



Fact Sheets for General-Funded Programs

January 2011

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## Accreditation, Curriculum, and Instruction

The Accreditation Division supports three major directives: 1) reviewing 828 school programs and course offerings to ensure compliance with accreditation standards adopted by the Board of Public Education; 2) providing individual, regional, and statewide professional learning opportunities, classroom resources and model curriculum for use by local districts; and 3) facilitating use of local student achievement data by educators to plan, implement, and evaluate student progress toward meeting academic content standards.

The Accreditation Division:

- Delivered technical assistance to more than 5,000 educators, on gifted and talented programs, standards-based education, understanding content standards as revised for science, information literacy-library, technology, mathematics, communication arts, integrating technology into the curriculum and common core state standards.
- Developed the Full-Time Kindergarten Model Curriculum Guide and provided technical assistance to 200 kindergarten teachers on using the guide in their classrooms.
- Completed a Montana Model Curriculum Development Guide for Science education.
- Developed and disseminated an interactive DVD and companion how-to guide to implement the revised Science standards. Also trained 50 educators to provide regional professional development using OPI created resources.
- Provided workshops on the revised science standards reaching 163 districts, 309 schools, 187 administrators, and 2,909 teachers.
- Provided 10 workshops, individual assistance to 37 districts, five webinar presentations, four face-to-face presentations and telephone assistance to help school personnel analyze local data to plan, implement and evaluate a continuous school improvement plan.
- Reached 793 parents and educators through technical assistance, professional development workshops and presentations on gifted and talented education.
- Convened a 35 member Task Force to revise a portion of the Board of Public Education's Accreditation Standards. In the next Biennium, the Superintendent of Public Instruction will recommend such revisions to the Board of Public Education. These recommended amendments provide local districts opportunity for flexibility and innovation, while ensuring quality education and public accountability.
- Facilitates four on-site reviews at Montana's postsecondary educator programs.
- Provides technical assistance to educators in completing the annual school data reports through five regional face-to-face workshops and ongoing webinars.
- Is beginning to develop and disseminate guides for Information Literacy-Library, Technology, Mathematics, and Communication Arts.
- Is conducting an alignment study to determine gaps between National Common Core Standards and Montana's current standards. The Common Core Standards Initiative ([www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)) was led by the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, working with Achieve, ACT and the College Board, among other education groups. The state Superintendent will make a recommendation concerning the potential adoption of the Common Core State Standards to the Montana Board of Public Education in May 2011.



## Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE)

Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) includes instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies and English as a Second Language and other skills required for attaining employment, or entering post secondary education. ABLE serves approximately 200 adults in the Montana State Prison system, 1,500 individuals between 16-18 years of age and 4,500 adults.

The Adult Basic and Literacy Education Program:

- Developed a performance-based funding model that aligns the components of a funding formula with state funding priorities.
- Worked with the Montana Department of Labor and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education to develop the PEP Talk Process, which is a common intake activity that assists each student/client in the development of a personal employment plan that can seamlessly transition between agencies.
- Wrote ABLE content standards to clearly define what an adult student needs to know and be able to do in order to pass the GED, a postsecondary entrance exam or be workforce-ready.
- Implemented GED Online to provide instruction to students who are not able to attend classroom instruction during scheduled hours or who live a long distance from service providers.
- Is working with Flathead Valley Community College to develop a contextualized learning model that integrates career training in the ABLE classroom.
- Is developing a data initiative entitled: *Diving Deep into the National Reporting System (NRS) Local Pool; Attendance, Education Gain, and Transition Outcomes.*
- Manages and monitors program adherence to the requirements of the Adult Family and Literacy Act.
- Collects data on student attendance and pre-post test gains.
- Oversees sub-grants for 20 programs and 36 satellite programs across Montana.

Sub grantees provide:

- Basic education skills development in literacy, math, etc. (skills to grade level equivalency 12.9) with an average of 260,000 of classroom hours provided/year.
- GED preparation with approximately 900 adults obtaining their GED per year.
- Instruction on employment readiness by integrating lessons on use of technology, soft skills, resume writing, and specific requests by employers/students.
- English as a Second Language instruction to approximately 200 adults each year.
- College preparation with application assistance and prep for postsecondary entrance exams.
- Employment retention by providing instruction in skill areas requested by an employer or helping students prepare for employment advancements.



## **Audiology (Statewide Hearing Conservation)**

The purpose of the Statewide Hearing Conservation Program is to identify and provide services to children with hearing impairments. The Office of Public Instruction contracts with eight providers (five private providers, two university providers and one public school provider) for audiology services. These providers are located in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Glasgow, Great Falls, Kalispell, Lewistown and Missoula. Every school district in Montana has access to audiology services. Contractors provide the needed matching funds for the program's operation. The program is an excellent example of public and private partnership for the benefit of Montana's children. The Special Education Division administers the Hearing Conservation Program.

### The Audiology Program:

- Ensures Montana's children who have been identified as having a hearing impairment are reported to schools so that necessary instructional supports can be provided for the children's successful education.
- Assures public schools have on-going access to qualified audiology providers even in the most rural and remote regions of the state.
- Screens approximately 63,000 children annually and refers nearly 1,700 children for follow-up medical evaluations when screening data indicate a hearing problem needing medical attention.
- Provides about 50 comprehensive hearing evaluations annually for children suspected of having a hearing impairment.
- Provides follow-up to hospital screenings of infants suspected of having a hearing impairment to determine the need for referral to DPHHS for infant and toddler services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (special education).
- Works with schools and contractors to ensure services are provided in accordance with contracts and technical assistance requirements.



## Career and Technical Education

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division supports more than 470 school programs and approximately 680 certified teachers of agriculture, business, family and consumer sciences, health occupations, industrial technology, and marketing. Ninety-nine percent of Montana high schools (163) provide CTE programs to their students.

The Career and Technical Education Division:

- Assists schools with the curriculum development and implementation of Big Sky Pathways (an initiative helping high school students focus their academic and vocational course selections on their college and career goals).
- Plans and provides online tutorials, conference workshops, and other professional development opportunities for CTE teachers.
- Communicates with schools concerning State and Federal Career and Vocational/Technical Education funding.
- Monitors Federal Carl Perkins and State CTE programs and expenditures.
- Provides assistance to parents, educators, schools and communities related to career and technical education.
- Develops and updates Montana Program Standards and Guidelines for Career and Vocational/Technical Education.
- Creates partnerships between CTE programs, business and industry associations, and the public.
- Serves as State Advisor for CTE Student Organizations.

### Montana Career and Technical Education Program Areas:

- **Agriculture Education** - 80 approved programs serve 4,033 students and have 80 FFA student chapters with 2,555 members.
- **Business/Marketing Education** - 160 approved programs serve 14,000 students and have 90 Business Professionals of America (BPA) chapters with 1,562 members and 13 DECA student chapters with 352 members.
- **Family and Consumer Sciences Education** - 112 approved programs serve 9,139 students and have 70 Family, Career & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) student chapters with 1,263 members.
- **Health Occupations Education** - 13 approved programs serve 734 students and have seven Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) student chapters with 137 members.
- **Industrial Technology Education** - 111 approved programs serve 12,774 students and have 34 SkillsUSA student chapters with 427 members and nine Technology Student Association (TSA) chapters with 121 members.



## Educator Licensure

The Superintendent of Public Instruction issues all teacher, administrator and education specialist licenses in Montana as set forth in the policies of the Board of Public Education, Chapter 57 of the Administrative Rules of Montana. The Educator Licensure Program ensures educators meet all requirements for licensure in Montana. OPI Legal Counsel administers the Educator Licensure Program.

The Educator Licensure Program:

- Maintains a database and document management system of over 24,500 licensed Montana educators to ensure current and accurate educator licensure information is available.
- Issues 1,000 or more new educator licenses each year.
- Renews over 1,800 licenses per year, nearly half via an online application process.
- Responds to over 17,000 inquiries per year.
- Works with the Board of Public Education and the Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council on issues regarding licensure.
- Updates the OPI website on the current licensure status of all licensed Montana educators and keeps application forms and licensure information up-to-date and available.
- Approves providers of professional development and individual activities for license renewal credit.
- Recommends revocation and suspension of licenses to the Board of Public Education for those licensees determined to have committed criminal and other actions of potential harm to children.
- Reports surrendered licenses to the Board of Public Education and defends decisions to deny licenses for academic and character reasons when a denial is appealed to the Board of Public Education.



## General Educational Development (GED)

The proper administration, supervision and integrity of the GED testing program are joint responsibilities of Montana and the GED Testing Service. Montana's GED program has day-to-day responsibility for policy implementation, administration of the program and all GED testing center services. It approves and monitors state testing centers, provides training and technical assistance to test examiners and evaluation of field operations.

The GED Program:

- Oversees 25 General Educational Development (GED) testing sites and 10 addendum sites across the state.
- Monitors all GED testing centers to ensure compliance with the American Council on Education regulations.
- Processes more than 3,000 GED tests annually.
- Annually mails over 2,500 GED duplicate transcripts used by individuals for application to the military, postsecondary education and employment.
- Responds to approximately 1,000 inquiries via telephone and email each year from parents, students, teachers, administrators and community-based organizations regarding GED attainment.
- Implemented an electronic scoring system that provides student test scores within one to four hours for all sections of the test except the essay portion. The essay scoring may take one to three days. Previously, test takers waited three to six weeks for test score results.
- Developed an updated information system that allows each test center the ability to view a student's test history, modify demographic data and print unofficial transcripts. Previously, test centers had to contact the OPI for all student information which delayed student testing and student transition to the workforce or entry into postsecondary.



## Gifted and Talented State Grants

The Gifted and Talented State Grant (GTSG) Program administers state-funded grants to assist school districts in meeting the requirements under Administrative Rules of Montana 10.55.804 Gifted and Talented, and the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 20-7-901 through 904. One program specialist administers, oversees, and monitors the GTSG Program. Approximately 7,400 identified gifted and talented students in Montana benefit from the educational services provided through the GTSG Program. Each school district in Montana develops its own philosophy, definition, identification process and services for gifted and talented students. Districts determine the specific grades to provide services and these services range from Kindergarten through grade 12.

The Gifted and Talented State Grant Program:

- Evaluates applications annually from school districts for Gifted and Talented grants, distributing funds and monitoring grant awardees. In FY 2010-11, the GTSG Program awarded a state total of \$229,813 in formula grants to 76 Montana schools. These funds support educational services for approximately 7,400 students identified as gifted and talented.
- Hosts approximately 10 regional trainings per year for teachers, administrators and parents in using the best educational practices for meeting the state standards for Gifted and Talented Programs.
- Conducts approximately 15 on-site visits per year to school districts across the state to assist schools in ways to best serve Montana's Gifted and Talented students.
- Collects data on the number and percentage of Montana students identified as gifted and talented at every grade level to increase achievement for all gifted and talented students.
- Works cooperatively with the Montana Association of Gifted and Talented Education by co-sponsoring professional learning workshops for teachers and parents.
- Develops, disseminates and implements gifted education program guides, classroom resources and parent information materials to improve services to gifted and talented students.



## Indian Education

The Indian Education Division provides leadership, education, guidance and resources to school districts, students, parents and educational agencies and organizations in the state of Montana and serves two purposes. The first is to assure that the 16,724 American Indian students in Montana's public schools receive a quality and equitable education as provided for by Montana Code Annotated 20-9-330, which directed funds to school districts for the purpose of closing the achievement gap. The second purpose is to assure that all students leave the public education system with an understanding of the rich history and contemporary issues of Montana's Indians per the state's Constitution.

Within the Indian Education Division,

The Indian Student Achievement Program:

- Analyzes American Indian student and school-level data to monitor and improve the learning of American Indian students in Montana.
- Monitors current educational research and best practices to assist schools in closing achievement gaps and designing and implementing school improvement efforts.
- Develops effective strategies to reduce Indian student dropout rates and increase completion rates.
- Identifies and conducts training for educators in developing and implementing exemplary Indian education best practices.
- Administers the Title III English Language Acquisition Program of No Child Left Behind, which provides funding for supplemental services to limited English proficient students, the majority of whom are American Indian students.

The Indian Education for All Program:

- Provides high quality professional development (on-site, state conferences, etc.), materials and support to schools on the implementation of "Indian Education for All" (MCA 20-1-501).
- Administers and supports sub-grant opportunities to schools and educators to enhance the implementation of Indian Education for All efforts at the local level.
- Partners and collaborates with organizations, entities and consortia to assist in providing professional development, creating materials and resources, and the overall implementation of Indian Education for All.
- Provides staff support and resources for the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Board of Public Education's Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE).
- Distributes information on current American Indian education issues to the public.



## Information Technology

The Information Technology Division designs and operates the computer systems used by the OPI to conduct daily operations in order to complete the mission of the agency. The division funds the licenses and maintenance contracts for hardware and software maintained by the OPI.

Within the Information Technology Division,

### Network Services:

- Installs, secures and operates the OPI's network and desktop computing environment including the support of cell phones and more than 200 desktop and laptop computers. Hosts the OPI website, the Board of Public Education's website, the Montana NewsLink website and the Legislature's website including video streaming of the House and Senate Chambers and committee hearings.
- Hosts OPI's applications on a virtual server for cost efficiency.

### Systems Development:

- Issued RFPs for the Statewide Longitudinal Data System project; created a central repository that documents the data the OPI maintains and how it is collected and reported; created an online application for school continuous improvement plans; performed a major rewrite of the systems used by the School Nutrition Program; and migrated a number of applications from obsolete software to a newer and easier maintained environment.
- Creates and supports more than 60 OPI- written computer applications used by the agency.
- Is establishing a data warehouse and new reporting tools; implementing an improved system to control access to OPI's computer applications and provide single sign-on for users of OPI systems; and migrating all OPI systems to a web-based presentation layer to provide easier access to systems and allow cost effective maintenance of the systems.

### Internet Services:

- Completed a major rewrite and update of the OPI website and the installation of a new bulk email server.
- Maintains the OPI website, which has more than 3 million visits a year. Maintains the electronic communication between the OPI, Montana's 420 school districts, 56 county superintendents, tribal educators and the Board of Public Education. Operates the "Jobs for Teachers" website which notifies teachers and school administrators of job openings and provides for online teacher applications. Provides desktop publishing services for the cost effective production of all OPI publications.

### Resource Center:

- Operates the OPI Resource Center which provides research, answers reference and resource questions, and maintains the OPI research library.

### School Computer Equipment Program:

- Operates the OPI School Computer Program which distributes more than 2,000 surplus state government computers and peripherals a year to 420 school districts.



## K-12 Education Data Systems

The K-12 Education Data Systems supports OPI's efforts to coordinate data collection and reporting related to K-12 education and student achievement. The major systems that are supported with state funding are the AIM (Achievement in Montana) statewide student information system, the development of a school staffing module, and OPI's electronic grants management system.

Within the K-12 Education Data Systems Division,

### AIM, Statewide Student Information System:

- Collects enrollment, demographic and program participation data from all school districts and accredited private schools to facilitate the statewide student assessment, accreditation processes and performance measurement.
- Uses the AIM system to register students for the statewide student assessment and report on student achievement and Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind (NCLB).
- Develops training materials including Montana specific AIM Quick Reference Guides and data collection tutorials for school personnel.
- Trains school staff on the use of the Montana Edition (local school district software) and the Special Education reporting tool.
- Trains OPI staff on OPI's Student Records Confidentiality Policy, which applies to all contractors, employees of OPI, and researchers requesting access to confidential, sensitive or restricted student information.
- Provides public reports and analysis on indicators of student success, including attendance, graduation and dropout reports.

### School Staffing Information System:

- Links data related to educator training and professional qualifications with teaching assignments in schools.
- Designates critical educator shortage areas for providing educator loan repayment assistance.
- Is piloting a process for collecting salary and benefit information from school districts.
- Is redesigning the data system for issuing educator licenses and managing licensure information.

### Electronic Grants Management System:

- Provides school districts with online tools to apply for 14 federal grant programs administered by OPI, making approximately \$131 million available to Montana schools per year.
- Facilitates OPI's online review and approval process for grant applications and notices of awards to 420 school districts and numerous other eligible community-based and non-profit applicants.
- Streamlines processes by allowing school districts to submit online cash requests and to access information about the status of project payments over multiple years.
- Facilitates OPI's monthly electronic grant payments to sub-recipients and ties payments to the status of grant allocations and appropriations on the state's accounting system (SABHRS).
- Facilitates collection of data about planned uses of federal grant funds, used in reporting to the federal government.



## Legal

The OPI Legal Counsel provides legal advice and services to the Superintendent of Public Instruction and all divisions and programs of the Office of Public Instruction. The Legal Division consists of the chief legal counsel, an attorney assigned to special education matters, and two legal support staff. The Legal Division also supervises the Education Licensure Program.

The Legal Division:

- Drafts and reviews OPI documents, policies and contracts for legal content and compliance.
- Ensures OPI compliance with state and federal statutes and rules.
- Ensures Montana educators are qualified to be licensed by providing background check review, and investigation of issues potentially affecting applicants' qualifications for licensure.
- Represents OPI before the Board of Public Education in approximately 10 cases per year regarding educator licensure matters.
- Issues Superintendent of Public Instruction decisions on contested cases appealed from county superintendents and county transportation committees.
- Provides information on school law to parents, teachers and school officials fielding approximately 2,600 inquiries per year.
- Represents the Superintendent of Public Instruction in court proceedings.
- Assists with the adoption and amendment of administrative rules and of state education laws.
- Provides technical assistance to parents, schools and advocacy organizations regarding the delivery of free, appropriate public education for special education students. This includes resolving the vast majority of approximately 2,800 calls per year, which last year resulted in managing 17 due process hearings, and investigating and writing reports for 12 formal complaints.
- Resolves special education related legal questions and disputes through mediation and informal dispute resolution.
- Revises and produces *School Laws of Montana*, a post-legislative session compilation of Montana's statutory laws affecting our schools.



## Office of the State Superintendent

The Office of the State Superintendent provides leadership for Montana's K-12 public education system that includes 834 public schools, 141,807 students, and 12,733 certified educators and licensed professionals and management of 165 full-time OPI employees to achieve the Superintendent's statutory duties. It is the mission of the agency to provide vision, advocacy, support and leadership for schools and communities to ensure that all students meet today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction and her staff:

- Focus agency policy, planning and procedures to build a quality education system in Montana.
- Identify and promote key legislative initiatives targeted at achieving adequate school funding, recruiting and retaining quality educators, raising student achievement and supporting classroom instruction.
- Fulfill fiduciary responsibilities to the school children of Montana by maximizing revenue from school trust lands while balancing long-term value and benefits.
- Administer the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- Build partnerships to promote quality education with the Governor's Office, Higher Education, Legislature, education partners, MT State Library, Workforce Investment Board, private businesses and state and national education coalitions.
- Communicate information about public education and current educational issues to parents, the public, schools, businesses, state, local and tribal governments, the Legislature and the news media.
- Promote accountability by overseeing the annual statewide testing of MT students and analyze and report results to the Board of Public Education, schools and the public.
- Promote the development of valid and reliable education information systems improving information exchange among schools, the OPI, policy makers and the public.
- Make recommendations to the Board of Public Education in the areas of academic standards, school safety, students with special needs, and educator qualifications. Support the Board with resources, services and research.
- Manage the human resource functions of the Office of Public Instruction.
- Recognize educator excellence by distributing stipends to teachers who achieve certification from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.



## School Finance

The School Finance Division distributes state funding to Montana's 420 school districts, establishes school accounting and budgeting policies, trains and assists school and county staff with all facets of school finance, and collects and reports highly reliable data used by legislature and the federal government. This division also oversees and funds pupil transportation.

With nine program staff and one computer programmer, this OPI division is cost efficient, operating the entire school funding distribution system with overhead costs of less than 1/10 of one percent of the total state payments to schools.

Within the School Finance Division,

State Payments to Schools, Special Education Cooperatives and Counties:

- Distributes over \$708 million (close to 40 percent of the Montana State General Fund Budget) to Montana's 420 school districts under 14 payment programs.

Pupil Transportation:

- Distributes state transportation payments to districts for over 2,000 school bus routes traveling over 18 million miles each year, transporting almost half of Montana's 141,807 K-12 students.
- Ensures Montana's 2,700 school buses are inspected yearly and 2,500 bus drivers are certified and trained according to Montana's standards.

Accounting Policies:

- Sets Montana's school accounting policies in accordance with national accounting standards and best practices, ensuring school finance data used in legislative decision making is consistent and reliable.

Data Collection and Reporting:

- Maintains the MAEFAIRS computer system to collect school district budgets, annual revenue and expenditure reports, and other financial data used by practically all OPI divisions, other state and federal agencies, and the Montana Legislature.

Technical Assistance and Training:

- Provides technical assistance and trains school district business managers, superintendents, county officials, board members, and auditors on all topics related to school finance.
- Provides online resources for schools and the public on our OPI web page. Answers thousands of calls to provide information to school personnel, parents and other taxpayers every year.

Audit Monitoring:

- Annually reviews approximately 250 school district audits and helps schools take corrective action on audit findings.

Impact Aid Liaison:

- Serves as the liaison to the Federal Impact Aid Program, which provides more than \$40 million each year to over 100 Montana school districts. Montana receives no federal administrative funding for this federally required state liaison function (0.20 FTE).



## School Nutrition

The School Nutrition Program administers the school-based Child Nutrition Program on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The OPI paid reimbursements to Montana schools of more than \$33 million in federal funds for school meals served in FY2010. Montana's state match requirement for participating in the National School Lunch Program was \$645,934 in FY2010. The OPI uses the state match appropriation to pay the costs of storing and shipping USDA Foods for schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program.

The OPI School Nutrition Program includes the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Afterschool Snack Program, Special Milk Program, Summer Food Service Program, Food Distribution Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Team Nutrition Program and Cooperative Purchase Program. These programs are in place to ensure that schools provide nutritious meals and promote healthy lifestyles to Montana's kids.

The School Nutrition Program:

- Provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free meals in 812 schools in Montana (approximately 80,500 lunches and 24,700 breakfasts each day). In Montana, half of the lunch meals and two-thirds of the breakfast meals are served to children free or at a reduced-price, based on their family's household income.
- Makes federal reimbursement payments to school districts for meals served.
- Reviews school districts for compliance with federal regulations and conducts trainings/provides technical assistance so school staff are informed of program requirements.
- Collects and compiles data for federal reporting.
- Administers the USDA Food Distribution Program that delivers a variety of healthful USDA Foods that account for 15 to 20 percent of food used by the school food service programs.
- Administers the Cooperative Purchase Program allowing small schools to take advantage of substantial cost savings on food items.
- Helps schools create meals consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the MyPyramid food guidance system.
- Works on increased program access and participation to end childhood hunger by making it easier for children to enroll in free school meals through direct certification, expanding access and participation in the School Breakfast Program, and feeding kids when school is out through the Summer Food Service Program.
- Supports student wellness and childhood obesity reduction efforts by ensuring nutrient rich school meals, increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables, expanding farm-to-school programs, and ensuring that food safety procedures are followed.



## Special Education

The Division of Special Education is responsible for ensuring that the 17,000 plus students with disabilities, ages 3 through 18, are provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state laws. Montana's special education programs have received national recognition for excellence.

The Special Education Division:

- Allocates over \$43 million in state special education funds to districts and special education cooperatives for support of special education and related services to more than 17,000 students with disabilities.
- Distributes over \$200,000 per biennium to schools to assist in meeting the special education obligations of students with significant needs – funds that are remaining in the allocation for educational services in the residential treatment facilities noted in the next bullet. Access to these funds is not based on disability but needs that are beyond a district's capability to meet appropriately.
- Oversees contracts with Shodair Children's Hospital, Acadia Residential Treatment Center, Intermountain Children's Home and Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch for the purpose of providing education services to Montana children and youth who are in residence at each of the facilities. The biennial allocation is \$830,000.
- Assists schools with understanding their responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act as they relate to providing access to school services for students with physical and mental impairments. The OPI does not have monitoring responsibilities for these services and provides guidance to schools and parents as a collateral benefit.



## Traffic Education

The Traffic Education (TE) Program manages the state novice driver education program. Summer one-day workshops provide advanced driver training at the Montana DR.I.V.E. facility in Lewistown for school bus drivers, state agencies, businesses and the general public. The TE unit assists 139 districts providing driver education to approximately 8,500 teens annually.

### The Traffic Education Program:

- Sets program, curriculum and teacher preparation standards to assure quality and increase teen driver safety. Also provides technical assistance to program managers and professional development opportunities for teachers.
- Monitors programs through desk audits and site visits. When public schools meet all applicable state standards, the OPI reimburses a portion of the expenses incurred delivering the driver education from a percentage of driver license fees.
- Created in collaboration with the Department of Justice, a parent's guide to graduated driver licensing (GDL) to help parents understand their role in supervising, coaching and restricting teen driving in high risk conditions.
- Pilot-tested the nation's first driver education parent/teen homework assignments, in cooperation with the Montana Traffic Education Association (MTEA). The use of the parent teen homework (Keep Encouraging Young-driver Safety – KEYS) is increasing by recruiting and training more teachers on using the materials.
- Created a Law Enforcement Guide to the GDL to aid officers in properly citing violations, in cooperation with Montana law enforcement.
- Partnered with Western Transportation Institute to conduct research in order to better understand teen distracted driving and the effectiveness of possible safety measures.
- Is evaluating Montana's driver education program and developing an updated sustainable quality assurance process to ensure teens are getting the best possible driver education. This evaluation will be conducted by outside researchers and is funded by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.
- Provides advanced driver training to approximately 500 drivers each summer through one-day workshops with Montana DR.I.V.E. (Driver in Vehicle Education) in Lewistown. This training develops behind-the-wheel skills to respond safely to driving risks. The program has nine professional instructors, a fleet of school buses and sedans, as well as a dump truck, an ambulance and a fire truck. It is supported solely by user fees.