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Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

School Finance



Welcome Debbie Casey!

The OPI School Finance Division is pleased to announce that Debbie Casey has joined our team as Computer Support Specialist. Debbie has been employed at OPI for over 17 years and has held positions in OPI's Assessment and G.E.D. programs. You can call Debbie for help with MAEFAIRS registration, information and technical assistance and general questions about the division's activities and web postings. Welcome, Debbie!

For more information, contact [Debbie Casey](#), (406) 444-3096

Senate Bill 329 Multi-district Agreements FAQ Document

Senate Bill 329 (SB329), approved in the 2011 legislative session, contains provisions that allow school districts to participate in agreements that create a multi-district cooperative. OPI has posted a document containing answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about multi-district cooperatives, including guidance for the accounting treatment and reporting of activity related to multi-district cooperatives on the annual Trustees Financial Summary.

The document is located at this link: [CLICK HERE](#)

For more information, contact [Denise Ulberg](#), (406) 444-1960

2012 Election Calendar

The 2012 School Election Calendar is posted on the OPI website at: [CLICK HERE](#), and the Election Manual is posted at: [CLICK HERE](#).

For more information, contact [Brenda Thomas](#), (406) 444-4524

FY2011-12 Second Semester Bus Inspections

Pre-filled bus inspection forms (TR-13) for the second semester may be printed from the transportation system. Buses must pass inspection by January 31, 2012 in order to be eligible for full funding for the second semester. Please schedule inspections early to allow time for re-inspection by January 31, if necessary.

For more information, contact [Donell Rosenthal](#), (406) 444-3024

FY2011-12 Education Jobs Supplemental Grant

On September 16, 2011, the U.S. Department of Education awarded supplemental funds to the State of Montana under the Education Jobs Fund program (CFDA No. 84.410), which is authorized under section 101 of Public Law No. 111-226 (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act). The award (\$454,107.00) is a supplement to the Education Jobs Fund monies the state received in September 2010, and as such, must be treated in the same manner as the original award. Under the original application for the funding, Governor Schweitzer directed the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to distribute the Education Jobs Fund monies to schools to fund K-12 BASE Aid. The federal monies did not provide any new resources to schools. Instead, the Governor's Office directed that the federal monies replace state general fund dollars that were allocated by the legislature to fund schools. In FY2010-11, OPI distributed the original grant (\$30.7 million) as Direct State Aid (DSA).

The OPI has posted a spreadsheet and accounting instructions at [CLICK HERE](#). The spreadsheet shows the distribution by legal entity (LE) of the Education Jobs Supplemental grant funds that support K-12 BASE Aid to schools in FY2011-12. These federal monies will be distributed as DSA in the General Fund. The Accounting Instructions explain the valid accounting codes to use for recording the expenditures and associated revenue for this funding source. **Ideally, OPI would like to distribute these funds with the April 2012 DSA payment.** In order to accomplish this, school districts should record expenditure of the monies on their January, February or March 2012 accounting records and request reimbursement of the funds on the 3rd Quarter ARRA report in the MAEFAIRS system. OPI plans to open MAEFAIRS for 3rd Quarter ARRA reporting in January 2012.

Questions about the Education Jobs Fund Supplemental grant should be directed to:

Brenda Thomas, (406) 444-4524 or bthomas@mt.gov
Janelle Mickelson, (406) 444-3249 or jmickelson@mt.gov
Rebecca Phillips, (406) 444-0783 or rphillips2@mt.gov
Denise Ulberg, (406) 444-1960 or dulberg@mt.gov

School Staffing Project

In partnership with Hupp Information Technologies, the OPI is developing a new web-

based Educator Licensure system as the first module of a new school staffing information system. The system has been named the Montana State Educator Information System (MSEIS). The module will automate and improve many tasks related to licensing educators. This module will also provide school district personnel greater electronic access to the educator licensure system, including a feature for school administrators to inform licensure staff when schools are trying to hire someone with a pending licensure application. A School Employment ID (SEID) will be generated for each school district employee through the MSEIS. For teachers, the Folio ID will be converted to the SEID. For non-teachers, a file upload process will generate the SEID to be used in all future school staff information collections. The module is set to be in production this spring.

Under the same contract with Hupp Information Technologies, a second module is being developed that will collect compensation information and personnel assignments for individual school district employees, and FTE information. The new module will replace and enhance the current Annual Data Collection (ADC) for schools, districts and counties to report assignments, accreditation data and highly qualified teacher status. The new module will also associate student rosters with teaching assignments thereby creating a "Master Schedule". Through this project, the OPI will also implement the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Secondary Course Codes, which will be the means for linking teachers to students. The plan is to have this new module in production late summer 2012.

The OPI is currently working with a pilot group of 24 districts to develop a process for collecting actual salaries and benefits information for all district employees (SB329). The implementation for all districts will be in the summer of 2013 during the FY2013 Trustees Financial Summary (TFS) collection.

If you would be willing participate on a team to provide input on this project or if you have questions, please contact Kellee English, School Staffing Project Manager, at (406) 444-1625 or kenglish@mt.gov.

School Food Safety Inspections 2010-11

The National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program require two food safety inspections of school cafeterias each year. In the 2010-11 school year, 467 schools met the two inspection requirement, while 269 schools had one inspection and eighty-eight had zero inspections.

Overall there has been a seven percent increase from 2009-10 in the number of schools who did not receive any food safety inspection. Schools are encouraged to continue working toward the goal of two inspections a year. If a sanitation inspection has not been conducted or your school district has only participated in one inspection, please contact your county sanitarian. A sample letter requesting inspection is located at [CLICK HERE](#)

For more information, contact [School Nutrition Programs](#), (406) 444-2501

GEMS - Statewide Longitudinal Data System for K-12 Education

The 'Student Achievement' domain in GEMS has been uploaded into the new data warehouse and is currently undergoing user acceptance testing.

The GEMS Portal will be presented at the OPI Assessment and Data Conference on January 19-20, 2012. Sessions will be held on how to use GEMS. Two keynote speakers from Microsoft will discuss how the data warehouse can empower educators to improve student outcomes. A GEMS Advisory Group luncheon is being planned. Stay tuned for more information and for invitations to the luncheon.

The design and development of the 'Student Characteristics' domain has also begun. Data sets included in this next domain are Enrollment, Homeless, Neglected and Delinquent Students, Migrant Students and Limited English Proficient.

The OPI extends many thanks to all of our stakeholders who have participated in the GEMS project in many ways. We always welcome more volunteers to become part of our team and help us make GEMS a statewide success.

For more information, contact [Jamey Ereth](#), (406) 444-4409

Useful Links

State Entitlement Payments to Schools

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Finance&Grants/schoolfinance/Index.html#p7GPc1_9

School Accounting Manual

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Finance&Grants/schoolfinance/Index.html#p7GPc1_3

Forms and Publications & Tuition

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Finance&Grants/schoolfinance/Index.html#p7GPc1_10

Pupil Transportation

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/Pupil_Transportation/index.html

Student Count for ANB

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Finance&Grants/schoolfinance/Index.html#p7GPc1_8

Audit Information

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Finance&Grants/schoolfinance/Index.html#p7GPc1_4

OPI Calendar

<http://opi.mt.gov/Calendar/calendar.php>

OPI School Finance Division

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About Our Division "The Montana Office of Public Instruction provides vision, advocacy, support and leadership for schools and communities to ensure that all students meet today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities."

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Montana Office of Public Instruction Denise Juneau, Superintendent