

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

STATE OF MONTANA

Denise Juneau
Superintendent



www.opi.mt.gov
(406) 444-5643

May 29, 2015

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Assistant Secretary Delisle:

The 2015 Montana Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators, as required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, is attached to this email. The plan was developed by a leadership team in my office, in consultation with stakeholders which included the following: parents, teachers, administrators, advisory groups, boards and councils representing K-12 and higher education.

Montana will continue to ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers. This is not a new commitment in our state. We have long provided state sanctions to schools that do not provide highly qualified teachers. Our state process provides requirements that deficiencies in teacher qualifications are part of determining each school's accreditation status. In addition, Montana provides technical assistance to educators in the development of qualified teachers for all students.

It should be noted, however, the state does not control the hiring and placement of teachers in our schools. These decisions are made by locally elected boards of trustees, not the state. The state will continue to publicly report the accreditation status of all schools, including the accreditation deficiencies due to the lack of meeting the requirements for qualified teachers. We will also continue to provide best practices in the hiring, placement and continued professional development of qualified teachers.

If you require more information concerning the Montana plan, please contact Deputy Superintendent Dennis Parman. You may contact Dennis by telephone at (406) 444-5643 or by email at dparman@mt.gov. I look forward to the approval of this plan.

Sincerely,

Denise Juneau
Superintendent of Public Instruction

PO Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501

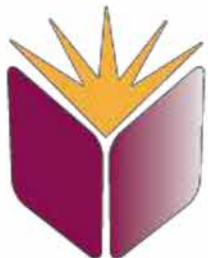


2015 Montana Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

**Presented to the U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education**

June 1, 2015

Revised September 1, 2015



opi.mt.gov

**Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent**

Contents

2015 Montana Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators.....	5
Section 1. Introduction	5
Section 2. Consultation with Stakeholders	7
Section 3. Equity Gap Analysis	7
Section 4. Strategies to Advance the Work of Closing the Equity Gaps	20
Section 5. Measuring Progress toward Closing the Equity Gaps	26
Section 6. Reporting Progress toward Closing the Equity Gaps	26
Section 7. Conclusion	26
Section 8. Attachments	27
Index.....	69

2015 Montana Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

Section 1. Introduction

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), requires state educational agencies (SEAs) receiving a Title I, Part A grant to submit a plan, developed by the SEA, in consultation with local educational agencies, teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, administrators, other staff, and parents (ESEA Section 1111(a)(1)). The plan submitted by the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) describes the steps it will take “to ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.” The term “state plan” refers only to State Plans to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators.

The Montana Constitution states:

- (1) “It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person. Equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed to each person of the state.” (Article X, Sec. 1)
- (2) “The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.” (Article X, Sec. 2)

The provisions of the Montana Constitution provide the foundation for the 2015 Montana Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators.

2015 Montana Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

2015 Montana State Plan goal: All poor and minority children in Montana are taught at the same rate as other children by experienced, qualified, and appropriately endorsed teachers.

2015 Montana State Plan objective: By June 1, 2015, the OPI, in consultation with Montana education stakeholders, identified measures to evaluate and publicly report the progress of closing the identified equity gaps.

The Montana State Plan will make continuous progress toward full access to excellent educators for all Montana children. Montanans are committed to ensuring equal access for all students to well-prepared, highly-qualified, experienced, and appropriately endorsed teachers and school leaders with an emphasis on schools and classrooms with the greatest needs.

To shape the 2015 Montana State Plan, a team of key leaders at the OPI, led by the assistant superintendent of the Department of Education Services, followed these steps. The OPI team:

1. Developed and is implementing Montana’s strategic action plan and timeline for engaging education stakeholders in the process. (Attachment A)
2. Reviewed data provided by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the data collected and analyzed at the state level.
3. Addressed root-cause analyses based on the data reviewed and through discussions with education stakeholder groups.



4. Created a plan to measure and report progress on closing the equity gap and continuously improve the state plan.

Background – 2006 Montana State Equity Plan

The 2006 Montana State Equity Plan established the goal that every teacher of a core academic subject in Montana's public elementary and secondary schools must meet the ESEA's Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) requirements.

In 2004-2005, the OPI collected data that:

1. Identified core academic subject classes in the state that were not being taught by teachers meeting the HQT definition by specific subject area.
2. Were analyzed to determine adequate yearly progress of schools and districts where these classes were located.
3. Identified the schools in Montana where teachers were misassigned or not endorsed in the subject areas they were teaching.
4. Tracked courses that were particularly hard to staff.

Based on these data, the 2006 state plan established strategies to assist all Montana accredited schools in reaching the goal of 100 percent of core academic subject classes taught by HQTs. From the 2006 state plan to the development and implementation of the 2015 state plan, annual data verifies that virtually all of Montana's classes in core academic subjects were taught by HQTs, consistent with the ESEA requirements. The 2005 data indicate that 98.9 percent of the total numbers of classes were taught by highly qualified teachers; in 2013, 99.4 percent of core classes were taught by HQTs. The NCLB Report Card is posted on the OPI website <http://opi.mt.gov/Reports&Data>. While Montana reports consistent percentages near 100 in the all category of core academic subject classes taught by HQTs, the 100 percent HQT goal for schools, districts, and the state remains elusive. Montana maintains its commitment to reach 100 percent equitable distribution of teachers who are qualified, properly endorsed, and assigned to teach classes in their endorsed subject area therefore, providing access to excellent teachers by all Montana's K-12 students.

2015 Montana State Equity Plan

For purposes of the 2015 Montana State Plan, the OPI compared data between the 2005 original analysis and 2013 data. Comparisons of data by schools and school districts were based on student enrollment numbers aggregated by minority and poverty calculations.

Montana targeted HQT data to analyze the percentage of highly qualified teachers teaching core academic classes in schools. These data were aggregated based on the percentage of poor and minority students to compare access to HQTs across the quartiles. Schools were aggregated then divided into high-poverty school quartiles, neither high- nor low-poverty school quartiles, and low-poverty school quartiles. The same process also applied to schools aggregated by minority student percentages.

Although additional teacher data are not available at this time, the OPI anticipates the teacher licensure system, Montana State Educator Information System, and the new nonfiscal data collection system, Terms of Employment, Accreditation and Master Schedule (TEAMS), and will deliver additional data (e.g., percent of teachers in their first year, years of teaching experience) over the next few years.



