

Montana Virtual Academy Proposal

Concept Description:

1. A state-funded distance learning Academy governed similarly to the Montana Schools E-Learning Academy (MSELC).
 - a. Participation organized through inter-local agreement.
 - b. State association representatives (1 each designated by MEA-MFT, SAM, MREA, MTSBA)
 - c. Board of Public Education, Office of Public Instruction and Governor's Office representatives
 - d. University of Montana representative
 - e. Montana State University representative
 - f. Parent
2. The board would be administratively attached to an agency or campus of the University System under guidelines similar to those specified in 2-15-121. Options for administrative attachment would include the University of Montana, School of Education, which has administered MSELC for the last year, or the Office of Public Instruction. The appointed board would govern the program, including employment of all staff for the program.
3. Use of teachers properly licensed and endorsed in Montana in the applicable subject matters. Standard compensation to district supplying instructor and terms of compensation to teacher by school district subject to terms of collective bargaining agreement, or district policy in the absence of a collective bargaining agreement covering instructors in the district.
4. Available to children enrolled in a K-12 public school in Montana, grades K-12.
5. In full compliance with all Accreditation standards.
6. Focused on core subject matters required under the Accreditation Standards, advanced courses for dual credit in collaboration with the Montana University System and enrichment courses developed after a comprehensive needs assessment.
7. Students would be enrolled in and would generate ANB to the school district of residence.

Sample Timeline to Full Implementation:

1. FY2010:
 - a. Entire year – School districts update technology with one time only funding stream provided by the state. Goal of ensuring sufficient broadband connectivity in each school to allow for effective participation in online and videoconference courses, both synchronous and asynchronous.
 - b. Entire year – Create a statewide awareness of and excitement for the program.
 - c. July 1, 2009 - Funding begins. Recruitment for a director of the program begins immediately.
 - d. August 15, 2009 – Hire director of program.

- e. September 1, 2009 – Recruitment of Academy instructors employed by Academy.
- f. August 15-October 1, 2009 – Determination of online platform software to be used for program.
- g. October 1, 2009 – Course development begins. Scheduled for completion within 6 months. Allocate \$40,000 per course (\$1.2 million total for 30 courses) with at least one full unit course in each of the core subject matters required by the Accreditation standards under 10.55.901 et seq. (English (4 units), Math (3 units required), Science (3 units required), Social Studies (3 units required), Vocational/Technical (2 units required), Arts (2 units required), Health Enhancement (1 unit required), World Languages (2 units required), and Electives (2 units required) and at least ten advanced courses, ideally eligible for dual credit in collaboration with the Montana University System.

The course allocation should be used to compensate the school district(s) supplying the instructor(s) who are developing the course, as well as technical support and assistance on course design. Team development will be encouraged to ensure that we have as many instructors as possible available to teach multiple sections of the same developed course.

- a. October 1, 2009 – Building of Academy website begins. Scheduled for completion within 6 months.
- b. April 1, 2010 – Launch website with full functionality for online registration and with completed courses – provide online course previews.
- c. April 2010– May 2010 – Provide regional information sessions regarding the program and course offerings.
- d. April 1 – June 30, 2010 – Registration and course selection

2. FY2011:

- a. July 2010 – In person orientation and professional development for all online instructors.
- b. August 2010 – Online orientation for all registered students
- c. End of August 2010, Beginning of September 2010 - Courses begin.

Proposed Budget, First Biennium

Ongoing:

- Full operational costs (e.g. facilities, supplies, phones, equipment, etc.) for 10 FTE hired by Academy Board and OPI to support program. Assuming that the costs are similar on a per FTE basis to the full costs of operating the Board of Public Education and CSPAC, this would come in at approximately \$1.1 million per year.
 - Director of Program
 - Curriculum Director

- 2 FTE administrative support
- 6 technical support/customer service/facilitators to assist in instruction and quality control
- Contracted Customer Service Hotline for 24-7 support on software, access, website, contracted tutorial service for student issues. \$200,000 annual cost.
- Funding to district supplying instructor. Suggested at \$10,000. Assuming that 2 sections of 30 courses are initially offered, this would reflect a \$600,000 annual cost.
- Annual professional development conference with instructor participation costs funded by state (likely needed on a more frequent, comprehensive basis in the initial years of the project, including training for the instructors and technology staff in school districts). \$45,000
- Annual allocation of funding necessary to update curriculum. \$45,000
- Quarterly meetings of the Academy board with expenses reimbursed for those traveling from out of town. \$10,000

One Time Only:

- \$1.2 million for course development (30 courses @ \$40,000 per course).
- \$40,000 for first year multi-day professional development for all initial instructors.
- \$1 million for strengthening school districts online access and delivery systems.