Bitterroot Valley Community College

Overview: the BVCC Effort

2001 thru 2005	Ravalli County workforce and education professionals independently pursue improved access to local adult learning opportunities.
Summer 2005	Ravalli County workforce and education professionals form a loose coalition to research how best to improve access to local adult learning opportunities.
February 2006	Ravalli County workforce and education professionals formally establish the **Bitterroot Valley Community College Exploratory Committee (BVCC-EC)**.
Spring 2006	BVCC-EC presents to numerous local groups including: *Ravalli County Commissioners, Bitterroot Chamber of Commerce, Stevensville Main Street Association, Florence Civic Club, Mule Team (Democrats), Pachyderms (Republicans), Kiwanis, and Lyons.*
May 2006	BVCC-EC contacts the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) about its interest in pursuing the establishment of a public community college pursuant to law.
Fall 2006	BVCC-EC commences petition drive to place BVCC initiative on local ballot. Over 5000 signatures (20 percent of registered voters in the proposed BVCC district) obtained.
May 2007	BVCC initiative is approved locally by a 52 percent majority. **BVCC Trustees-elect** also voted in.
Fall 2007 thru Summer 2008	BVCC Trustees-elect work with Legislature's Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget (PEPB) Interim Subcommittee, responding to policy and funding questions. PEPB Interim Subcommittee and Education & Local Government Interim Committee recommend in favor of the BVCC and draft initial BVCC resolution.
Fall 2008	BVCC Trustees-elect respond to Regents' request for information. Regents recommend against the BVCC while agreeing that Ravalli County needs the "Community College Mission"

SENATE EDUCATION
EXHIBIT NO. 3
DATE 2-11-2009
BILL NO. SJ12

Bitterroot Valley Community College

Ravalli County: Past and Present

No local postsecondary institution: why?	Has the situation changed?
Low Population 1910 – 12,000 1940 – 13,000 1970 – 14,000 **Primary Economy** Dominated by agriculture, mining, and logging Postsecondary degrees not essential for monetary stability or success **Proximity to Missoula** Distance from Hamilton to Missoula is 50 miles The University of Montana established in 1893 Missoula's College of Technology established in 1969	**Population 2004** 40,000 (173% increase since the 1970s) 50,000 projected by 2015 60,000 projected by 2025 **Economy 2004** 3% of earnings are in farming, forestry, and logging (down from 19% in 1970) 13% of earnings in building trades 72% of earnings in service sector **Missoula 2004** Enrollment data confirms that Missoula's institutions are not attracting Ravalli County adults at enrollment rates consistent with local access Commuting time and expense is a barrier to access Local needs are not met by nonlocal services

Bitterroot Valley Community College

Meeting the needs of Ravalli County

What local professionals conclude:
*The Bitterroot Valley needs a **lead education agency** which provides locally available adult learning services that are **affordable**, **comprehensive**, **accountable**, and **committed**.*

Affordable	For-credit and non-credit services must be available at the **lowest possible cost** to the student.
Comprehensive	Services must include **for-credit** occupational programs and general education transfer coursework **and non-credit** workforce development courses and remedial services.
Accountable	Checks and balances must be in place guaranteeing the community **sufficient leverage over the provider** to ensure services are timely, appropriate, and adequate in meeting the gamut of local needs.
Committed	Students and the community must be secure in the knowledge that **resources will be dedicated** to the provision of locally available adult learning services in a consistent, predictable, and ongoing manner.

Bitterroot Valley Community College

Why the community college option?

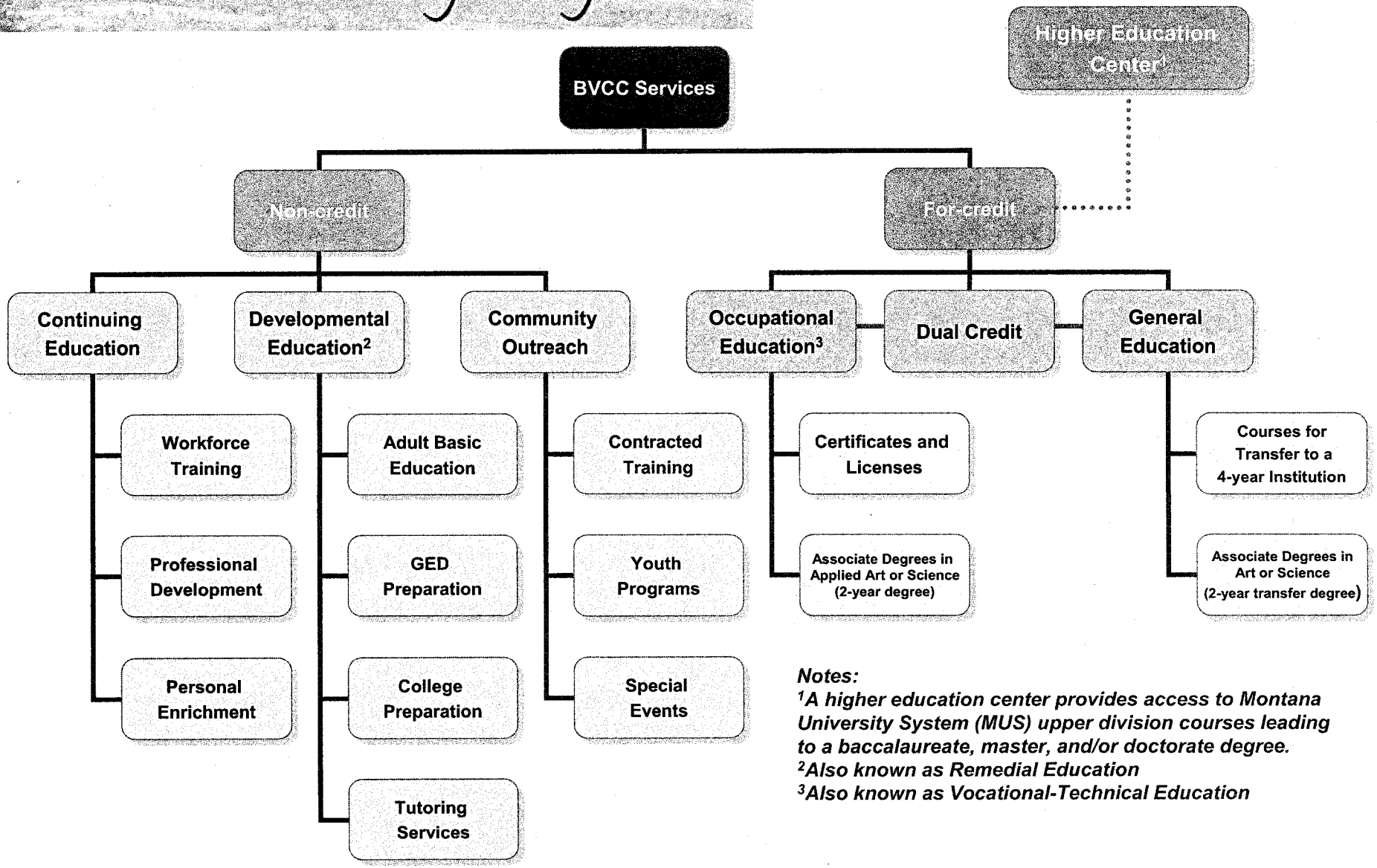
- **Affordable**
  - Local investment in a community college allows for affordable services.
- **Comprehensive**
  - Community colleges have a broad mission embracing the gamut of for-credit and non-credit programming (e.g., general education, vocational-technical education, continuing education, developmental/remedial education, and community outreach).
- **Accountable**
  - Community colleges are managed and controlled by a locally elected board of trustees. Local control ensures responsiveness; lack of top-down structure allows for flexibility.
- **Committed**
  - A community college district is a permanent, legally recognized educational entity. The formation of a community college district ensures the committed presence of local adult learning services.
- **Proposed district easily meets statutory criteria**
  - Six contiguous school districts; current tax valuation of $63 million; 1700+ students in area secondary schools.
- **Large pool of potential students**
  - Comparison to areas with established community colleges indicates demand for community college services will be great; projected student headcount ca. 700.

Ravalli County is the only Montana county with significant population which lacks a local institution of higher education

County	2006	2006 Rank	Postsecondary Institution
Yellowstone	138,213	1	MSU-Billings; COT-Billings; Rocky Mt. College
Missoula	101,417	2	UM-Missoula; COT-Missoula
Flathead	85,314	3	Flathead Valley CC
Gallatin	80,921	4	MSU-Bozeman; COT-Great Falls Extension
Cascade	79,385	5	COT-Great Falls; University of Great Falls
Lewis & Clark	59,302	6	COT-Helena; Carrol College
Ravalli	40,582	7	
Silver Bow	32,801	8	UM-Montana Tech; COT-Montana Tech
Lake	28,606	9	Salish Kootenai College (Tribal)
Lincoln	19,226	10	Flathead Valley CC - Libby Branch Campus
Hill	16,403	11	MSU-Northern; Stone Child College (Tribal)
Park	16,084	12	
Glacier	13,578	13	Blackfeet CC (Tribal)
Big Horn	13,035	14	Little Bighorn College (Tribal)
Fergus	11,496	15	MSU-Northern – Lewistown Higher Education Center
Custer	11,151	17	Miles CC
Roosevelt	10,496	19	Fort Peck CC (Tribal)
Rosebud	9,261	22	Chief Dull Knife College (Tribal)
Beaverhead	8,743	24	UM-Western
Dawson	8,624	26	Dawson CC
Blaine	6,615	30	Fort Belknap College (Tribal)

Bitterroot Valley Community College

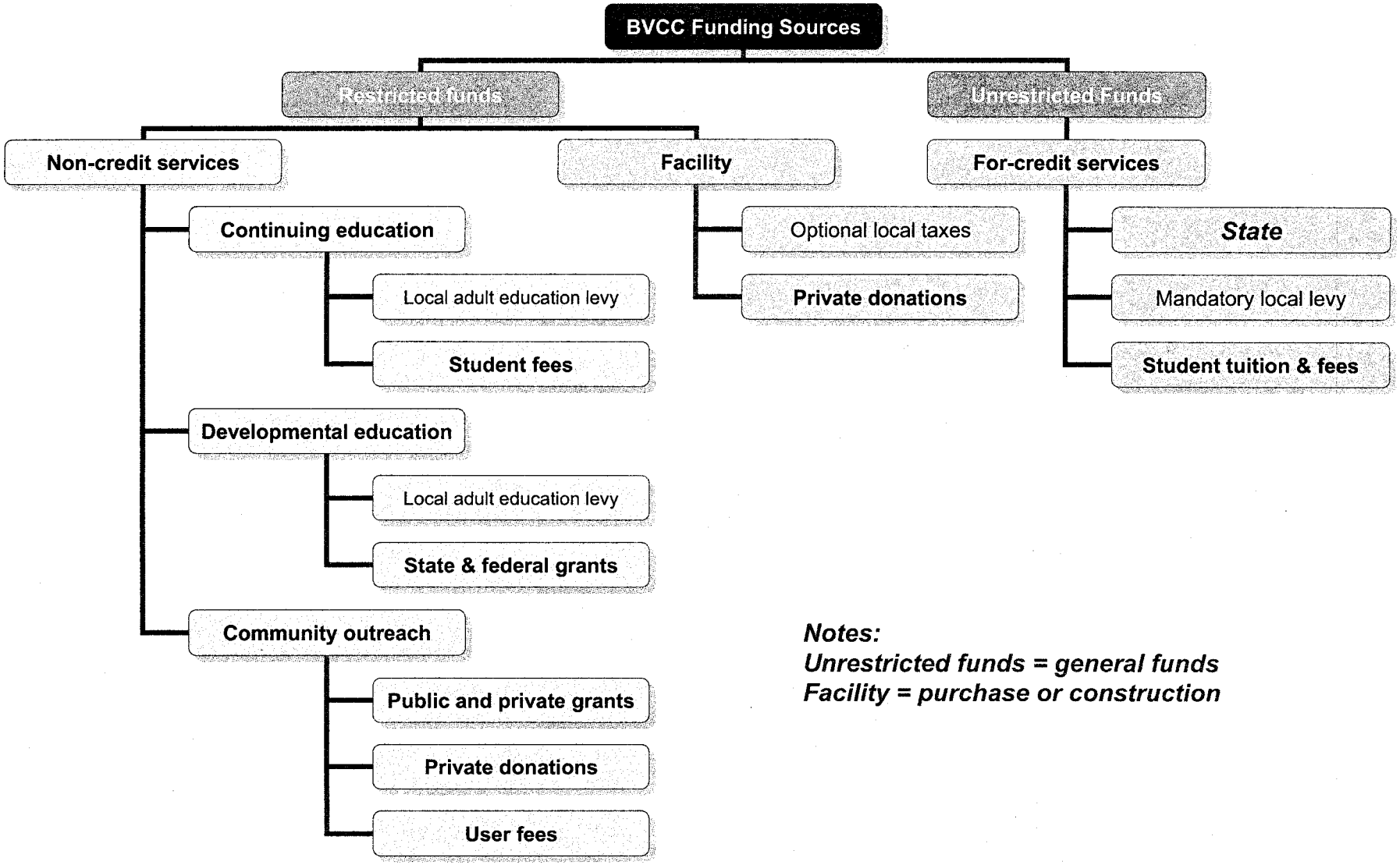
The BVCC Vision



Notes:
[1]A higher education center provides access to Montana University System (MUS) upper division courses leading to a baccalaureate, master, and/or doctorate degree.
[2]Also known as Remedial Education
[3]Also known as Vocational-Technical Education

Bitterroot Valley Community College

Funding the BVCC



Notes:
Unrestricted funds = general funds
Facility = purchase or construction

BITTERROOT VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE VERSUS A HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER OR MUS UNIT

As shown in the following matrix, a higher education center, as currently defined by Regents policy, would not meet the Bitterroot Valley need for access to affordable, comprehensive, accountable, and committed adult learning services (Note: example below assumes UM administration of a higher education center in Ravalli County). For an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the proposed BVCC and the proposed Hamilton Higher Education Center, please reference the BVCC Steering Committee's response to the UM's Higher Education Center Proposal (http://bvcc-edu.org/L.

As to how the BVCC would compare against "an extension site of some unit of the Montana University System" this would be entirely dependent on the governance, funding, and programming structure of the proposed unit. In the absence of any such details concerning such an entity, a comparison is not possible. At present, there is neither Regent policy nor state statute describing such a unit or its process of establishment, nor has any such unit been vetted.

	Affordable		***Comprehensive***	***Accountable***	***Committed***
	Funding	**Tuition**	**Mission**	**Governance**	**Establishment**
BVCC	State Local Student Able to levy adult education tax for non-credit education Eligible for state and federal dollars for adult literacy & GED (ABE)	Least expensive of public higher education options	For-credit Vo-tech Education General Education Non-credit Continuing Education Developmental Education Adult Literacy GED College Prep. Independently accredited, can initiate courses, programs, and degrees	Dual governance between a seven member locally elected board of trustees and the Board of Regents Local Board: *manages and controls* Board of Regents: *supervises and coordinates*	Vote of the people Vote of the legislature Results in the establishment of a permanent community college district with local taxing authority
HEC	State Student	No local investment leaves for-credit tuition dependent on state appropriation* No local investment leaves non-credit services dependent on student fees	For-credit: authorized UM or HEC partner programs leading to a degree NOT independently accredited, all programming must be authorized via the UM or one of the HEC's partners	Single governance by Board of Regents: *supervises, coordinates, manages, and controls* Under UM direction with a UM designated local coordinator	UM President plans & proposes Regents authorize Commissioner may recommend to discontinue Results in the establishment of a UM HEC with no legal charter and no local taxing authority

*Center cannot be run at a loss. If enrollment is not sufficient, a self-sustaining funding model may be pursued, whereby the state appropriates NO funds, and all costs must be absorbed by students, grants, contracts, or other non-state sources.

BITTERROOT VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE VERSUS A COMMUNITY COLLEGE SERVICE REGION

As shown in the following matrix, having the Bitterroot Valley become a service region (MCA 20-15-241) of an existing community college would not meet the Bitterroot Valley need for access to affordable, comprehensive, accountable, and committed adult learning services.

From a merely practical standpoint, it should be noted that with respect to the state's existing community colleges, Ravalli County is considerably more populous than the counties supporting Dawson and Miles community colleges, not to mention that these two schools are both over 500 miles east of Ravalli's county seat in Hamilton. Too, regarding Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC), not only is Kalispell 165 miles north of Hamilton, but, moreover, adding Ravalli County to FVCC territory would boost FVCC's total service population from 106,000 to 146,000, an increase of 38 percent. It seems likely that the FVCC Board would proceed with great caution before committing to such an expansion of its service base.

	Affordable		***Comprehensive***	***Accountable***	***Committed***
	Funding	**Tuition**	**Mission**	**Governance**	**Establishment**
BVCC	State Local Student Able to levy adult education tax for non-credit education Eligible for state and federal dollars for adult literacy & GED (ABE)	Least expensive of public higher education options	For-credit Vo-tech Education General Education Non-credit Continuing Education Developmental Education Adult Literacy GED College Prep. Independently accredited, can initiate courses, programs, and degrees	Dual governance between a seven member locally elected board of trustees and the Board of Regents Local Board: *manages and controls* Board of Regents: *supervises and coordinates*	Vote of the people Vote of the legislature Results in the establishment of a permanent community college district with local taxing authority
CC Service Region	State Local* Student Eligible for state and federal dollars for adult literacy & GED (ABE) via association with parent CC	Least expensive of public higher education options HOWEVER, for-credit and non-credit student expenses are fixed by parent CC	For-credit Vo-tech Education General Education Non-credit Continuing Education Developmental Education Adult Literacy GED College Prep. HOWEVER, specific programming is dependent on parent CC	Dual governance between a seven member *non-locally* elected board of trustees and the Board of Regents Non-Local Board: *manages and controls* Board of Regents: *supervises and coordinates*	Local governing body submits service plan to parent CC Board Parent CC Board approves region Board of Regents approves region Locals vote to establish region Region may be rescinded in 5 years by a vote of the local governing body designating the region, the parent CC Board, or by a vote of the local electorate

*Local levy for all services dependent on agreement with parent CC

BITTERROOT VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE VERSUS DISTANCE EDUCATION

As shown in the following matrix, having the Bitterroot Valley be served solely via distance education would not meet the Bitterroot Valley need for access to affordable, comprehensive, accountable, and committed adult learning services.

Too, it should be remembered that although distance education is a viable option for many students, there are significant barriers to distance education for certain segments of the population (most notably those without convenient high-speed internet access, those without sufficient language arts skills, those without sufficient computer skills, those unfamiliar with postsecondary education procedures, and those lacking sufficient self-discipline and academic confidence). While it is possible to address these barriers and expand the distance education student base, such an effort requires funding, screening, counseling, training, and support, and generally includes a local facility wherein face-to-face interaction is possible. For an example of what is required to successfully implement distance education within a targeted population, please review the Montana Distance Learning Pilot Project (http://www.nwlincs.org/mtlincs/opi/08-09/distance_learning.pdf) conducted this past year by Montana Adult Basic and Literacy Education (contact state ABLE director Margaret Bowles for pilot project details).

	Affordable		***Comprehensive***	***Accountable***	***Committed***
	Funding	**Tuition**	**Mission**	**Governance**	**Establishment**
BVCC	State Local Student Able to levy adult education tax for non-credit education Eligible for state and federal dollars for adult literacy & GED (ABE)	Least expensive of public higher education options	For-credit Vo-tech Education General Education Non-credit Continuing Education Developmental Education Adult Literacy GED College Prep. Independently accredited, can initiate courses, programs, and degrees	Dual governance between a seven member locally elected board of trustees and the Board of Regents Local Board: *manages and controls* Board of Regents: *supervises and coordinates*	Vote of the people Vote of the legislature Results in the establishment of a permanent community college district with local taxing authority
Distance Education	State Student No local levy to offset for-credit or non-credit student expenses	Dependent on distance education provider HOWEVER, distance education credits typically run ca. $30 more per credit than traditional credits HOWEVER, distance education often requires ownership of a computer and home internet access	For-credit Vo-tech Education General Education Non-credit Continuing Education Developmental Education GED College Prep. HOWEVER, programming variety dependent on distance education provider HOWEVER, programming limited by distance delivery method (no hands-on labs, etc) HOWEVER, access to and success of distance education dependent on individual student characteristics	All governance is situated with the distance education provider No local control	To the extent that local residents fit the profile for a successful distance education student and are aware of distance learning opportunities, distance education is already available to residents of Ravalli County