

# The OPI Monthly Summary: September 2020

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# Office of the Superintendent

## Montana Education Updates

The OPI hopes that your fall semester is going well and that your students and staff are healthy! Thank you for your dedication to ensuring that schools can safely reopen for academic success to continue. As we navigate these uncertain circumstances, the OPI is here to serve you, your staff, your students, and your communities. Please continue to stay in touch and let us know how we can be of service.

As a reminder, the [Reopening Montana Schools webpage](#) will continue to be the best place to find the latest information from the OPI.

### 2021 Montana Teacher of the Year

Kristi Borge from Polaris has been named Montana's 2021 Teacher of the Year. Congratulations, Kristi! Mrs. Borge is the lead K-8 teacher in Polaris' one-room schoolhouse. She will go on to represent Montana in the National Teacher of the Year program. You can learn more about Kristi [here](#).

### College Application Week

The OPI is partnering with the Montana University System again this year to promote College Application Week which is September 28-October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Superintendent Arntzen and Commissioner Christian have sent a letter to all high schools encouraging students to visit [ApplyMontana.org](http://ApplyMontana.org) to access the new free applications for any MUS campus.

### ESSER Equitable Shares Update

The letter issued by Secretary DeVos on Friday regarding equitable share for private schools simply referred states and school districts to the existing Title I statute. As a result, school districts may consider four options for determining the number of Title I eligible children at nonpublic schools in order to calculate the percentage of ESSER grant funds that are due to nonpublic schools. The OPI understands that Montana has unique complexities in doing this since we are one of only a few states that consider homeschool students to be non-public for these purposes. **The OPI is preparing guidance for schools to allow them to understand their options and the financial implications of each. The OPI will issue this guidance as soon as possible and will schedule a webinar for next Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am to review the document and allow districts to ask questions and provide feedback.** We believe this is the surest way to resolve the equitable share issue for both public and private schools in Montana. The OPI is here to support and serve you through this process. If you have any questions, please contact Ken Bailey at [kbailey2@mt.gov](mailto:kbailey2@mt.gov) or 406-444-2562.

### Monthly Zoom Meetings with LEAs

In order to be responsive to the needs of local districts, the OPI will be hosting monthly Zoom meetings with district and county superintendents and board chairs as well as our state education partners. These Zoom meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month at 9:30am.

The login info is below:

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/91999957998?pwd=aitSbU1kUnZad0JobVJadU9PMU1EQTO9>

Meeting ID: 919 9995 7998

Password: 430540

Dial by Telephone

+1 646 558 8656 or +1 406 444 9999

Meeting ID: 919 9995 7998



Password: 430540

### Deputy Superintendent Updates

- There are new guidance documents on the [OPI website](#) regarding accreditation, attendance, and aggregate hours.
- Deputy Superintendent Johnson and I will be calling this month to simply check on your wellbeing and let you know that you are in our thoughts. The leadership in our districts is excellent. We will also be asking for any suggestions you have on ways to serve you better during this new season of learning.
- Superintendent Arntzen continues to pursue flexibilities on your behalf, whether from the Board of Public Education, the Governor, our local legislators, or the US Department of Education, your suggestions are not ignored.
- FY2021 funded districts in Transformational Learning and Montana Advanced Opportunities will receive their funding this week. The next application window for both grants opens December 7, 2020 at 8am MST and closes January 11, 2021 at 5pm MST. Application forms will be available on the [OPI website](#) in mid-October. For more information or support, contact Krystal Smith at [krystal.smith@mt.gov](mailto:krystal.smith@mt.gov).

### Superintendent's Office September Events

- Board of Land Commissioners meeting
- Education Interim Committee meeting
- Meeting with Billings SROs and administrators
- Weekly meeting with the Governor's senior staff
- Visit with Polaris school leaders and students
- [Safe and Drug-Free Schools Roundtable](#)
- [Constitution Day program](#)
- Meeting with Ravalli County SROs and administrators
- Board of Public Education meeting
- Zoom calls with school administrators and education partners

Follow the Office of Public Instruction on social media:    
For more information, contact [Dylan Klapmeier](#), 406-444-3559.

## Data & Technology

### AIM Information for October

There are three important AIM reminders we want to share with you as we enter October:

- 1. The list of upcoming reporting due dates:**
  - October 9: Beginning of Year Verification & Previous year Graduate, Cohort and Dropout Validation and Certification,
  - October 19: Fall EL Assessment Verification,
  - October 23: Fall Enrollment Count & Program Participation, and
  - October 30: Special Education Child Count.
- 2. The AIM data that doesn't have specific deadlines and should happen all throughout the year:** behavior, enrollment, EL Identification, and Optional Assessment Information for Interims.
- 3. All the support available for successfully submitting your data in AIM:**
  - find due dates and support links on the [submission calendar](#),
  - join a webinar or watch a recorded one - [AIM webinars](#), or
  - reach out to contact [AIM support](#) directly, 877-424-6681 or 406-444-3800.

## School Innovation and Improvement Department

### Every Student Succeeds Act

#### Public Comment Needed on ESSA Waiver Related to 21st CCLC

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is seeking public comment on a waiver to the United States Department of Education that will allow the OPI to waive the definition of out-of-school time found in ESSA Section 4201(b)(1)(A) for the 2020-2021 school year. This will provide local programs with more flexibility to meet community needs related to COVID-19 by allowing for the use of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) funds to support programming when schools are currently operating. This waiver requires that modified programming align with the spirit of the subgrantee's original approved application and is supplemental in nature.

**Join an upcoming Zoom meeting to share your thoughts:**

**Oct 5th at 10am**

**Oct 13th at 2pm**

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/91344915718>

Meeting ID: 913 4491 5718

Dial by Telephone  
+1 646 558 8656 or +1 406 444 9999  
Meeting ID: 913 4491 5718

**Questions or Concerns?**  
Email [essainput@mt.gov](mailto:essainput@mt.gov).

For more information, contact Julie Murgel at [Julie.Murgel@mt.gov](mailto:Julie.Murgel@mt.gov)

## Federal Programs

### **FY 2021 Egrants Consolidated Applications**

FY 2021 Egrant ESEA Consolidated Applications must be submitted and approved no later than October 31, 2020. Late applications will need to be approved by Sharyl Allen, Deputy Superintendent at [Sharyl.Allen@mt.gov](mailto:Sharyl.Allen@mt.gov). For more information, contact Sheri Harlow at [SHarlow@mt.gov](mailto:SHarlow@mt.gov) or 406-444-5660.

## Indian Education for All

### **Funding Guidance Regarding Indian Education For All ANB Funds**

The Indian Education for All Unit would like to remind districts that they receive an annual ANB allocation of \$22.36 per student to provide PD, purchase supplies and materials, hire specialists and Tribal speakers, or conduct other events or initiatives aimed at effective implementation of IEFA. If you are curious as to your allocation in FY 21, this can be found on the school finance webpage in the [monthly district payment reports](#). Also, to help you better determine the most appropriate way(s) to utilize your funding, the IEFA Unit has a [funding guidance document](#) on its website. Lastly, the IEFA Unit also provides a [materials evaluation guide](#) that can help teachers and administrators ensure that the materials they provide and activities they conduct portray Montana Indians in a culturally authentic, tribally specific manner. For more information, contact [Zach Hawkins](#), OPI IEFA Director at 406-444-0708

# Student Support Services Department

## School Nutrition Programs

### **Is the Summer Food Service Program right for your district?**

To help you determine whether the Summer Food Service Program or the National School Lunch Program is the best fit, please review this [comparison chart](#).

### **Three easy steps to start the Summer Food Service Program:**

1. Districts interested in running the Summer Food Service Program need to fill out the [School Year Summer Food Service Program form](#).
2. An OPI Specialist will follow up with you about eligibility and next steps for signing up for the program.

3. If you are eligible, you are allowed to retroactively claim meals back to September 1, 2020.

For more information, contact [cemerson@mt.gov](mailto:cemerson@mt.gov) or 406-444-2502.

## Social, Emotional Learning Curriculum Available for Elementary and Middle Schools

The OPI currently has Second Step curriculum available for interested elementary and middle schools. Second Step is an evidence-based social, emotional learning curriculum designed to be delivered in a school setting. Research has shown that students who receive [Second Step](#) are more likely to display prosocial behaviors and less likely to bully or display aggressive behaviors. Schools who receive the Second Step curriculum will be asked to submit quarterly data reports indicating the number of students receiving the curriculum and what lessons were delivered. If you would like more information about Second Step and how to receive the curriculum, please contact [Michele Henson](#).

## Filtered Water Bottle Filler Stations

To minimize possible exposure to Coronavirus at water fountains, the OPI in partnership with Montana DEQ recommends schools shut off drinking water fountains and only allow teachers, students and visitors to use water bottle filler stations or bring water from home. While Coronavirus is not known to be in the water, drinking water fountains require physical contact to operate. Filtered water bottle filler stations are a good solution to provide clean drinking water for your students while limiting potential exposure to the Coronavirus. Bottle filler stations require no contact from the student to operate. If your school does not have filter bottle filler stations, the Cares Act can be used to purchase them. If you would like more information, please contact [Greg Montgomery](#), Lead in School Drinking Water Rule Manager, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, 406-444-5312.

## Air Filtration and HEPA Air Purifiers

During the pandemic, the best way to protect ourselves, our children, and our schools are with evidence-based information. Filtration in building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems can play a role in a school's overall risk mitigation approach but is not generally regarded as a solution by itself. Likewise, portable High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) air purifiers are only likely to be effective alongside other measures. Please go to [DPHHS Official Statement: HEPA Air Purifiers and Air Filtration Montana Schools](#) to view the full statement. If you would like more information, please contact [BJ Biskupiak](#), Program Coordinator, School Health and Asthma Control Programs, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, 406-444-0995.

## Free Pencils for Montana Teachers

Montana teachers can use [this link](#) to request free pencils for their classrooms just in time for Red Ribbon Week. (Oct 23-31, 2020) Choose between heat-activated “Tobacco-Free....For Life” pencils enjoyed by elementary students or shiny blue pencils for MS/HS students with a reminder that nicotine is addictive. Order yours while supplies last! Don’t forget to check out these [youth tobacco use prevention resources](#) as you navigate this complex school year. If you’d like more information about youth tobacco use prevention resources, please contact [Kris Minard](#).

# Teaching and Learning Department

## Assessment Unit

### Assessment Requirements for 2020-2021

The US Department of Education shared a [memo from Secretary Betsy DeVos to Chief State School Officers](#) on the requirements of state assessments this school year. For more information, contact the Assessment Unit at [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov) or 844-867-2569.

### Administering Interim Assessments

As districts solidify plans for measuring student learning through various tools, the OPI has available at no cost math, English language arts (ELA), and science interims on the [Montana Testing Portal](#). This free suite of tools provides educators with a multiple measure approach to support teaching and learning by using standards-aligned assessments to gauge the learning. Data literacy and its direct influence in guiding instruction, alongside a balanced approach (i.e., formative, interim and summative strategies) ensures all children have fair and equitable opportunities to reach proficiency on academic content standards. Recommendations for administering math and ELA interims can be found on the [Fall 2020 Interim Benchmarks](#) webpage. This webpage includes a [19-minute Quick Start Video](#). The recent Interim Report (9/24/20) showed over 1,200 math and ELA interims were completed. Montana Science Interims are also available on the [Montana Testing Portal](#). For more information, contact the Assessment Unit at [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov) or 844-867-2569.

### Test Security and Certification

To use the interims described above, Test Administrators (TA) must complete the online TA Certification Course and acknowledge the Test Security Agreement for the 2020–2021 school year in order to administer tests. The [Steps to Become Certified to Proctor a Test](#) outline how to complete these tasks. Users will not be able to proctor any assessment without completing these steps. For more information, contact the Assessment Unit at [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov) or 844-867-2569.

### **Remote Screener for English Learners**

School districts are required to identify students who are eligible for language assistance. School districts must use the “[ELP Guidance for School Districts](#)” to identify and support English Learners (ELs). The [Provisional English Learner Identification Procedure](#) remote-learning guidance document provides a means of provisionally identifying ELs in times of extended school closures where districts provide continuity of educational services online and face-to-face screening is not possible. The [Remote WIDA Flyer](#) provides guidance and instruction for administering the remote WIDA Screener. For more information, contact the Assessment Unit at [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov) or 844-867-2569.

## **Career, Technical and Adult Education Unit**

### **Contact Us!**

[Shannon Boswell](#), Director - 406.444.7915  
[Eric Tilleman](#), Agriculture Education Specialist - 406.444.4451  
[Eric Swenson](#), Business Education Specialist - 406.444.7991  
[Ian Beagles](#) CTE/Perkins Data Control Specialist - 406.444.9019  
[Megan Vincent](#), Family & Consumer Sciences Education Specialist - 406.444.359  
[Renee Erlandsen](#), Health Sciences Education Specialist - 406.994.6986  
[Mike Houghton](#), Industrial Technology Specialist - 406.444.4452  
[Austin Schweitzer](#), CTAE Marketing Program Coordinator - 406-444-2059  
[Katie Madsen](#), Adult Education State Director- 406-444-4443  
[Emily Fuller](#), Adult Education Program Specialist-406-444-1691  
[Wanda Arlint](#), HiSET Administrative Assistant- 406-444-4151  
[John Stankowiak](#), Veterans Education- 406-444-4122

### **HiSet Options Program**

The process of setting up a [HiSET Options Program](#) in your school is easier than you think! Utilizing existing staff and resources at your school ensures the program is easy and of low cost to you and your district. All you need is a designated HiSET Options Program Coordinator, a certified teacher, a classroom with learning material, and a designated testing center near your school.

To get started, please read the Montana HiSET Options Guidelines, then fill out the corresponding HiSET Options application and submit it to Austin Schweitzer - HiSET Options Program Specialist, at the State of Montana - Office of Public Instruction (OPI). Once the State has approved your application and program of Montana, you can begin setting up your staff, learning material, and other resources in conjunction with Educational Testing Services (ETS) and Montana Career Information Systems (MCIS).

ETS helps provide you with resources, such as administrative support, practice tests, learning activities, and more. MCIS is where students will set up their “personal learning plan,” which outlines their career goals and future studies.



Once your program is approved and ready, it's time to recruit eligible students to enter the program. Most HiSET Options Programs in Montana enroll students in the Spring semester as increases the chance of graduation, although you are free to start in the Fall semester.

Contact [Austin Schweitzer](#) with any questions.

### **The New CTE Professionals Virtual Workshop 2020**

The New CTE Professionals Virtual Workshop 2020 focuses on early-career professionals—specifically Career & Technical Education professionals within the first five (5) years in a Montana Career & Technical Education classroom. Past participants of the Montana CTE New Professionals may also attend to enhance their classroom skills and Career & Technical Education knowledge. School administrators and counselors who want to learn more about Career & Technical Education in Montana are also encouraged to attend.

The virtual workshop will be held Tuesday afternoons from 4:00-5:15 pm beginning Tuesday, September 22, and concluding Tuesday, October 20. The workshop is free of charge, and up to six (6) OPI Renewal Units will be offered. Additional details about the New CTE Professionals Virtual Workshop 2020, including a schedule of events, are available on the [Secondary CTE](#) page of the OPI website. Registration for the New CTE Professionals Virtual Workshop 2020 can be completed and submitted online at this [link](#).

### **CTE Perkins V Grants**

Remember, the deadline for the Carl D. Perkins V application is **September 30, 2020**. Your application needs to be completed in E-grants along with a completed and uploaded Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment saved as a Doc or PDF. For schools receiving less than \$5,000 in the Fiscal Year 2021 Perkins allocations, you are also eligible for the [Montana Perkins Secondary Rural Reserve Grant](#). Due by January 15, 2021. Contact [Shannon Boswell](#) with any questions.

## **Standards, Instruction, and Professional Learning Unit**

### **Contact Us!**

- [Colet Bartow](#), Senior Manager, Teaching and Learning Department, 406-444-3583
- [Stephanie Swigart](#), English Language Arts and Literacy Coordinator, 406-444-0736
- [Michelle McCarthy](#), Science Coordinator, 406-444-3537
- [Marisa Graybill](#), Mathematics Coordinator, 406-444-0706
- [Terri Barclay](#), Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program Manager, 406-444-0753
  - Literacy Grant Specialist, [Liz Tuss](#)
  - Literacy Grant Specialist, [Rachel Anderberg](#)
- [Carli Cockrell](#), Professional Learning Coordinator, 406-444-0769
- [Jessica Bryant](#), Teacher Learning Hub Coordinator, 406-444-3557
- [Allyson Briese](#), Teacher Learning Content Specialist, 406-444-0716
- [Marjorie O'Rourke](#), Professional Learning Data & Information Specialist, 406-444-3538

### **Remote Learning Resources**

Visit the [OPI Academic and Remote Learning Resources](#) webpage for newly updated resources to support teaching and learning in any environment. Visit the newly updated [Just for Families](#) webpage to access family road maps for content standards and other resources you can share with families who are wanting to learn more about how to support their students in remote learning. Contact [OPICSI@mt.gov](mailto:OPICSI@mt.gov) with any questions.

### **Professional Learning Info for School Leaders**

Schools are encouraged to be Renewal Unit Providers as the bulk of educator professional learning occurs in the school setting. Schools are also able to issue renewal unit certificates for professional learning that occurred external to the school environment if the organization that provided the professional learning is not an existing renewal unit provider AND if the professional learning opportunity meets the Administrative Rules of Montana related to Professional Development.

Visit the [OPI Administrators Professional Learning](#) webpage for more information. Contact OPI Professional Learning Coordinator [Carli Cockrell](#) with any questions.

### **OPI Learning Opportunities Portal**

Visit the [Learning Opportunities Portal website](#) to find out about classes, workshops, and courses. The Portal is just one of the ways the OPI informs educators about upcoming professional learning opportunities in our state. We are updating with any cancellations or postponements as we are made aware of these changes. Contact [Carli Cockrell](#) with any questions or to let us know about changes to your events.

### **Learning Hub**

If you haven't already, [check out](#) what more than 16,000 Montana educators have experienced! The Hub team is always adding and updating our self-paced and facilitated courses. Please check the [Learning Hub homepage](#) for a complete [listing](#) and [catalog](#).

Take a look at these courses to help support your interests and planning for the upcoming school year and the exciting potential for online, remote, or blended learning integration!

- [Introduction to Online Course Design](#) - introduction to the basics of online learning and design (1 renewal unit)
- [Digital Accessibility Fundamentals](#) - tutorial on how to make digital content accessible to all learners (1 renewal unit)
- [UDL: Digital Tools and Digital Learning](#) - covers the basic principle of universal design for learning, practical strategies, and tools for all grade levels (2 renewal units)
- [Digital Citizenship](#) - learn to foster students' safe, ethical, and responsible uses of technology (2 renewal units)

- [Moving CTAE to Online and Remote Learning](#) - Designed to help CTAE teachers understand how to start the year to lead to successful learning no matter if learning is in-person, remote, or blended, how to do hands-on activities in an online environment, and where to find further training and resources. (3 renewal units)
- [Tech-ify Your Classroom! The Basics of K-5 Technology Integration](#) - covers the basics of meaningful, effective technology integration in grades K-5 (4 renewal units)
- Platform-specific courses: [Google Suite for Beginners](#) (6 renewal units), [Google Suite Advanced](#) (20 renewal units), [Student-Created Digital Learning Portfolios](#) - SeeSaw (15 renewal units)

We are working on more courses to support online learning and will announce those as they are launched. Stay tuned! Contact [OPILearningHub@mt.gov](mailto:OPILearningHub@mt.gov) with any questions.

## Additional Education Updates

### T-Mobile Wireless Connectivity Resources

T-Mobile [announced \[t-mobile.com\]](https://www.t-mobile.com) the official launch of Project 10Million, a \$10.7 billion initiative to help close the homework gap and connect those who need it most.

### NASA Art Contest

Learn more at NASA's [website](#).

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