "Independent elementary school district" means a district organized for the purpose of providing public education for all or any combination of grades kindergarten through 8.
- (25) "Indian Education for All" means the constitutionally declared policy of this state to recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritages of American Indians and to be committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural heritages. Implementation of these requirements ensures:
- (a) every Montanan, Indian or non-Indian, is encouraged to learn about the distinct heritages and contributions of Montana tribal groups and governments in a culturally responsive manner; and
  - (b) every educational agency must work cooperatively with Montana tribes to provide means by which school personnel will gain an understanding of and appreciation for American Indian people.
- (26) "Instructional paraprofessional" means school or district personnel whose positions are instructional in nature and who work under the direct supervision of licensed school personnel. The supervising licensed school personnel are responsible for:
- (a) the design, implementation, and assessment of learner progress; and
  - (b) the evaluation of the effectiveness of learning programs and related services for children.
- (27) "Integrated action plan" means a district plan that ensures a learner centered system and continuous improvement that reflects local context and needs, is based on school level comprehensive needs assessment, incorporates stakeholder input and feedback, and aligns plans across required state and federal programs.
- (28) "Intensive assistance" means a required process for schools in accredited with probation status. Such schools have failed to develop or implement an approved corrective plan to remedy accreditation deviations within the designated timeline.
- (29) "Internship" as provided for in ARM 10.57.114 means an agreement between a fully licensed Class 1, 2, or 3 educator, the school district, and a Montana accredited educator preparation program. Internships are permitted in endorsement areas approved by the Board of Public Education in ARM 10.57.412 and 10.57.414 to 10.57.419.
- (30) "K-12 district" as defined in 20-6-701, MCA means an elementary district, with the same district boundaries as a high school district, which has been attached to that high school district. The high school district remains an organized district and the elementary district is an inactive district pursuant to 20-6-101, MCA.
- (31) "Learning model" means the learning experiences student engage in and teachers facilitate that are aligned to the desired attributes of a graduate profile.
- (32) "Learning progression" means the specific performance expectations in each content area

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and grade-band from kindergarten through grade 12.

- (33) "Licensure" means a certificate issued or applied for under 20-4-101, et seq., MCA.
- (34) "Literacy" means constructing and validating knowledge in specific content areas which includes interpretation and learning with language, numeracy, and media.
- (35) "Measure" means a way to assess the level of proficiency on a performance indicator aligned to the district graduate profile.
- (36) "Middle grades" means grades 4 through 9.
- (37) "Minimum aggregate hours" means the minimum hours of pupil instruction that must be conducted during the school fiscal year in accordance with 20-1-301, MCA and includes passing time between classes. Minimum aggregate hours do not include lunch time and periods of unstructured recess, as defined in 20-1-101, MCA.
- (38) "Minimum requirement" means groups of 10 or more students.
- (39) "Misassignment" means a licensed educator/specialist teaching outside their endorsed teaching area(s) or level (elementary K-8 and secondary 5-12).
- (40) "Nonlicensed" means a person who does not hold a current Montana educator license, except for a person for whom an emergency authorization of employment has been issued under the provisions of 20- 4-111, MCA.
- (41) "Offsite instructional setting" means an instructional setting at a location, separate from a main school site, where a school district provides for the delivery of instruction to a student who is enrolled in the district.
- (42) "Online learning" means educational activity in which instruction and content are delivered primarily via the Internet and through emerging technologies. Online learning is a form of distance learning.
- (43) "Personalized learning" means to:
  - (a) develop individualized pathways for career and postsecondary educational opportunities that honors individual interests, passions, strengths, needs, and culture;
  - (b) support through relationships among teachers, family, peers, the business community, postsecondary education officials, and other community stakeholders;
  - (c) embed community-based, experiential, online, and work-based learning opportunities; and
  - (d) foster a learning environment that incorporates both face-to-face and virtual connections.
- (44) "Postsecondary and workforce readiness" means the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that a student has attained prior to completing a high school program.
- (45) "Principal" means a person who holds a valid Montana Class 3 educator license with an

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applicable principal endorsement and who is employed by a district as a principal, or who is enrolled in a Board of Public Education approved principal internship program under ARM 10.57.114.

- (46) "Professional Development" means adult learning that increases educator effectiveness and learning outcomes for all students.
- (47) "Proficiency-based learning" means systems of instruction, assessment, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills as outlined in the state content standards.
- (48) "Proficient" means that a student demonstrated a high level of knowledge and skills that are expected to be learned signaling that a student is well prepared to progress on the learning continuum aligned to the content standards, learning progressions, and necessary readiness skills.
- (49) "Program area standards" means the subject matter Montana school districts are required to offer and the strategies and proven practices used to instruct. The program area standards include English language arts, arts, health and physical education, mathematics, science, social studies, career and technical education, technology integration, computer science, library media and information literacy, world languages, and school counseling.
- (50) "Program delivery standards" means the conditions and practices school districts are required to provide ensuring that every student is afforded equal educational opportunities to learn, develop, and demonstrate achievement in content standards and content-specific grade-band learning progressions.
- (51) "Pupil instruction" means the conduct of organized instruction of learning opportunities for pupils enrolled in public schools while under the supervision of a teacher.
- (52) "Pupil instruction day" means a school day when organized instruction is conducted with students under the supervision of a teacher.
- (53) "Pupil instruction-related (PIR) day" means days of teacher activities devoted to improving the quality of instruction. The activities may include, but are not limited to in-service training, attending state meetings of teacher organizations, and conducting parent conferences.
- (54) "School" means, for accreditation purposes, an educational program and grade assignments designated by the local board of trustees in one of the following categories:
  - (a) an elementary school, which offers any combination of kindergarten through eighth grade;
  - (b) a seventh and eighth grade school, which comprises the basic education program for grades 7 and 8 that may be funded at the high school rate pursuant to 20-9-396, MCA;
  - (c) a junior high school, which offers the basic education program for grades 7 through 9;
  - (d) a middle school, which offers education programs for grades 4 through 8 or any

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- combination thereof; and
- (e) a high school, which offers the educational programs for grades 9 through 12 or grades 10 through 12 when operating in conjunction with a junior high school.
- (55) "School administrator" means a person who is a part of the school's administrative or supervisory staff and who holds a Class 3 license and is appropriately endorsed, or who is enrolled in a Board of Public Education approved administrator internship program under ARM 10.57.114
- (56) "School district" means the territory, regardless of county boundaries, organized under the provisions of Title 20, MCA to provide public educational services under the jurisdiction of the local board of trustees. A high school district may encompass all or parts of the territory of one or more elementary districts. "School district" refers to all state-funded special purpose schools that are accredited under this chapter.
- (57) "School system" means the administrative unit of a district or combination of districts. In Montana, types of school systems are as follows:
- (a) "combined elementary-high school district" means an elementary district and a high school district which are combined into a single school system for district administration purposes;
  - (b) "independent high school district" means a district organized for the purpose of providing public education for all or any combination of grades 9 through 12; and
  - (c) "independent elementary school district" means a district organized for the purpose of providing public education for all or any combination of grades kindergarten through grade 8.
- (58) "Stakeholder Engagement" means a measurable, inclusive, intentional, and ongoing process of communicating to, learning from, and partnering with stakeholders to best support continuous school improvement and learning outcomes for all students.
- (59) "Stakeholders" means community members who are involved and invested in districts, schools, programs, and outcomes for students. Stakeholders include students, families, educators, leaders, business and community leaders, and the many partners who support them.
- (60) "State accountability system" means federally mandated academic measures and Montana defined flex indicator(s) within the annual meaningful differentiation process.
- (61) "Student growth" means changes in student learning as measured from one point in time to another as determined by state or local measures, or both. The federal accountability system uses a growth model to demonstrate student learning across time as measured by statewide assessments.
- (62) "Student performance standards" means measurement of student performance proficiency on annual state level summative assessments and graduation rates used to determine the accreditation status of a school.
- (63) "Superintendent" means a person who holds a valid Montana Class 3 educator license, with an applicable superintendent's endorsement, or who is enrolled in a Board of Public

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Education approved superintendent internship program under ARM 10.57.114.

- (64) "Synchronous" means occurring at the same time. "Synchronous" refers to instruction and communication between participants (i.e., students and teachers) that occurs at the same time even though they may be in different physical locations. For example, instruction in which students and teachers are online at the same time so that a question can be immediately answered.
- (65) "Teacher" means a person, except a district superintendent, who holds a valid Montana educator license issued by the Superintendent of Public Instruction under the policies adopted by the Board of Public Education and who is employed by a district as a member of its instructional, supervisory, or administrative staff. This definition of a teacher includes a person for whom an emergency authorization of employment has been issued under the provisions of 20-4-111, MCA.
- (66) "Technology-delivered learning" means instruction and content digitally delivered via technologies.
- (67) "Variance to standard" means an alternate approach to meeting or exceeding the minimum standards.
- (68) "Work-based learning" means sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in- depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks of a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.

**10.55.603 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT**

- (1) Local school districts shall develop and implement a proficiency-based learning model that includes curriculum aligned to all content standards and appropriate learning progressions.
- (2) School districts shall review, update, and align their learning programs following or after the state's schedule for revising standards.
- (3) School districts shall assess all students' progression, growth, and proficiency of content standards and content-specific grade-band learning progressions in each program area as aligned with ARM 10.55.603(5). The district shall use multiple measures , including state-level achievement information obtained by administration of assessments pursuant to ARM 10.56.101 to examine the learning program and measure its effectiveness.
  - (a) This examination of program effectiveness using assessment results shall include current students and be supplemented with information about graduates and other students no longer in attendance; and
  - (b) The information obtained shall be considered in curriculum and assessment development.
- (4) For content standards in all program areas pursuant to the requirements of ARM 10.55.602, school districts shall:
  - (a) establish curriculum and assessment development processes as a cooperative effort

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- of personnel licensed and endorsed in the program area and trustees, administrators, other teachers, students, specialists, families, community members, and, when appropriate, tribal representatives and state resource staff;
- (b) review curricula at least every five years or consistent with the state's standards revision schedule, and modify, as needed, to meet the goals of the integrated action plan pursuant to ARM 10.55.601;
  - (c) review materials and resources necessary for implementation of the curriculum and assessment at least every five years, or consistent with the state's standards revision schedule, that are consistent with the goals of the integrated action plan pursuant to ARM 10.55.601; and
  - (d) review curricula and instructional materials and resources to ensure the inclusion of the distinct and unique cultural heritages and contemporary portrayal of American Indians.
- (5) The school district shall develop and implement an assessment plan that supports progression, growth and proficiency, promotes demonstrations of student learnings, and measures student progress ensuring alignment to the local curriculum in all program areas pursuant to ARM 10.56.101.
- (a) The assessment plan shall be included in the integrated action plan pursuant to ARM 10.55.601 and be in place within two years following the development of local curriculum.
  - (b) School districts shall use appropriate multiple measures and methods, including state-level achievement information obtained by administration of assessments pursuant to the requirements of ARM 10.56.101, to assess student growth and proficiency of content standards and content-specific grade-band learning progressions in all program areas.
  - (c) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop criteria and procedures for the selection of appropriate multiple measures and methods to be used to assess student growth and proficiency of content standards and appropriate content-specific grade-band learning progressions in all program areas.
  - (d) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide technical assistance to districts to meet the criteria and procedures in (5)(c).

**10.55.604 VARIANCES TO STANDARDS**

- (1) A local board of trustees may apply to the Board of Public Education through the Superintendent of Public Instruction to implement variance to an assurance standard or a section of assurance standards, excluding standards stating statutory criteria, standards pertaining to educator licensure or endorsement, and content standards as defined by the Board of Public Education and provided in guidance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- (a) In its application, the local board of trustees shall outline how and why its proposed variance would be workable, educationally sound, and designed to meet or exceed results under established standards and, where applicable, aligned with program standards under ARM 10.55.1101 through 10.55.2201.
  - (b) In its application, the school district shall provide evidence through official minutes of the board of trustees that local school community stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed variance to an assurance standard

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- or a section of assurance standards. Stakeholder groups include trustees, administrators, teachers, classified school staff, families, community members, and students as applicable. A district shall provide evidence it adopted its application for variance at an official, properly noticed meeting of its board of trustees.
- (c) An application for variance to an assurance standard or a section of assurance standards is due in writing to the Superintendent of Public Instruction no later than the second Monday in October for the current academic year.
  - (d) Upon receipt, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall refer applications for variance to an assurance standard or a section of assurance standards to a pre-appointed review board. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall facilitate and provide organizational support for the meetings of the review board.
    - (i) The review board shall consist of the following, appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and approved by the Board of Public Education: one trustee, one district superintendent, one high school principal, one elementary principal, two high school teachers, two elementary school teachers, one tribal council representative, and one family or community representative.
    - (ii) The review board members shall serve five-year terms with no limit to the number of terms any one person may serve. Terms shall be staggered where half of all positions shall be filled every three years prior to the first meeting of the review board in the third year.
  - (e) The review board shall review all applications and use a uniform rubric, made available to districts in advance of applying to implement a variance to an assurance standard or section of assurance standards. The uniform rubric will ensure consistent and high-quality applications from school districts across Montana.
  - (f) The review board shall provide its recommendations to the Superintendent of Public Instruction with a recommendation for approval, modification, or rejection of the review board's recommendation within 60 calendar days of the review board being referred an application.
  - (g) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide the Board of Public Education with a recommendation for approval, modification, or rejection of the review board's recommendation.
  - (h) If the Superintendent of Public Instruction or review board finds an application to be preliminarily deficient, the superintendent shall advise the applicant school district why that application is not ready for consideration. The applicant district shall have the opportunity to change its application as suggested or submit it as originally proposed.
- (2) The Board of Public Education shall approve or deny proposed variances to assurance standards. If the board denies a proposed variance to assurance standards, it shall remit in writing to the applicant school district why it has done so.
  - (3) If the Board of Public Education approves a proposed variance to assurance standards, it shall initially do so for no more than two years pending ongoing review of the implementation by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
  - (4) Following the second year of implementation of a variance to assurance standards, the

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school district shall provide evidence to the Superintendent of Public Instruction that the methods selected by the district implement, meet, or exceed results that could have been achieved under established standards.

- (5) If the Superintendent of Public Instruction finds the variance is workable, educationally sound, the Superintendent shall report findings and recommend continued approval to the Board of Public Education.
- (6) If the Board of Public Education concurs with the Superintendent's recommendation, it may renew the variance for no more than three years.
- (7) The Board of Public Education may subsequently renew the variance provided the district continues to show how the variance meets or exceeds established standards.
- (8) If the Superintendent of Public Instruction finds the variance to assurance standards is not working as intended or does not meet or exceed results that could be achieved under established standards, the superintendent shall recommend to the Board of Public Education that the variance be revoked.
- (9) If the Board of Public Education accepts the Superintendent's recommendation to revoke a variance, the board's decision is final.
- (10) A school district may discontinue an approved variance at any time. If it does so, it shall promptly notify the Superintendent of Public Instruction in writing.

**10.55.605 CATEGORIES OF ACCREDITATION**

1. Accredited with distinction means the school has met the assurance standards and exceeded student performance standards as defined in ARM 10.55.606 and the Licensure Endorsement Requirements related to teaching assignments, a copy of which the Superintendent of Public Instruction must make publicly available. Three consecutive years in the accredited with distinction status, allows the local board of trustees to waive assurance standards for the school for three years.
2. Accredited means the school has met the assurance standards with minor and/or few deviations from the standards and met or exceeded the student performance standards as defined and delineated in ARM 10.55.606, the Licensure Endorsement Requirements Related to Teaching Assignments, and in the Accreditation Status Criteria Reference Guide, a copy of which, the Superintendent of Public Instruction must make publicly available.
3. Accredited on probation status means the school exhibits serious and/or numerous deviations from the assurance standards and/or does not meet the student performance standards as defined and delineated in ARM 10.55.606, the Licensure Endorsement Requirements Related to Teaching Assignments, and in the Accreditation Status Criteria Reference Guide, a copy of which the Superintendent of Public Instruction must make publicly available. For a district with a school accredited on probation status, the district administrator, and the chair of the local board of trustees shall submit to the

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Superintendent of Public Instruction a corrective plan, including a systematic procedure and timeline for resolving the deviations noted. Schools identified as accredited on probation will be required to participate in an annual review of progress from the Office of Public Instruction. If a school has three consecutive years on probation, the school shall be placed into the intensive assistance process.

4. A school seeking initial accreditation or reinstatement of accreditation shall meet the requirements of accreditation outlined in (2). This process shall include an on-site review from the Office of Public Instruction.

**10.55.606 ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

- (1) The categories of accreditation of a school shall be determined by using two sets of standards:
  - (b) assurance standards; and
  - (c) student performance standards.
- (2) Assurance standards are comprised of the following subchapters in ARM Title 10, chapter 55:
  - (a) Subchapter 6: General Provisions, ARM 10.55.601 through 10.55.608;
  - (b) Subchapter 7: School Leadership, ARM 10.55.701 through 10.55.724;
  - (c) Subchapter 8: Educational Opportunity, ARM 10.55.801 through 10.55.806;
  - (d) Subchapter 9: Academic Requirements, ARM 10.55.901 through 10.55.910; and
  - (e) Subchapter 10: Program Area Standards, ARM 10.55.1001 through 10.55.2201
- (3) Student performance standards are comprised of measures required under ARM 10.56.101(3) and other measures described in the state accountability system, defined in ARM 10.55.602, recommended by the state superintendent and approved by the Board of Public Education .
  - (a) Board of Public Education shall annually review the minimum requirement, defined in ARM 10.55.602, for reporting valid and reliable student group results and to protect student privacy based on the recommendation of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
  - (b) The State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall recommend to the Board of Public Education modifications to the student performance standards after consultation with representative stakeholders.
- (4) For schools with only combinations of grades PK-2, only the assurance standards shall be used to determine accreditation status, pursuant to ARM 10.55.605 Categories of Accreditation.
- (5) Categories of assurance standards and student performance standards shall be used to determine accreditation status.
- (6) A school shall be designated accredited with distinction by using the combined results of accredited status for assurance standards and distinguished status for student performance results, where 80% of students are proficient or advanced and/or obtain an 80% or higher graduation rate.

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- (7) A school shall be designated accredited status by using the combined results of both assurance standards and student performance standards in accredited or as stated in ARM 10.55.605.
- (8) A school shall be designated in accredited on probation status by using the combined results of the assurance standards and student performance standards in accredited with probation for either set of standards, or as stated in ARM 10.55.605.

**10.57.114 INTERNSHIPS (Formerly 10.55.607)**

**10.55.608 Charter School Application**

- (1) A school district with the approval of the local board of trustees may apply to the Board of Public Education through the Superintendent of Public Instruction to form a charter school.
  - (a) A charter school must provide an education that meets or exceeds the requirements of the Montana Constitution, state law, and student performance standards.
  - (b) The Board of Public Education may only grant charters to publicly funded schools or programs under the supervision and control of a locally elected board of trustees in an existing school district.
  - (c) The procedure by which a school district may apply to create a charter school and by which the Board of Public Education may approve, deny, evaluate, and renew a charter school shall be identical to that outlined in ARM 10.55.604.
  - (d) To be proposed by a local board of trustees and approved by the Board of Public Education, a charter school shall, at a minimum, guarantee the following:
    - (i) school district governance and control;
    - (ii) unrestricted, open student access;
    - (iii) compliance with all health and safety laws;
    - (iv) teacher licensure and endorsement to the same extent as required or provided by state law or accreditation standards;
    - (v) employee collective bargaining to the same extent as required or provided by state law; and
    - (vi) a plan for consideration of input by community members and staff as to formation and implementation issues. Consideration of input may be identified by formation of advisory committees involving staff and/or community members, conduct of a properly noticed public meeting for purposes of comment on the formation or operation of the charter school, or any other reasonable means that result in an opportunity for input by staff and community members prior to a decision of significant interest to the public regarding the formation or operation of the charter school.
  - (e) Charter school applications cannot include standards stating statutory criteria, assurance standards pertaining to Subchapter 6, General Provisions, ARM 10.55.601 through 10.55.606, 10.57.114, 10.55.719 to 10.55.721, or Subchapter 8, Educational Opportunity, ARM 10.55.801 to 10.55.806, assurance standards pertaining to educator licensure or endorsement, student performance standards, and content standards as defined by the Board of Public Education and provided in guidance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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- (f) A school district may discontinue an approved charter school at any time. If it does so, it shall promptly notify the Board of Public Education in writing.

**10.55.701 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- (1) The local board of trustees shall ensure that the school district complies with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- (2) Each school district shall make available to the staff and public:
  - (a) integrated action plan that includes a graduate profile as outlined in ARM 10.55.601;
  - (b) sequential K-12 curriculum; for each program area that aligns to the content standards, grade-band learning progressions, and program area standards;
  - (c) policies establishing student assessment procedures that ensure evaluation of the district's curriculum and student learning. These procedures shall specify how and when data are to be collected, analyzed, and reported; and
  - (d) descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the local board of trustees, superintendent, and personnel employed by the school district.
- (3) The local board of trustees shall establish conditions that contribute to a positive school climate which:
  - (a) implement family and community engagement strategies as found in ARM 10.55.722; and
  - (b) engage in a continuous school improvement process;
- (4) The local board of trustees shall develop, with stakeholder input, a district mission and vision that aligns to the district graduate profile.
- (5) The local board of trustees with meaningful stakeholder involvement shall establish and implement policies that:
  - (a) provide for the safety and well-being of all students;
  - (b) emphasize student learning and each student's growth;
  - (c) allow for personalized and proficiency-based learning models; and
  - (d) other policies for the effective operation of the school district.

**10.55.702 LICENSURE AND DUTIES OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR – DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT**

- (1) The district superintendent shall be:
  - (a) appropriately licensed and endorsed in accordance with state statutes and Board of Public Education rules; or
  - (b) considered appropriately assigned if the superintendent is enrolled in an internship program as defined in ARM 10.55.602 and meets the requirements of ARM 10.57.114
- (2) A superintendent intern shall be supervised throughout the year by a licensed and

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endorsed superintendent contracted by the district, including participation in, and review of, and written concurrence in all performance evaluations of licensed staff completed by the intern.

- (3) The district superintendent shall perform administrative duties in accordance with 20-4-402, MCA.

**10.55.703 LICENSURE AND DUTIES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

- (1) The school principal shall:
  - (a) be appropriately licensed and endorsed in accordance with state statutes and Board of Public Education rules; or
  - (b) be considered appropriately assigned if the principal is enrolled in an internship as defined in ARM 10.55.602 and meets the requirements of ARM 10.57.114.
- (2) Supervision of the principal intern shall be provided throughout the year by the district superintendent, county superintendent, or in the absence of either, a licensed and endorsed superintendent contracted by the district. Such supervision shall include participation in, and review of, and written concurrence in all performance evaluations of licensed staff completed by the intern.
- (3) The principal shall carry out the district's policies and procedures, provide instructional leadership that allows for personalized and proficiency-based learning models, engage in strategic planning and school improvement, intentionally engage families and community members, ensure a positive school climate, and be responsible for the effective day-to-day operation of the school, the management of finances, materials, and human resources to maximize student learning outcomes.

**10.55.704 ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL: ASSIGNMENT OF DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS**

- (1) The assignment of licensed superintendents for all configurations of school systems shall be determined by the local board of trustees, who recognize that in order to have a quality school system, leadership and leadership stability matter. The employment, assignment, functions, and duties of superintendents must comply with 20-4-401 MCA, 20-4-402 MCA and 20-3-207 MCA. The local board of trustees shall hire a district superintendent when:
  - (a) It is the operation of a County High School, except the trustees may employ a Class 3 holder with a district superintendent endorsement as the county high school principal in lieu of a superintendent.
  - (b) The trustees of any high school district that operates under a separate board of trustees due to alternate methods of electing members of the high school board of trustees and the trustees of the elementary district where its high school building is located shall jointly employ and appoint a district superintendent.
  - (c) Whenever a joint board of trustees has been formed by a county high school and the elementary district where the county high school is located, the joint board shall jointly employ and appoint a district superintendent.
  - (d) The trustees of any other district may employ and appoint a district superintendent or when practicable seek the services of the county school superintendent as

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outlined in 20-3-207, MCA to assist with the supervision or other support requirements identified by the county superintendent (e.g., employ a principal, subcontract with a licensed superintendent).

- (2) When a district superintendent is employed, the trustees shall enter into a minimum of a one-year negotiated contract with the superintendent but can negotiate up to three-years. Renewal of contracts must comply with 20-4-401, MCA.
- (3) Based on the enrollment of a school system and the scope, functions, and duties of the superintendent, the district superintendent is encouraged to recommend to the local board of trustees the assignment of additional staff (e.g., assistant superintendents, coordinators, directors, supervisors) to assist with the operation of the school district to provide a quality education that results in actualized learning outcomes and the safety and wellness of students.
- (4) (4) School systems with 100 or more full-time equivalency (FTE) licensed staff shall employ a full-time curriculum coordinator to supervise the educational program and alignment of standards, assessment, curriculum, instruction, and instructional materials. The curriculum coordinator shall hold a Class 3 administrative license. Those districts with fewer than 100 FTE licensed staff and no full-time curriculum coordinator shall employ the services of a consortium, multidistrict collaborative, or interlocal cooperative, or a part-time, designated curriculum coordinator.

**10.55.705 ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL: ASSIGNMENT OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS/PRINCIPALS**

- (1) The assignment of licensed school administrators/principals for all configurations of school systems shall be recommended by the district superintendent or county superintendent to the local board of trustees based on the scope, functions, and duties of the administrator/principal outlined in ARM 10.55.703, who recognize that in order to have a quality school system, leadership and leadership stability matter. Further it is recognized that principals and assistant principals are the school leaders whose impact is second only to the classroom teacher in quality student learning outcomes and the safety and well-being of students.
  - (a) Local board of trustees may employ a principal/superintendent combination to lead their school districts.
  - (b) Local board of trustee shall ensure that administrator/principal duties shall be met through the employment of a superintendent/principal or, where practicable, seek the needed services of the county superintendent in a school district with fewer than 125 students.
  - (c) A school district must assign licensed school administrator/principal full or partial FTE based on scope, function, and responsibilities for a school district with an enrollment of 125 students or more.
- (2) Dependent on the student enrollment of the school and the scope, function, and responsibility of a principal/administrator, local boards of trustees are encouraged to set staffing levels of principals/administrators that will provide a quality education that results in learning outcomes and supports the safety and wellness of students.

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- (a) Trustees may employ and assign a principal/superintendent combination to lead their school districts;
  - (b) Trustees may assign a supervising teacher and/or county superintendent to fill the duties of the principal in schools; or
  - (c) Trustees may assign a licensed school administrator/principal at a partial or full-time equivalency.
- (3) Additional administrator/principal FTE may be recommended by the district or county superintendent to the local board of trustees for consideration at any time during the school year.

**10.55.706 TEACHER INVOLVEMENT**

- (1) Teachers should use their professional judgment and measures of student growth and proficiency to provide engaging and highly effective instruction to all students based on individual need.
- (2) Teachers shall be involved in curriculum development and student assessments and in the promotion of a school climate that enhances student learning, achievement, and well-being.

**10.55.707 TEACHER AND SPECIALIST LICENSURE**

- 1) Teachers and specialists shall be:
  - (a) appropriately licensed and endorsed in accordance with state statutes and Board of Public Education rules; or
  - (b) considered appropriately assigned if enrolled in an internship as defined in ARM 10.55.602 and meet the requirements of ARM 10.57.114
- (2) The school district shall arrange for a licensed and endorsed teacher in the content area to provide periodic support to the intern.
- (3) School psychologists shall be licensed under ARM 10.57.432(1) or 10.57.433 and 10.57.434, or considered appropriately assigned if they are enrolled in an internship as defined in ARM 10.55.602 and meet the requirements of ARM 10.57.114.
- (4) School counselors shall be:
  - (a) licensed under ARM 10.57.432(2) or 10.57.433 and 10.57.435; or
  - (b) considered appropriately assigned if they hold a Class 1 or 2 license and are enrolled in an internship as defined in ARM 10.55.602 and meet the requirements of ARM 10.57.114.
- (5) All personnel whose qualifications are not outlined in ARM Title 10, Chapter 57 must have a license issued by the appropriate state or federal licensing agent or national registry if required by the existing rules and regulations.

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**10.55.708 TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS**

- (1) Teachers shall be assigned at the levels and in the subjects for which they are licensed and endorsed, unless they are enrolled in an internship as defined in ARM 10.55.602 and meet the requirements of ARM 10.57.114.
- (2) Teachers assigned in grade 5 or 6 in the departmentalized classroom or middle school, who hold a 5-12 secondary license, must be endorsed in the subjects they are teaching.
- (3) Licensure at the elementary level entitles the holder to teach in grades K through 8.

**10.55.709 LIBRARY MEDIA SERVICES, K-12**

- (1) Each school must have a library media and literacy information program aligned to the content standards in ARM 10.53.1201 and the program standards in ARM 10.55.1801 that results in student learning outcomes for media and information literacy.
- (2) Based on the needs of the district, in concert with national and state program standards, the superintendent must recommend to the local board of trustees the assignment of library media staff to provide library media and information literacy services that result in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students need by:
  - (a) employing licensed and endorsed library media specialist(s); or
  - (b) contracting with a licensed and endorsed school library media specialist; or
  - (c) utilizing a consortium, multidistrict agreement, interlocal cooperative, or
  - (d) utilizing any other cooperative method that is authorized to secure these services.

**10.55.710 ASSIGNMENT OF SCHOOL COUNSELING STAFF**

- (1) Each school must have a school counseling program for K-12 students aligned to delivery standards in ARM 10.55.1901 and national counselor and student standards. The school system will assess the need for student supports that result in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students need to:
  - (a) address mental health, safety, and well-being;
  - (b) achieve academic success and college and career readiness; and
  - (c) develop the mindsets and behaviors as identified in the national school counseling standards.
- (2) Based on the needs of the district in concert with national and state standards the superintendent must recommend to the local board of trustees the assignment of counseling staff based on the capacity of individual counselors to provide school counseling programming and services by:
  - (a) employing licensed school counselor(s) or Class 6 specialist(s); or
  - (b) contracting licensed school counselor(s) or Class 6 specialist(s); or
  - (c) utilizing a consortium, multidistrict agreement, or interlocal cooperative to secure these services; or
  - (d) utilizing any other cooperative method that is authorized to secure these services.

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- (3) Based on the student need and school population(s) the district superintendent must recommend to the local board of trustees, the assignment of additional degreed, licensed, or credentialed staff (e.g., school counselors, school psychologists, career advisors, licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, behaviorists, other mental health professionals, and/or other resources) that supports the staffing levels based on evidence-based research and national counseling standards.

**10.55.711 GENERAL: CLASS SIZE AND TEACHER LOAD**

Repealed

**10.55.712 CLASS SIZE: ELEMENTARY**

- (1) In single grade rooms, the maximum class size shall be:
  - (a) No more than 20 students in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2;
  - (b) no more than 28 students in grades 3 and 4;
  - (c) no more than 30 students in grades 5 through 8.
- (2) In multigrade classrooms, the maximum class size shall be:
  - (a) no more than 20 students in grades K, 1, 2, and 3;
  - (b) no more than 24 students in grades 4, 5, and 6;
  - (c) no more than 26 students in grades 7 and 8.
- (3) Multigrade classrooms that cross grade-level boundaries (e.g., 3-4, 6-7) shall use the maximum of the lower grade.
- (4) In one-teacher schools, the maximum class size shall be 18 students.
- (5) The school district must provide additional human resources when exceeding maximum class sizes.
- (6) An overload of no more than five students per classroom is considered excessive.

**10.55.713 TEACHER LOAD AND CLASS SIZE: HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR HIGH, MIDDLE SCHOOL, AND GRADES 7 AND 8 FUNDED AT HIGH SCHOOL RATES**

No recommended changes

**10.55.714 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- (1) Professional development:
  - (a) shall be aligned with the district graduate profile and educational goals outlined in the district integrated action plan described in ARM 10.55.601;
  - (b) is focused to enable educators to ensure that safety, well-being, and mental health of students is provided;

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- (c) focuses on teachers as central to student learning and includes all other members of the school community;
  - (d) focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational learning, reflection, and growth;
  - (e) respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community by incorporating active learning and adult learning theory;
  - (f) reflects research and demonstrates models of effective practice in teaching, learning, and leadership;
  - (g) enables teachers to develop further experience in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards;
  - (h) offers opportunities for feedback and reflection;
  - (i) is ongoing and sustained;
  - (j) is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development;
  - (k) requires substantial time, other resources, and where practical provides coaching and expert support;
  - (l) is job-embedded to encourage teachers to meet, share, collaborate, and grow their practice;
  - (m) is driven by a coherent long-term plan; and
  - (n) is evaluated on the impact of professional development on teacher effectiveness and student learning, and the results of this assessment guides subsequent professional development.
- (2) Teachers and specialists shall annually complete professional development pursuant to the requirements of 20-1-304 and 20-4-304, MCA, including a minimum of three pupil instruction related (PIR) days dedicated exclusively to professional development.
- (a) A professional development PIR day shall constitute six hours of contact time.
  - (b) A school district may divide a professional development PIR day into no fewer than two-hour blocks of contact time.
  - (c) A professional development block may be held on the same day as a pupil instruction day, but a school district shall not schedule a professional development PIR day to convene simultaneously with a pupil instruction day.
- (3) The local board of trustees shall establish an advisory committee to evaluate the school district's current school year professional development plan; and develop and recommend a plan for the subsequent school year, which is a required component of the integrated action plan outlined in ARM 10.55.601.
- (a) The advisory committee shall include, but not be limited to, trustees, administrators, and teachers. A majority of the committee shall be teachers.
  - (b) Each school year the local board of trustees shall adopt a professional development plan embedded in the district integrated action plan for the subsequent school year based on the recommendation of the advisory committee.
  - (c) The plan recommended by the advisory committee and adopted by the local board of trustees shall outline how, when, and from whom teachers and specialists shall meet their professional development PIR day expectations.
  - (d) The plan adopted by the local board of trustees must take into consideration the advisory committee's recommendations and include two professional development PIR days in October during which schools must close in order to permit teachers and

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- specialists to attend the annual professional development meetings of state professional associations.
- (e) The adopted plan may include alternatives but shall not interfere with or prohibit teacher and specialist attendance at the annual October professional development meetings of state professional associations.
  - (f) Teachers and specialists who do not attend the annual professional development October meetings of state professional associations or school district plan approved alternative professional development PIR days shall not be paid for the days they are absent.
  - (g) Teachers, specialists, administrators, and school districts shall not substitute for professional development PIR day purposes professional development opportunities not specifically outlined in the school district's adopted professional development plan. The local board of trustees shall make their plan available to employees and the public.

**10.55.715 INSTRUCTIONAL PARAPROFESSIONALS: QUALIFICATIONS AND SUPERVISION**

No recommended changes

**10.55.716 SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

- (1) Substitute teachers may be used for extended teacher absences under the following conditions:
  - (a) In cases where a regular, licensed teacher under contract is temporarily unable, by reason of illness or for other reasons approved by the local board of trustees, to fulfill the teacher's duties, substitute teachers may be employed to carry on the duties of that teacher's position for a period not to exceed 35 consecutive teaching days. Such substitutes need not hold a current license, but preference shall be given to those substitutes who are properly licensed.
  - (b) If the absence of the regular, licensed, or authorized teacher continues for more than 35 consecutive teaching days, the substitute may be placed under contract if licensed or the local board of trustees shall place a licensed teacher under contract. If the local board of trustees makes a written declaration to the Superintendent of Public Instruction that no licensed teacher is available, the district shall pursue the employment of a teacher authorized under the provisions of ARM 10.57.107.
- (2) Any nonlicensed substitute teacher shall complete a minimum of three hours of training, as approved by the local board of trustees.
- (3) Any nonlicensed substitute teacher must have received a high school diploma or have attained a passing score on the general education development assessment.
- (4) A district that employs a nonlicensed substitute teacher must conduct a fingerprint-based background check of that individual according to the following procedures:
  - (a) The nonlicensed substitute teacher must present a complete set of fingerprints to a qualified law enforcement agency to be submitted to the school district.

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- (b) The district shall not employ the nonlicensed substitute teacher until state and federal authorities have reported the results of the background check or until the district has conducted a reference check of the individual.
- (c) The district shall consider the information obtained from the results of the fingerprint-based background check under the provisions of Title 37, chapter 1, part 2, MCA, governing the licensure of criminal offenders and under 20-4-110, MCA. Conviction, including conviction following a plea of nolo contendere, a conviction in which the sentence is suspended or deferred, or any other adjudication treated by the court as a conviction, may be considered by the district as grounds for removal from the classroom if the conviction was for a sexual offense, theft, or any other crime meeting the criteria of Title 37, chapter 1, part 2, MCA.

**10.55.717 ASSIGNMENT OF PERSONS PROVIDING INSTRUCTION TO BRAILLE STUDENTS**

- (1) No licensed or classified employee of a school district, cooperative, or any contracted service provider shall be assigned to provide instruction of Braille to a student or produce Braille materials who has not demonstrated competency in "contracted" (grade two) standard literary Braille code by:
  - (a) successful completion of a program, for teaching visually impaired students, from an approved educator preparation program as defined in 10.57.102; or
  - (b) successful completion of the National Certification in Unified English Braille Test and maintenance of that certificate; or
  - (c) successful completion of the Unified English Braille Exam (Washington State School for the Blind) and ongoing maintenance; or
  - (d) successful completion of the Literary Braille Transcribing Course available through National Federation of the Blind.
- (2) The employing agency (school district and/or cooperative) is responsible for:
  - (a) monitoring appropriate assignment of personnel under (1);
  - (b) assuring personnel working towards certification are making adequate gains in their coursework; and
  - (c) assuring maintenance of certification.
- (3) Any person under (1) shall have two years, from the date that the individual has been initially assigned to provide instruction in Braille or to produce Braille materials, to successfully pass the testing requirements.
- (4) A person who has met the requirements of (1) shall maintain their facility with "contracted" (grade two) standard literary Braille code through continuing education opportunities.
- (5) For the purposes of (4), an approved provider of continuing education may include any entity approved by the Montana Office of Public Instruction and/or the Montana Board of Education.
- (6) Individuals who seek to remain eligible to work with visually impaired students are responsible for documenting completion of continuing education. Such individuals will provide a copy of their documentation to their employing school district.

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- (7) If a paraprofessional, who has not successfully met the requirements found in (1), is assigned to work with a student who has a visual impairment, the paraprofessional will be supervised by the designated special education teacher in collaboration with a teacher of the visually impaired who holds a credential from an approved educator preparation program as defined in ARM 10.57.102. In addition, the assigned paraprofessional and the school district shall meet the requirements contained in (1) within two years of the date a student with a visual impairment has been identified as in need of Braille instruction and/or materials.

**10.55.718 ASSIGNMENT OF PERSONS PROVIDING SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING**

- (1) Effective July 1, 2011, and notwithstanding (3), no licensed or classified employee of any school district, cooperative, or contracted service provider shall be regularly assigned to provide educational sign language interpreting for a student(s) unless the employee has demonstrated skills and knowledge, at a 3.5 level or higher, on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) and passed the written portion of the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment.
- (2) Substitute employees of any school district, cooperative, or contracted service provider temporarily assigned to provide educational sign language interpreting for a student(s) for a period longer than 35 consecutive teaching days shall meet the standard in (1).
- (3) An employee who has not met the qualifications in (1), but who has demonstrated a competency level of 2.5 or higher on the EIPA or a score commensurate with a competency level of 2.5 or higher on the EIPA Pre-Hire Assessment, may be assigned to provide educational sign language interpreting services. Such individuals shall have three years, from date of initial assignment, or the effective date of this rule, to demonstrate competency as described in (1).
- (4) The employing entity (school district, cooperative, or contracting service provider) is responsible for providing appropriate assignment of personnel (directly) and/or use of appropriate technologies.
- (5) Employees who have met the requirements in (1) and who seek to remain eligible to work as educational sign language interpreters are responsible for documenting a completion of 12 clock hours of professional development and/or Office of Public Instruction professional development units per calendar year related to the improvement of educational interpreting, performance, and knowledge skills. Such individuals will provide documentation of completion to their employing school district, cooperative, or contracting agency.
- (6) For purposes of (5), approved providers of continuing educational opportunities shall include any entity approved by the Montana Office of Public Instruction or the Montana Board of Public Education.

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**10.55.719 STUDENT PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

No recommended changes

**10.55.720 SUICIDE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

No recommended changes

**10.55.721 HAZARD AND EMERGENCY PLANS**

- (1) A local board of trustees shall adopt a policy addressing a school safety plan or emergency operations plan. The plan required by this rule shall be periodically reviewed with stakeholder input and updated as determined necessary by the trustees based on changing circumstances pertaining to school safety.
- (2) The plan shall include:
  - (a) identification and assessment of the risks posed by potential local hazards within the boundaries of its school district;
  - (b) designing and incorporating regularly conducted disaster drills to address the hazards identified pursuant to (1);
  - (c) prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery before, during, and after an event; and
  - (d) training.

**10.55.722 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- (1) The local board of trustees shall implement a comprehensive family and community engagement plan that:
  - (a) is aligned to the district integrated action plan required in ARM 10.55.601;
  - (b) includes effective engagement practices that are linked to relational, developmental, collaborative, and interactive learning;
  - (c) family and school staff have a shared responsibility in the learning of their child(ren) as evidenced by the following core beliefs:
    - (i) families have dreams for their children and want the best for them;
    - (ii) all families have the capacity to support their children's learning;
    - (iii) family and school staff are partners; and
    - (iv) the responsibility for cultivating and sustaining an inviting and inclusive climate rests primarily with school staff; and
  - (d) meets the following goals:
    - (i) families actively participate in the life of the school and are welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class;
    - (ii) families and school staff engage in regular, two-way meaningful communication about student learning;
    - (iii) families and school staff continuously collaborate to support student learning and healthy development both at home and

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- at school and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively;
- (iv) families and school staff are empowered to advocate for children, to ensure that students are treated equitably and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success;
  - (v) families and school staff partner in decisions that affect children and families and together inform and influence policies, practices, and programs; and
  - (vi) families and school staff collaborate with members of the community to connect students, families, and staff to expand learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

**10.55.723 MENTORSHIP AND INDUCTION,**

- (1) The local board of trustees shall implement a mentorship and induction program that:
  - (a) is research-based to ensure inclusion of high- impact professional learning strategies;
  - (b) implemented to assist initial licensed and incoming educators in meeting teaching standards embedded in the district evaluation framework outlined in ARM 10.55.724;
  - (c) supports initial licensed and incoming teachers' planning, implementation, and assessment of instruction aligned to the program area and content standards and content-specific learning progressions;
  - (d) supports initial licensed and incoming teachers to establish and maintain a positive classroom climate; and
  - (e) encourages continuous learning, reflection, and growth.
- (2) The mentorship and induction program may include the following criteria:
  - (a) provide training for mentors through the Montana Teacher Learning Hub, professional organizations, or other professional development opportunities;
  - (b) prioritize mentor-mentee matches that are grade and subject-level aligned;
  - (c) focus on research-based instructional practice;
  - (d) engage with mentoring partners in professional collaboration; and
  - (e) establish effective coaching for learning methods.

**10.55.724 EVALUATION**

- (1) The local board of trustees shall ensure written evaluations of all regularly employed personnel.

**10.55.801 SCHOOL CLIMATE**

- (1) The local board of trustees shall:

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- (a) develop policies, procedures, and rules that respect the rights of all learners, promote an awareness of and concern for the well-being of others, and address bullying, intimidation, and harassment of students and school personnel;
- (b) create teaching and learning conditions that meet the district's educational goals and recruit and maintain a quality staff;
- (c) offer programs and services which, in content and presentation, endeavor to be free of stereotyping in terms of aptitude, ability, sex, political or religious ideas, race, culture, social origin or condition with prejudice toward none;
- (d) provide programs and services that meet the needs of students which the school has identified as at-risk;
- (e) inform students, parents, families, and guardians of the school's expectations and of students' rights and responsibilities;
- (f) encourage students to take responsibility for their education, including preparing for and participating in class and school activities, taking full advantage of learning services provided, helping design their educational goals, and conducting themselves respectfully and appropriately;
- (g) encourage the active involvement of parents, families, and guardians in their children's education and in their school;
- (h) provide opportunities for parents, families, guardians, educators, and members of the community to take active roles in developing and reviewing district and school educational goals; and
- (i) measure school climate through a valid and reliable tool to understand student, staff, family, and community perceptions of climate in their school and make data-driven decisions about programs and practices that could improve school climate.

**10.55.802 OPPORTUNITY AND EDUCATIONAL EQUITY**

- (1) It is the purpose of the accreditation standards to guarantee equality of educational opportunity and to respect the dignity of every person regardless of aptitude, ability, race, color, sex, culture, social origin or condition, or political or religious ideas, with prejudice toward none. This includes, but is not limited to, programs, facilities, educational materials, curriculum, counseling, library services, and extracurricular activities.

**10.55.803 LEARNER ACCESS**

- (1) Equal opportunity to learn is a primary consideration of all program areas, at all levels. In order to integrate this concept throughout the education program, the local board of trustees shall develop and implement processes that ensure each learner has access to the following:
  - (a) high quality instruction provided by a qualified educator that meets each of the following criteria:
    - a. students are engaged in authentic learning experiences that tie to their interests;
    - b. students are all included in activities and given equal opportunity;
    - c. uses formative and interim assessments to guide instruction;
    - d. supports student metacognition, self-assessment, and reflection; and
    - e. provides opportunities for individual self-direction and decision making;

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- (b) rigorous learning activities that are complex, engaging, can be accessed by all learners, and match student interests;
- (c) standards aligned curriculum and instructional materials that are place based, culturally diverse, honor differences among learners, reflect authentic historical and contemporary portrayals of American Indians, and include opportunity for choice and voice;
- (d) technology hardware and software appropriate to support individual student learning;
- (e) time for learning that includes opportunities for multiple modalities, collaboration in a variety of configurations, and student discussion;
- (f) supportive learning environment that provides a safe physical space for learning, furniture and other fixtures that provide adequate space for students to fully engage in learning activities, is accessible to all learners, regardless of physical limitations; and
- (g) other resources, such as after school programming, tutoring, paraprofessionals, counselors, librarians and libraries, and support staff.

**10.55.804 GIFTED AND TALENTED**

- (1) Districts shall provide educational services to gifted and talented students that are commensurate to their needs, foster a positive self-image, and create a supportive learning environment.
- (2) Each district shall comply with all federal and state laws and regulations addressing gifted education.
- (3) Each district shall provide structured support and assistance to teachers in identifying and meeting the diverse student needs of gifted and talented students and shall provide a framework for considering a full range of alternatives for addressing student needs.

**10.55.805 SPECIAL EDUCATION**

No recommended changes

**10.55.806: ENGLISH LEARNERS**

- (1) Districts shall provide educational services to help English Learners become proficient in English and meet state standards by creating high level language instruction programs, professional development, and family outreach.
- (2) Each district shall comply with all federal and state laws and regulations addressing English Learners.
- (3) Each district shall identify students who are eligible for language assistance, provide a sound program of instruction, assess their English proficiency annually, and notify parents of their initial placement in, progress within, and exit from the language program.

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**10.55.901 BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM: ELEMENTARY**

- (1) An elementary school shall have an education program aligned to the program area standards that the content standards and content-specific grade-band learning progressions and recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritages of American Indians.
- (2) Instruction in reading literacy and writing literacy shall be incorporated into all required and elective program areas as required in the Montana Content Standards, ARM 10.53.101.

**10.55.902 BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM: MIDDLE GRADES**

- ( 1 ) A school with middle grades must have an education program aligned to the program area standards that the content standards and content-specific grade-band learning progressions and recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritages of American Indians.
- (2) Instruction in reading literacy and writing literacy shall be incorporated into all required and elective program areas as required in the Montana Content Standards, ARM 10.53.101.
- (3) At a minimum, the following program areas as aligned with ARM 10.55.603 and ARM 10.55.1001 are required of all students yearly:
  - (a) English language arts;
  - (b) mathematics;
  - (c) sciences;
  - (d) social studies;
  - (e) health and physical education; and
  - (f) elective/exploratory offerings at the discretion of the local board of trustees to provide a minimum of three of the following:
    - (i) arts (visual arts, media arts, theater arts, music, and dance);
    - (ii) career and technical education;
    - (iii) computer science;
    - (iv) world languages; and
    - (v) exploratory courses for example: math exploration, science exploration, business, creative writing, financial education, photography, and leadership.

**10.55.904 BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM OFFERINGS: HIGH SCHOOL**

- (1) The basic education program, aligned to the program area standards, for grades 9 through 12 shall be at least 20 units of coursework that the content standards and content-specific grade-band learning progressions and recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritages of American Indians.
- (2) Instruction in reading literacy and writing literacy shall be incorporated into all required and elective program areas as required in the Montana Content Standards, ARM Title 10, chapter 53.

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- (3) Minimum offerings shall include at least the following:
- (a) 4 units of English language arts;
  - (b) 3 units of mathematics;
  - (c) 3 units of science;
  - (d) 3 units of social studies (including ½ unit Civics or Government).
  - (e) 2 units of career and technical education;
  - (f) 2 units of arts;
  - (g) 1 unit of health and physical education;
  - (h) 2 units of world languages;
  - (i) 2 units of electives; and
  - (j) ½ unit of economics or financial literacy within the 3 units of social studies, the 3 units of math. or the 2 units of career and technical education.

**10.55.905 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

- (1) As a minimum, a school district's requirements for graduation shall include a total of 20 units of study that the content standards and content-specific grade-band learning progressions. Students may demonstrate achievement through a flexible system of pupil-centered learning.
- (2) In order for students to graduate, they must meet the content and performance standards. The following 13 units shall be part of the 20 units. The required units may be satisfied by an equivalent course that meets the district's curriculum and assessment requirements, which are aligned with each of the content standards:
- (a) 4 units of English language arts;
  - (b) 2 units of mathematics;
  - (c) 2 units of social studies (including a ½ unit of Civics or Government);
  - (d) 2 units of science.;
  - (e) 1 unit of health and physical education;
  - (f) 1 unit of art;
  - (g) 1 unit of career and technical education; and
  - (h) ½ unit of economics or financial literacy within the 2 units of social studies, the 2 units of mathematics, or the 1 unit of career and technical education.
- (3) Units of credit earned in any Montana high school accredited by the Board of Public Education shall be accepted by all Montana high schools.
- (4) In accordance with the policies of the local board of trustees, students may be graduated from high school with less than four years enrollment.

**10.55.906 HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT**

- (1) A high school shall require a minimum of 20 units of credit for graduation, including ninth grade units.
- (a) A unit of credit is defined as the equivalent of at least 8100 minutes for one year or demonstration of an equivalent course that meets the district's curriculum and

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- assessment requirements, which are aligned with each of the content standards.
- (b) Passage of time between classes may be counted toward the standard school day but shall not be counted toward class time.
- (2) A student who is unable to attend class for the required amount of time may be given fractional credit for partial completion of a course, with the local board of trustees' permission.
- (3) The local board of trustees may waive specific course requirements based on individual student needs and performance levels. Waiver requests shall also be considered with respect to age, maturity, interest, and aspirations of the students and shall be in consultation with the parents or guardians.
- (4) With the permission of the local board of trustees, a student may be given credit for a course satisfactorily completed in a period of time shorter or longer than normally required and, provided that the course meets the district's curriculum and assessment requirements, which are aligned with the content standards stated in the education program. Examples of acceptable course work include those delivered through correspondence, extension, and distance learning courses, adult education, summer school, work study, specially designed courses, and challenges to current courses. Acceptable programs must be consistent with the local board of trustees' policy.
- (a) Montana high schools shall accept such units of credit taken with the approval of the accredited Montana high school in which the student was then enrolled and which appear on the student's official high school transcript as defined in ARM 10.55.911.

**10.55.907 DISTANCE, ONLINE, AND TECHNOLOGY-DELIVERED LEARNING**

- (1) This rule establishes requirements for distance, online, and technology-delivered learning programs and/or courses that fulfill elementary or middle grades basic education programs and/or high school graduation requirements.
- (2) School districts may receive and/or provide distance, online, and technology-delivered learning programs.
- (a) School districts receiving distance, online, and technology-delivered learning programs to supplement instruction may utilize distance, online, and technology-delivered learning as they would other supplementary resources without restriction.
- (b) Distance, online, and technology-delivered learning programs and/or courses shall at a minimum be aligned with state content standards and content-specific grade-band learning progressions.
- (c) Annually, a school district shall provide a report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction documenting all distance, online and technology-delivered courses, student enrollments, and the digital content providers.
- (3) Except as provided in (3)(a), teachers of distance, online, and technology-delivered learning programs shall be licensed and endorsed in Montana or elsewhere in the area of instruction taught. School districts receiving distance, online, and technology-delivered

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learning programs described in this rule shall have a distance learning facilitator for each course and available to the students.

- (a) When a teacher of distance, online, and technology-delivered learning programs and/or courses does not possess the qualifications specified in (3), the facilitator must be licensed and endorsed in Montana or elsewhere in the area of instruction facilitated.
  - (b) When a teacher of distance, online, and technology-delivered learning programs is qualified as provided in (3), the receiving school district's facilitator shall be a licensed teacher or a para-educator.
  - (c) School districts receiving distance, online, and technology-delivered learning programs and/or courses must provide qualified facilitators for synchronous delivery to students in schools accredited by the Montana Board of Public Education, requiring physical presence of a facilitator, and for asynchronous delivery, requiring facilitators be available to students.
  - (d) The school district must ensure that the distance, online, and technology-delivered learning facilitators receive in-service training on technology-delivered instruction.
- (4) Montana school districts providing distance, online and technology-delivered learning shall comply with the teacher load requirements of ARM 10.55.713(3).
- (5) Digital content providers serving Montana schools accredited by the Board of Public Education shall:
- (a) annually, register with the Office of Public Instruction;
  - (b) annually, identify the Montana school districts served in the current school year by the digital content provider, including the courses and student enrollments for each school district served; and
  - (c) document the professional qualifications, including Montana teacher licensure and endorsement, of their teachers of distance, online, and technology-delivered programs and/or courses by providing names and credentials of other licensing entities, when not licensed and endorsed in Montana.

**10.55.908 SCHOOL FACILITIES**

- (1) School facilities shall be constructed, maintained, and supervised in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal codes, regulations, and laws.
- (2) School facilities shall be of sufficient size and arrangement to meet all programs' educational goals.
- (3) The local board of trustees shall provide for educational facilities which are functional and safe for the conduct of the educational and extracurricular activities of students, and which will meet state or federal accessibility standards.
- (4) The school shall provide the necessary equipment for first aid.
- (5) When the local board of trustees considers major remodeling or building a facility, it shall seek facility expertise in all affected program areas as well as comments from faculty, students, and community.

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- (6) The local board of trustees shall have a written policy that defines the use of school facilities and resources.

**10.55.909 STUDENT RECORDS**

No recommended changes

**10.55.910 STUDENT DISCIPLINE RECORDS**

No recommended changes

**10.55.911 OFFICIAL HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT**

No recommended changes

**10.55.1001 PROGRAM STANDARDS**

- (1) It is the local board of trustees' responsibility to ensure the district's curricula align with the state content standards and content-specific grade-band learning progressions.

**10.55.1003 PROGRAM FOUNDATION STANDARDS**

- (1) The purpose of all programs is to develop and apply knowledge and skills necessary to pursue lifelong goals and opportunities.
- (2) Program foundation standards are the common conditions and practices that will be evident in all programs within a school system to ensure that all students have educational opportunity to learn, develop, and demonstrate learning in the content standards and content-specific grade-band learning progressions. All programs shall follow the content standards in the administrative rules of Montana. The local board of trustees shall:
- (a) meet the following conditions:
    - (i) ensure integration of the history, contemporary portrayals, and contributions of American Indians, with an emphasis on Montana Indians, for all students, across all content areas;
    - (ii) ensure an educational climate that promotes academic freedom and respect for diversity with prejudice toward none;
    - (iii) maintain high expectations for student performance, behavior, and lifelong learning; and
    - (iv) encourage collaboration among school personnel to plan, assess, and support instruction.
  - (b) include the following practices:
    - (i) offer engaging and relevant experiences that enable students to develop effective communication skills in their personal lives, workplaces, and communities;

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- (ii) teach ethical behavior, including use of technology (social media) and the implications of one's choices;
- (iii) implement research-based instructional skills and strategies to improve student learning;
- (iv) challenge students to think creatively and critically, and use the inquiry process to solve problems and make informed decisions;
- (v) encourage interdisciplinary instruction;
- (vi) use relevant data to inform decision making, modify instruction, and increase student learning;
- (vii) integrate information literacy skills and technology tools, to support learning in all curricular areas; and
- (viii) provide equitable access to all facilities, technology, equipment, materials, and services necessary to support the instructional process.

**10.55.1101 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY**

- (1) In general, a basic program in English language arts and Literacy shall:
- (a) meet the following conditions:
    - (i) promote reading, writing, speaking, and listening for creative and purposeful expression in language;
    - (ii) engagement with high-quality literary and informational text that build knowledge, expand experiences, and broadens views;
    - (iii) emphasize reasoning and use of evidence that is essential for deliberation;
    - (iv) make available a variety of print and non-print materials encompassing fiction and non-fiction, classic and contemporary works, and diverse perspectives including Montana American Indian works; and
    - (v) promote critical reading that is necessary to navigate the vast amount of information available both in print and digitally;
  - (b) include the following practices:
    - (i) integrate reading, literature, writing, speaking, listening, and media literacy with a balanced approach supported by current research and/or based on best practices in the field of English language arts and Literacy;
    - (ii) emphasize multiple strategies and artistic forms to teach the conventions, demands, and responsibilities of language;
    - (iii) emphasize writing as a process;
    - (iv) provide opportunities for informal and formal speaking and listening;
    - (v) offer experiences in viewing, creating, and critically evaluating different types of media; and
    - (vi) encourage co-curricular offerings in drama, speech, debate, journalism, literary publications, and other related activities.

**10.55.1201 ARTS PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

No recommended changes

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**10.55.1301 HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

- (1) In general, a basic health and physical education program shall:
- (a) meet the following conditions:
    - (i) maintain class size in accordance with other curriculum areas;
    - (ii) focus on the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle;
    - (iii) integrate and include components of the traditional "health" and "physical education" disciplines;
    - (iv) maintain a program that meets the educational requirements of health and physical education;
    - (v) provide for the participation of all students in a health and physical education program; and
    - (vi) maintain adequate first aid materials and communication device capabilities.
  - (b) include the following practices:
    - (i) make appropriate use of technology in the curriculum;
    - (ii) give students the decision-making tools to promote personal and community responsibility;
    - (iii) address the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual dimensions of a healthy lifestyle; and
    - (iv) promote physical activity as a means to a healthy lifestyle.

**210.55.1302 HEALTH ENHANCEMENT PARTICIPATION**

Repealed

**10.55.1401 MATHEMATICS PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

No recommended changes

**10.55.1501 SCIENCE PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

No recommended changes

**10.55.1601 SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

No recommended changes

**10.55.1701 CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

- (1) In general, a basic program in career and /technical education shall:
- (a) meet the following conditions:
    - (i) skill development leading to lifelong pursuits;
    - (ii) program development in consultation with an advisory council; and

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- (iii) opportunities for authentic application, work experience, and/or articulation with postsecondary education.
- (b) include the following practices:
  - (i) foster skill development for employment, advanced training, and lifelong learning;
  - (ii) input from representatives of business and industry;
  - (iii) analysis of skills and knowledge required in paid and non-paid careers;
  - (iv) leadership character development, character, and employability skills through participation in career and technical student organizations (CTSOs);
  - (v) progression of skills and knowledge from basic to advanced; and
  - (vi) integration of career and /technical competencies with academic knowledge in a contextual setting.

**10.55.1801 LIBRARY MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

No recommended changes

**10.55.1901 SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

- (1) In general, school counseling shall:
  - (a) meet the following conditions:
    - (i) provide a comprehensive, preventive, and developmentally planned program to all students systematically;
    - (ii) develop and implement a counseling program based on data-informed decision making;
    - (iii) advocate for all students and encourage students to develop to their full potential;
    - (iv) respect the worth and dignity of all individuals by building trust and respecting confidentiality;
    - (v) value and respond to the diversity and individual differences in communities in a culturally and responsive way; and
    - (vi) contribute as an integral part of the education process that is delivered through a variety of systems by school staff, students, parents, business, and industry.
  - (b) include the following practices:
    - (i) maximize students' potential in the areas of academics, career, and personal/social development;
    - (ii) develop, implement, and assess a curriculum aligned with the ASCA national model which includes the student standards for success, mindsets, and behaviors which is presented through structured groups and classroom presentations;
    - (iii) conduct individual planning using assessment, advisement, placement, and follow-up;
    - (iv) deliver responsive services through individual and group counseling, consultation, and referral;
    - (v) provide system support through management, consultation with staff,

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- community outreach, and public relations; and
- (vi) collaborate with families, community stakeholders, and other educators to create environments resulting in positive impact on student achievement, attendance, and discipline.

**10.55.2101 WORLD LANGUAGES PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

- (1) In general, a basic program in world languages shall:
  - (a) meet the following conditions:
    - (i) consistent and continual experience with the target language and culture;
    - (ii) access to native speakers or experts, authentic cultural contact, and culturally authentic materials (e.g., print, video, audio, literature, music, art); and
    - (iii) access to technology that provides contact with the target language.
  - (b) include the following practices:
    - (i) promote confidence in practicing the language by encouraging risk-taking and minimizing verbal correction;
    - (ii) maximize use of target language in an authentic manner through student-teacher and student-student interaction; and
    - (iii) gain understanding of the cultural perspectives of the target culture.

**10.55.2201 COMPUTER SCIENCE PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

No Recommended Changes

**10.55.2301 TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS**

No Recommended Changes