

February/March 2006



SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the School Finance Division

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This newsletter is emailed to school districts, county superintendents, county treasurers, and auditors each month. The newsletter is intended to reach all district staff involved in budgeting, accounting, enrollment, special education funding, and federal programs. Please forward this newsletter to all interested parties. Got suggestions for items to include here? We'd love to hear from you!

School Finance Division Welcomes Paul Taylor

Paul Taylor joined the School Finance Division on January 30 as Computer Support Specialist (a.k.a. "Go-To person"), In this position, Paul will serve as the primary contact for school staff who need assistance accessing and using MAEFAIRS. Paul also coordinates other division activities and maintains the division website. Nica Carte previously held this position before she assumed the lead role in enrollment and school structure issues. Paul was formerly a high school science teacher in Guam and has his master's degree in educational technology. He also served as his school's webmaster and was troubleshooter for a variety of technology problems throughout the district. Under Nica Carte's tutelage, we are confident Paul will provide the same exemplary customer service MAEFAIRS users have enjoyed in the past. Welcome, Paul!

First Semester Transportation Payments in March

OPI will distribute the 1st semester transportation reimbursements for bus routes and individual contracts on March 24, 2006. School districts will be notified by Official Email that a payment advice is posted on the website. OPI will also notify county superintendents of the amount paid to each district and the amount due from county transportation aid. First semester TR-5s and TR-6s that were received by OPI after the February 15 deadline will be paid with the second semester transportation payment in June.

OPI contact: Maxine Mougeot (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@mt.gov.

Budget Amendments for Increased Enrollment

Based on the recent spring enrollment count, districts with more than a 6% enrollment increase over the FY2004-05 average enrollment counts may be eligible for direct state aid. **OPI contact: Nica Carte (406) 444-4401 or ncarte@mt.gov.**

**FY2006-07
General Fund
Budget Tools
Now Available**

To assist schools in budgeting for the FY2006-07 school year, the following tools and resources are now available on the OPI website at the following links:

Preliminary Data Sheets: <ftp://www.opi.mt.gov/School%20Finance/FY2006-07DataSheets>

FY2006-07 General Fund Excel Spreadsheets:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfinance/excel.html> (Note: the data used for the FY2006-07 new funding components can be found in the spreadsheets on the "SS New Components" tab.)

FY2006-07 General Fund Overview & Worksheets:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/SchoolFinance/budget/FY07GenFund.pdf>

FY2006 Enrollment Reports:
<ftp://www.opi.mt.gov/School%20Finance/EnrollmentReports/>

FY2005-06 Budgets:
<ftp://www.opi.mt.gov/School%20Finance/SchoolBudgets/>

Special Session Legislative Summary:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/SchoolFinance/05SpSsSummary.pdf>

Guidance for Tracking FY2007 General Fund Components:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/SchoolFinance/Acct/ReportFY07Components.pdf>

To help OPI staff serve you better, please direct questions regarding this information to the appropriate individual:

Accessing the spreadsheets/ Computer/Technical Questions	OPI Help Desk (406) 444-3448 Paul Taylor (406) 444-3024
Budgeting/Entitlement Questions (including special session new funding components)	Bonnie Maze (406) 444-3249 Mike Waterman (406) 444-4524 Denise Ulberg (406) 444-1960
Enrollment Questions	Nica Carte (406) 444-4401
FTE Data (Quality Educator Pymt)	Karen Richem (406) 444-2410
American Indian Enrollment Data	Andy Boehm (406) 444-0375 Linda Atwood (406) 444-6712
Title I Allocation Data	BJ Granberry (406) 444-4420
Election Questions	Mike Waterman (406) 444-4524

**Save this Date!
MASBO Spring
Budget
Workshops**

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) will conduct Spring Budget Workshops in Missoula 3/13/06 and Billings 3/20/06. Two additional workshops are being offered at the following locations:

March 21 Miles City – Town & Country Club
March 27 Great Falls – MSU Great Falls College of Technology

Participants should bring their district's budget data and a calculator to work through the general fund budget during the session using manual worksheets. Presenters will be MASBO members and OPI staff members. There is a charge for the workshop.

Register at

<http://www.masbo.com/budget%20workshop%20flyer%202006%20-2.pdf>.

For more information, contact **Lynda Brannon (MASBO Executive Director)** (406) 444-5599 or masbo@in-tch.com.

**2006 Election
Handbook and
Calendar**

The 2006 Election Handbook and Calendar have been updated and are posted at these links:

Election Handbook:

<ftp://www.opi.mt.gov/School%20Finance/Election%20Manual/>

2006 Election Calendar:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/ElectionCalendar.pdf> .

Significant changes to the original calendar include:

- **Trustee candidates file for election.** The last day for trustee candidates to file a nomination for petition is March 23, 2006.
- **Address confirmation forms for electors on the permanent absentee voter list.** Montana law now allows electors to request an absentee ballot for each subsequent election (including school elections) provided the elector remains at the same address and remains qualified to vote. District clerks must send an "address confirmation form" to electors on this permanent absentee voter list at least 75 days before the election. Contact your county election administrator to obtain the list of permanent absentee voters in your district. A sample address confirmation form is posted at: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/AbVoteAddConf.pdf>
- **Deadline to call for an election.** Trustees must call for an election no later than March 23, 2006.

OPI Contact: Mike Waterman (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@mt.gov.

**FY2004-05
A-133 Audits
Due March 31,
2006**

A-133 “federal” audits for FY2004-05 are due to OPI by March 31, 2006. This affects districts and cooperatives that spent over \$500,000 of federal money (including USDA commodities) during FY2004-05. For districts and cooperatives that spent less than \$500,000 of federal funds and received more than \$200,000 of revenue under all sources during that year, “yellow book” audits for FY2004-05 are due June 30, 2006. Audited financial statements must comply with national reporting standards passed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) under Statement No. 34. More information about GASB 34 is available on OPI’s website at <http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfinance/gasb34.html> **OPI contact: Denise Ulberg (406) 444-1960 or dulberg@mt.gov**

**Indirect Cost
Applications**

Applications for indirect cost rates for FY2006-07 will be e-mailed to schools by the end of March and will be due to OPI in May. Indirect cost rates are OPTIONAL, but a district must have a rate approved by OPI each year in order to draw indirect cost recoveries off state and federal grants. (NOTE: Districts accumulating unused sick and vacation leave obligations for federally paid employees should use an indirect cost rate, since federal regulations do not allow termination payouts using direct charges to grants, but do allow payout from the indirect cost pool.) **OPI contact: Jim Oberembt (406) 444-1257 or joberembt@mt.gov.**

**Tuition Under
HB 83
FAQ’s for
FY2005-06**

Tuition for students placed in a district outside the student’s district of residence by a state agency or court, including tribal court, will be paid by OPI beginning with attendance during the FY2005-06 school year. More information, including FAQ’s is available at http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/SchoolFinance/Tuition/Tuition_memo_Jan06.pdf . **OPI Contact: Denise Ulberg (406) 444-1960 or dulberg@mt.gov.**

**MASBO Offers
New Clerks
Training in
April 2006**

MASBO’s New Clerks Workshop is scheduled for April 3 through April 5, 2006 at Jorgenson’s Holiday Motel in Helena. This 3-day seminar is designed to help new (or nearly new) district clerks learn what the school business office needs to do, what reports need to be filed and potential pitfalls to avoid. Veteran clerks are always welcome, too. For more information and registration materials, access this link: <http://www.masbo.com/New%20Clerk%20Brochure%20-%20Spring%202006.pdf> . **Contact: Lynda Brannon (MASBO Executive Director) (406) 444-5599 or masbo@in-tch.com.**

**Tax-Free
Vehicle Fuel
(Gas and
Diesel)
Discounts
Available
Through State**

School districts are eligible to participate in the state vehicle fueling network, which automatically calculates state-negotiated discounts and removes applicable taxes at the pump through Wright Express. Wright Express fuel cards are accepted at 95% of the gas stations around Montana. Over 50% of schools are already participating in the Vehicle Fueling Program. **Contact Devin Garrity (406) 444-3366 or dgarrity@mt.gov** to request an information packet on the Vehicle Fueling Program. The packet will include important information about state and federal special fuel tax exemptions.

**IRS Standard
Mileage Rate for
2006**

The Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate for 2006 was reduced to **44.5 cents per mile** as of **January 1, 2006**. The IRS announcement is available at this link:

<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=151226,00.html>

OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt (406) 444-1257 or joberembt@mt.gov.

**Important Email
and Website
Address
Changes**

Effective January 1, 2006 all State of Montana email addresses changed from @state.mt.us to **@mt.gov** (e.g., jbrown@mt.gov). Any mail will be returned as undeliverable if it goes to the @state.mt.us address. METNET email addresses are also affected by this change. METNET email addresses are now **@metnet.mt.gov**. **Contact: Paul Taylor (406) 444-3024 or ptaylor2@mt.gov.**

Useful Websites

Let us know if you are looking for a particular form, and we'll do our best to provide it electronically!

- List of all Official OPI E-Mails: http://www.metnet.mt.gov/Official_Mail
- OPI's GASB 34 Web Page:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfinance/gasb34.html>
- Bus Safety and Driver Training Videos:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/pupiltransport/TrainingVideos.pdf>
- OPI's "Get Answers" searchable databases for School Finance:
http://data.opi.mt.gov/scripts/rightnow.cfg/php.exe/enduser/std_alp.php?p_sid=VtNdSksh&p_lva=&p_li=&p_page=1&p_prod_lvl1=2&p_prod_lvl2=%7Eany%7E&p_cat_lvl1=%7Eany%7E&p_search_text=&p_new_search=1&p_search_type=3&p_sort_by=dfilt
- School Finance forms and publications:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfinance/forms.html>
- FP-14 Student Attendance Agreement:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/FP14Fillin.pdf>
- FP-14A Special Tuition Rates (used with FP-14)
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/FP14AFillin.pdf>
- Reconciling Cash to the County Treasurer (spreadsheet):
- Student Activity Fund Recap (spreadsheet):
- FY06 Reconciling Cash in the Misc. Programs Fund (spreadsheet):
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/SchoolFinance/Acct.html>
(Upper right-hand corner of page)
- CFDA Numbers for Federal Grants: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/FederalPrograms/handbook.html>
(Appendix F of the OPI State and Federal Grants Handbook)
- Budget Amendment Packet: OPI offers a packet of information about the budget amendment process for school districts:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/schoolfinance/forms/2002bapacket.pdf>
- Montana Codes Annotated (MCA) Online:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/masterMCASearch.html>
- Pupil Transportation link for MAPT Conference information and training opportunities:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PupilTransport/index.html#train>

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