



APRIL 2021 MASS MEETING UPDATES FROM THE OPI

Below are key talking points from the OPI Executive Staff to be shared with the MASS Regions AS OF 3.29.2021

ESSER II & ESSER III -Funding

The DOE is reserving 1/3 of the ESSER III funds (ARPA) until the State Plan is submitted and approved. Local districts it sounds like, will also have to have plans on use of funds and addressing requirements of ESSER III. Stay tuned for future webinars on this topic.

ASSESSMENT WAIVER

The OPI does not have a response from the DOE related to the Assessment Waiver submitted in February. However, the accountability template submitted March 25, 2021, was approved and provides for accountability waivers, including the 95% participation rate on assessments. The requirement to assess has not yet been waived. Districts are encouraged to continue providing the opportunity to assess, while ensuring that student safety and well-being is your #1 priority.

Secretary Cardona, in a speech he gave on 3.23.2021 to State School Chiefs, made the following key points:

- Context Matters
- One size fits one
- Assessment is more for the policy makers and decisions for the allocation of ARPA funding with a high priority on addressing inequities.
- Assessment waivers from state chiefs are being carefully reviewed related to context and the needs identified by the States.

In the future, we need to re-examine the role of assessment. This is simply not the year for a referendum on assessment.

The OPI is working diligently on two pieces that we believe will begin the future of what Montana assessment can imagine:

1. Potential Metametrics contract by which the varied forms of assessment used at the local level can be collected and summarized providing a state view on student growth.
2. Opportunity to Learn Survey for Students and Teachers to be distributed May 1 – May 30 to inform the OPI and legislators on the impact of COVID on learning through the student and teacher lens. This survey is critical to our ability to answer DOE questions related to student learning and funding uses by the State and districts. Your help in ensuring this survey is successfully distributed, is much appreciated. It is anticipated that the survey will be sent to you by mid-April along with a parent letter.



April is designated as the *Month of the Military Child* or “**Purple Up! For Military Kids.**” Military members and military-connected families make many sacrifices for the security and safety of our nation, specifically military-connected children during their K-12 careers. Across the nations, states and school districts will celebrate the important role military children play while their service member parents serve our country through special events and wearing the color **purple**.

Superintendent Arntzen invites all Montana schools to join her in celebrating and recognizing all Montana Military Kids this year! We at OPI are committed to providing a high-quality education for all Montana students in public schools. Please consider supporting our military families in April for “**Purple Up! For Military Kids**” by:

1. Coordinating a district-wide month or day and promote through your communication channels (website, newsletters, social media - tag **#MIC3Compact** and **#purpleup4militarykids**).
2. Sharing the attached letter or draft a short memorandum to your schools encouraging them to consider sponsoring an activity (paint rocks purple, color the sidewalks with purple chalk, staff and students wear purple (red+white+blue) on Friday, April 16th)
3. Attending a district or school event celebrating “**Purple UP! For Military Kids**”
4. Get creative with virtual events and celebrations. Additional information and ideas can be found in the **Purple Up! Toolkit** or website: <https://mic3.net/motmc/>

VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

Superintendents are encouraged to get registered ASAP for the Virtual Education Fair for Montana only districts to meet, interview and work to fill vacant teacher positions. The virtual fair is April 17 with browsing available on the 15th and 16th of April. The next technical support session is Thursday, April 7th at 10:30 a.m. This session is provided to help districts create their booths with visuals and materials that will provide the greatest success.

Superintendent Arntzen is pleased to announce that the **Montana Virtual Education Summit-x21 will be held June 24-25th**. The conference will provide learning strands for all educators and will offer facilitated sessions for district teams that are working on their ESSER funds uses plans.

