



## Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee

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### 62nd Montana Legislature

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DATE

Denise Juneau, Superintendent  
Office of Public Instruction  
P.O. Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501

Dear Superintendent Juneau,

The Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee has spent several months studying issues related to childhood hunger. Throughout the study, the committee heard from many interested parties about programs that currently exist to educate school students and others about healthy food choices. The committee also heard from many people about the need to ensure that people have the knowledge and skill to use their food dollars wisely, make good food choices, and provide nutritious meals for their children.

Several stakeholders suggested that a clearinghouse for existing information on nutrition education would benefit children, their parents, and many of the groups that are involved with ensuring that Montana children have access to healthy foods. On behalf of the committee, I'm writing to ask that you consider establishing such a clearinghouse within the Office of Public Instruction.

Stakeholders envisioned the clearinghouse as a Web site that would provide information about and links to the many nutrition education efforts already underway in the state. These efforts range from the training and technical assistance that Montana Team Nutrition provides to schools to the nutrition education offerings of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, after-school programs, local food banks, and organizations such as 4-H and Grow Montana

The Web site would provide a wealth of information to anyone who wants to learn more about ways to improve child and youth nutrition. As part of its responsibilities, the clearinghouse also could inform interested parties — such as food banks and other groups involved in efforts to alleviate hunger — of the existence of the Web site.

The interim committee members heard about the important role that Montana Team Nutrition plays in school-related nutrition education efforts. We also learned of the program's involvement in bringing together other groups involved in nutrition education, to encourage sharing of information.

Because OPI oversees Montana Team Nutrition and also is involved in several statewide coalitions focused on nutrition and food security, the committee believes OPI is best positioned to establish and publicize a clearinghouse for nutrition education. Thus the Children and Families Committee respectfully asks you to take on this task.

Thank you for consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Sen. Jason Priest  
Presiding Officer

OPI