

Office of Public Instruction
Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing
January 17, 2005
Education Services Department Overview

Madam Chair and members of the committee, for the record my name is Nancy Coopersmith, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Public Instruction. I want to provide you with an overview of the Education Services Department at the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

The staff of the Education Services Department provides support to Montana educators as these educators facilitate student learning in the classrooms across our state.

- We provide direct services to students, educators, parents, and community members. These services include visits to schools; development, production and distribution of materials; and professional development activities, such as workshops and conferences.
- We serve as a linkage between best practices and educators.
- We provide support and leadership to student and professional organizations.
- We manage state and federal programs funded by four federal agencies—the U.S. Departments of Education and Agriculture, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Corporation for National Service.
- We help schools to receive federal funds in excess of 100 million dollars each year.

These services save Montana school districts thousands and thousands of dollars each year by providing materials and assistance that would, in their absence, require teachers and administrators to obtain elsewhere, often out of state. You may wish to refer to the OPI organizational chart in your packet as I review the five divisions that comprise the Department of Education Services.

1. The **Accreditation Division** works to accredit schools and administers several federal programs. The division assists school districts in the implementation of the Montana Accreditation Standards and monitors district and school progress to meet or exceed these standards adopted in rule by the Board of Public Education. The Division supports continuous education improvement in all Montana schools. The Division provides assistance to schools, districts, and teacher education programs to align curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development to state standards with the goal to improve learning for all Montana students.

Within the Division, 2.00 FTE are paid with the general fund to work to ensure that schools meet the accreditation standards adopted by the Board of Public Education. The staff annually reviews school program offerings, staffing, classroom loads, and other school practices for compliance with the Montana School Accreditation Standards and recommends school accreditation status to State Superintendent McCulloch and the Board of Public Education. In 2003-04 the staff reviewed the records of 859 schools.

The accreditation process includes on-site monitoring of new middle school programs, renewal of alternative standards requests, and school and district improvement plans that address accreditation deficiencies. In 2003-04, the accreditation staff conducted such on-site visits of 30 schools.

In addition, the unit continues to work with an OPI team to automate and ease the collection of data from schools and districts. Almost 100 percent of Montana schools submitted their reports electronically this year.

Staff in this division work collaboratively with school districts, other OPI division staffs, the Board of Public Education, units of the University system, and private and tribal colleges to maintain state standards and programs for the preparation of competent teachers to serve in Montana classrooms.

Several programs of the No Child Left Behind Act are administered by the Accreditation Division: Title II, Part A, Teacher Quality Enhancement Program; Title II, Part B, Mathematics and Science Partnerships (MSP) a competitive grant program; Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education Through Technology; and Title VI, Small Rural Schools Programs. The primary purpose of each program is to improve the academic achievement of students by improving professional development and other program offerings; efficient and effective use of resources; and integrating technology into the curriculum.

The Division also administers other federal programs, Montana Character Education and Montana Learn and Serve, including a Homeland Security program. Each of these federal grants provides funds to schools.

2. The Educational Opportunity and Equity Division manages 15 programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Less than 7 percent of the division funding is from the state general fund.

The largest program in the division is NCLB Title I, which provides more than \$38 million in funding to Montana schools for students who need extra help in learning. The program funds approximately 1,000 teachers in Montana schools and serves over 36,000 students each year.

Other federal programs assist homeless children; children who don't speak English; Indian, Migrant, and other minority children; and children identified as gifted. Other programs provide support for effective instruction, such as providing schools with research-based model programs for effective teaching and learning and resources for the teaching of reading in the early grades.

The Measurement and Accountability Unit of this division compiles non-fiscal educational data for school, district, state and federal purposes. Reports developed by the unit include Facts about Montana Education—a pamphlet in your packet, annual enrollment data, and

reports to the Board of Public Education about student assessment, dropouts, and teacher retention and recruitment. In addition, the staff of this unit assist with the data collection needed for the increased reporting required in the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. This act requires the state, each district and each school to develop and publish report cards that contain data about student achievement, qualifications of teachers, high school completion and other information.

3. The **Health Enhancement and Safety Division** receives over 90 percent of its funding from federal sources, which include the U.S. Departments of Education and Agriculture, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The division distributes approximately 95 percent of its funds to local schools and uses approximately 5 percent to administer the 16 distinct programs for which it is responsible. The division uses 17.58 FTE to administer and oversee 16 programs.

The division manages federal grants that focus on preventing health problems and behaviors among youth that place them at risk for accidents, disease, social problems and school failure.

The largest program in the division is the National School Lunch Program (NSL), which provides funding to schools for breakfast, lunch and snack programs before, during, and after school. Eighty-five percent (85%) of Montana schools participate in the National School Lunch program. Each school day approximately 19,000 breakfasts and 75,000 lunches are served to Montana students.

Other grants provide funding, instruction and materials for Montana educators to implement effective drug, alcohol and HIV prevention programs and to implement after-school enrichment programs that occur outside of the school day or year.

The division also includes two traffic education programs: 1) novice driver education for teens. The program serves approximately 10,000 teen drivers annually; and 2) the advanced driver education for adults

annually trains approximately 500 bus drivers, ambulance drivers, state Department of Transportation personnel and others.

4. The **Special Education Division** works with Montana educators to provide special education and related services to over 19,000 Montana children with disabilities. Over 90 percent of the funding within the division is federal. The Division administers two statewide programs:
- a. *The Hearing Conservation Program* serves children 0-21 years of age by providing hearing screening, in-school hearing assessments, and comprehensive audiology evaluation services; and the second program
 - b. *The Deaf-Blind Project* provides technical assistance and training opportunities to families and service providers. This assistance is specifically designed to meet the needs of children and youth, 0-21, identified as having deaf-blindness.

The Division conducts two major initiatives: *The Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI)* and the *We Teach All Project*.

- *The Montana Behavioral Initiative* is a comprehensive staff development program created to improve the capacities of schools and communities to meet the diverse and complex social, emotional and behavioral needs of students. Through its annual Summer Institute this initiative provides school teams of teachers and administrators with the strategies to assess student discipline problems in their schools and to implement solutions so that schools are safe havens for effective learning. Over 4,000 Montana educators have received the training.
- *The We Teach All Project* provides training and support to general and special education teams for implementing activities that are designed to effectively deliver the general education curriculum to all students. Over 70 districts have been involved in this project.

The Division implements a nationally recognized *Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD)* that helps to ensure quality educational programs and services for children and youth with

disabilities through training and technical assistance and supports activities designed to recruit and retain personnel. The system is organized through a statewide council and five regional councils composed of representatives from school districts, higher education, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), Early Childhood and education-related professional organizations.

Five years ago, the Division sought and obtained federal funding for a *State Improvement Grant* that supports participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessments, aligns current activities within general and special education, targets specific areas of need unique to the delivery of services to students with disabilities, and expands efforts at recruitment and retention of special education personnel. This grant fosters cooperation and collaboration between other OPI divisions and agencies in order to improve education for all students.

Two years ago, the Division obtained federal funding for a federal data enhancement grant for the purposes of identifying data components required to address reporting requirements across federal projects, to establish a data dictionary, and to identify key components for establishing a comprehensive data collection system.

This year, the Division obtained federal funding through an *enhancement grant* that will allow the OPI to design an infrastructure to support a more comprehensive system of personnel development for Montana. The project includes a blueprint for the system, an alignment of available resources with state needs, and a process and structure to provide evidence-based resources to Montana educators. The project also includes efficient use of distance technologies. A collaborative cross-divisional management structure and partnerships with key stakeholders in the Montana education community are important components of the project.

5. The **Career, Technical and Adult Education Division** includes programs that focus on career preparation, technical skills development, applied academics, and technological literacy. Both rigor and relevance underpin these programs that prepare students for contemporary workplace demands. Over 75 percent of the division's budget is from Federal funds. There are two units within the Career, Technical and Adult Education Division.

One unit, Career and Technical Education (CTE), is comprised of seven secondary education program areas: Agriculture, Business, Marketing, Family and Consumer Sciences, Health Occupations, Trade and Industrial, and Technology Education. Program specialists provide support to nearly 42,000 Montana students by assisting educators in 168 high schools. Each program includes an associated student organization such as FFA and Health Occupations Students of America or HOSA. The program specialists serve as the state advisors for the seven co-curricular student organizations. Through these student organizations, program specialists work directly with more than 5,800 high school students.

The second unit, Adult Services, is comprised of three program areas.

The Veterans Education program serves as the state-approving agency (SAA) for over 50 veterans education programs designed for beneficiaries of the GI Bill. The staff review, evaluate, and approve quality educational and training programs for veterans.

The General Education Development or GED program provides an alternative to the basic high school diploma for those students and adults who didn't complete the traditional high school program. The GED program staff approve and monitor state testing centers, provide training and technical assistance to test examiners, and provide evaluation of field operations.

The Adult Basic and Literacy Education program, a part of the federal Workforce Investment Act, funds regional centers for instruction in basic skills such as reading and writing, math, English-as-a-Second-Language, and GED preparation to adults 16 years of age and older who are not regularly enrolled, full-time students for purposes of ANB computation.

Closing

These are the five divisions of the Education Services Department. While they all have defined duties, they all work together on many projects. In addition, the divisions also work with the Operations Department and the Superintendent's office.

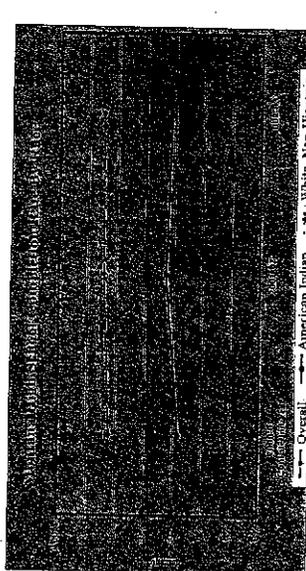
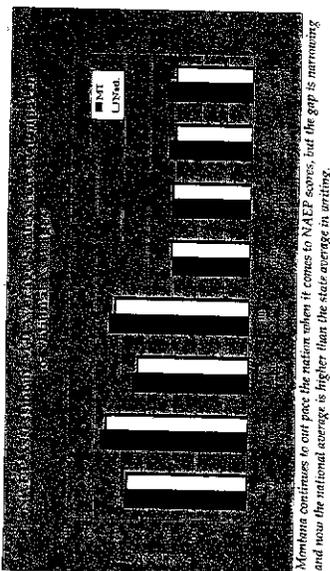
I want to provide you with an example of how our work is integrated. A team from this department and from the Department of Operations continued to work during this biennium to further streamline the application and reporting processes used by school districts to obtain state and federal funding. This work was incorporated in the revision of the State and Federal Grant Handbook, which is used extensively by district educators and clerks to answer questions about grant administration. Since we last met with you, these revisions have been reviewed in workshops with district educators and clerks.

Thank you for your time, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

Assessment

Test Scores	2001		2002		2003	
	MT	Natl.	MT	Natl.	MT	Natl.
SAT*						
Verbal	539	506	541	504	538	507
Math	539	514	547	516	543	519
ACT**	21.7	21.0	21.7	20.8	21.7	20.8

*Scholastic Aptitude Test—in 2003, 26% of Montana graduating seniors took the SAT.
 **American College Testing Program—in 2003, 52% of Montana graduating seniors took the ACT.



High School Graduates 2003
 High school graduates: 2003 10,657
 GED* recipients (ages 16 to 19) 1,291

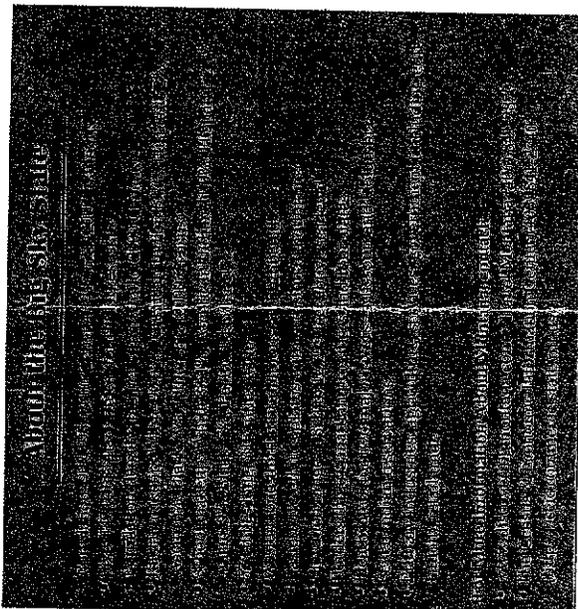
* General Educational Development

For more school data:
 • www.opi.state.mt.us/measurement/
 • www.opi.state.mt.us/reportcard/

Dear Friends:

I am proud of Montana's education system and honored to be leading efforts to build a bright future for our students. We have remarkable resources and talent in our communities, schools, and families. Our excellent public education is built on educators, students, parents, business and community members working together to invest in Montana's future. I am pleased to present the informative "Facts About Montana Education." To learn more about K-12 education in Montana, I invite you to visit our Web site at www.opi.state.mt.us.

Linda
 Linda McCulloch,
 State Superintendent



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FACTS ABOUT

MONTANA EDUCATION



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