



— **Montana Office of Public Instruction** —

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State Superintendent

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Office of Public Instruction
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Accreditation/Technical Assistance Specialists
Bud Williams Deputy Superintendent's Remarks

I. Introduction

- a. Madam Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Bud Williams. I am the Deputy in the Office of Public Instruction.
- b. I'm so pleased to have the opportunity to visit with you this morning about the accreditation technical assistance specialists for the Office of Public Instruction. This EPP is not in either Governor Martz's budget or Governor Sweitzer's budget but it was a high priority request in the state superintendent's budget requests. As you can tell from the testimony you heard yesterday in committee, it is also a high priority for the schools in Montana. Marsha Davis, the County Superintendent from Lewis and Clark County spoke to the importance of the Specialists in small schools. Bruce Messenger, the Helena Superintendent spoke to the importance in large schools, and Ron Whitmoyer, the Superintendent in East Helena spoke to the importance in mid-sized schools. Bob Vogel from MSBA and Eric Burke from MEA-MFT echoed their sentiments. They all spoke to OPI providing educational leadership. Educational Leadership that in many ways can only come from us. I'll share with you the budget detail.

II. Body

- a. As you can see we are asking for 4 Accreditation/technical assistance specialists and two support staff. The total amount of the request is \$421,749 for each year of the biennium. We are asking for specialists in Math, in Science, in reading and language arts and in early childhood education. The primary role of the curriculum specialists will be to help the classroom teacher implement the most current, effective curriculum in order to increase student learning. The curriculum specialist must stay abreast of national developments, best practice in the field and be able to translate this to all of Montana's schools, both large and small. In many cases the specialists

will make available training for teachers that they would not normally get.

In addition, each specialist would assist with accreditation monitoring and help provide supervision and assistance to the schools in the field. The Math and Science specialists would be high school trained and assist in the development of 5-year plans, school effectiveness reports and High School Reform-the latest piece of NCLB.

The reading language arts and early childhood specialists would provide that same support in the elementary and Middle Schools.

III. Closing

- a. I have been a School superintendent in Montana for 23 years. And for most of those years curriculum specialists were readily available at OPI to assist schools. In 90's the Office of Public Instruction lost 10 curriculum specialists. Specialists in 1. Reading 2. English/Language arts 3. Second Languages 4. Social Studies 5. Gifted and Talented 6. Mathematics 7. Science 8. Counseling 9. Fine Arts 10. Library Media

The office was left with a few professional staff to carry on the work to support schools and districts in meeting the accreditation standards and increasing student achievement. The OPI responded to the challenge and created strong partnerships within the agency and across the education community. During the ensuing years the OPI worked collaboratively with educators to provide assistance to schools and districts.

But folks, the times they are a changing! Since 1995 much has changed, specifically the level of accountability for all Montana Schools and Montana Educators. You know this all too well as you talk with your local administrators and teachers—adequate yearly progress, highly qualified teachers, and on and on! The stakes are very high! As I field questions and telephone calls from the field, I am constantly being asked questions that I'm not able to answer and there is no one that I can refer them to in the agency if they deal with most curricular areas.

- b. NCLB requires us to test students in grades 4, 8 and 10 in Math Reading and beginning in 2008 Science. And we must show improvement in each of those areas each year until every student is proficient. Members of the committee we must be able to give our schools the technical assistance that they need in order to show that improvement. That help is especially important in our smaller schools where they do not have sophisticated curriculum development and curriculum coordinators. They just have teachers and administrators and students and parents that need help.. the help that we should

provide. Please give us the tools we need to help the schools in Montana and allow the Office of Public Instruction to do it's job!