

## Assurances for State Fiscal Stabilization Funds

As a condition of the receipt of the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Governor with support from the Superintendent of Public Instruction made six assurances for K-12 education.

1. Achieving Equity in Teacher Distribution
2. Improving Collection and Use of Data
3. Improving Standards
4. Inclusion of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficiencies
5. Improving Standards
6. Supporting Struggling Schools

This document summarizes the action steps that the Office of Public Instruction is taking to comply with the assurances made by the state to the U.S. Department of Education (USED).

### **I. Achieving Equity in Teacher Distribution**

LFD 3501-09-G1: Improve teacher effectiveness and comply with ESEA requirements to address inequities in the distribution of highly qualified teachers

Program or Project Description: The Montana Legislature funds Quality Education Loan Assistance Payments to educators who teach in schools impacted by critical teacher shortages. The program provides for the direct repayment of educational loans of eligible quality educators for up to four years. The total annual loan repayment assistance per educator may not exceed \$3,000. The funding is anticipated to provide loan repayment assistance to approximately 300 educators in FY 2010 and 400 educators in FY 2011.

Appropriation: FY 2010 \$882,000 FY 2011 \$1,076,000

#### Action Steps:

- OPI prepares and presents a report to the Board of Public Education for approval identifying Critical Quality Educator Shortage Areas.  
Target: November 2009 Actual: November 2009
- OPI works with the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program to establish eligibility of Montana educators for loan repayment assistance.  
Target: April-June 2010 Actual: April – June 2010
- Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program makes assistance payments to eligible teachers.  
Target: June 2010 Actual: June 2010

- OPI collects data through the Annual Data Collection (ADC) related to the degree of difficulty school districts experience in filling positions for teachers on various subject areas.  
Target: October 2010      Actual: On-target

LFD Comment: This performance measure appears to be on track. The legislature may wish to obtain the results of the annual data collection regarding difficult to fill positions prior to session.

## II. Improving Collection and Use of Data

LFD 3501-06-G2: Establish a longitudinal data system for the P-20 education system in Montana

Project Description: The performance measure set by the USED is for the state to implement the 12 elements described in section 6401(e) (2) (D) of the America COMPETES Act for a statewide P-16 education data system. The 12 elements are shown in the table below. The checked items indicate elements that are implemented.

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|---|--|
| <p>(i) Preschool through grade 12 education and postsecondary education</p> <p>With respect to preschool through grade 12 education and postsecondary education--</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system;</li> <li>✓ student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information;</li> <li>✓ student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs;</li> <li>• the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; and</li> <li>• a State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability.</li> </ul> |
| <p>(ii) Preschool through grade 12 education</p> <p>With respect to preschool through grade 12 education--</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under <u>section 6311(b)</u> of this title;</li> <li>✓ information on students not tested by grade and subject;</li> <li>• a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students;</li> <li>• student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned; and</li> <li>• student-level college readiness test scores.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>(iii) Postsecondary education</p> <p>With respect to postsecondary education, data that provide--</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and</li> <li>• other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.</li> </ul>   |

Appropriation: None

Action Steps:

- Complete the Data Quality Campaign survey with detailed questions on the 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act.

Target: November 2009      Actual: November 2009

- Apply to the USED for a longitudinal data systems grant to establish data linkages from K-12 to post-secondary. OPI is the lead agency in partnership with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Department of Public Health and Human Services, and Department of Labor.

Target: December 2009      Actual: December 2009

- Received notification from USED was not awarded a longitudinal data systems grant to establish data linkages from K-12 to post-secondary.  
Actual: May 2010

- With funding from Montana's Student Assistance Foundation (SAF), the Office of Public Instruction enters into a contract with the National Student Clearinghouse to provide the *Student Tracker* to accredited high schools, to OPI and to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. The Student Tracker allows the state and high schools to determine the percentage of students who enroll in postsecondary programs after graduating from high school.

Actual: June 2010

- OPI assigns a statewide School Employee ID (SEID) to all teachers, specialists, administrators and paraprofessionals employed in the public school systems based on data reported through the Annual Data Collection.

Target: November 2010

LFD Comment: This performance measure appears to be on track. Five of the 12 steps to implement the longitudinal data system are complete. The legislature may wish to inquire about the timeline to implement the remaining seven steps.

### **III. Improving Standards**

LFD 3501-09-G3: Improve academic content standards and student academic achievement standards

Program or Project Description: The Board of Public Education reviews academic content and performance standards on a 5-year cycle. The OPI facilitates the review process, which includes focus group discussions with business leaders, school administrators, and post-secondary and K-12 faculty regarding the redesign of the standards.

Appropriation: State general fund; OPI Program 06-State Level Activities

Action Steps:

- Adoption of the revised standards for Mathematics by the Board of Public Education  
Target: September 2009      Actual: September 2009

- Adoption of the revised standards for Communication Arts by the Board of Public Education  
Target: January 2010      Actual: January 2010

- Participate in the national Common Core State Standards Initiative, a state-led process to develop and implement common English-language arts and mathematics standards.  
Target: On-going      Actual: On-going

LFD Comment: This performance measure appears to be on track.

#### **IV. Inclusion Assurance**

LFD 3501-09-G4: Develop valid and reliable assessments for children with disabilities and limited English proficiencies

Program or Project Description: The Office of Public Instruction has received three grant awards to study test designs for a statewide Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT) based on modified achievement standards. These grants are collaborations with other states, universities, and testing and research entities. Montana is the lead state in these collaborations.

- 1) In October 2005, the USED awarded OPI a General Supervision Enhancement Grant to begin the study on a new test design. Using the results from that study, OPI applied for and received two additional grants to further the research.
- 2) In October 2007, the USED awarded OPI an Enhanced Assessment Grant to continue the study of a new test design. The results are currently being analyzed.
- 3) In October 2007, the USED awarded OPI a second General Supervision Enhancement Grant to continue the study of a new test design to coordinate with the Enhanced Assessment Grant study.

Appropriation: Federal assessment grants

Action Steps:

- Conduct and complete an analysis of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the accommodations provided for students with disabilities.  
Target: October 31, 2010      Actual: Preliminary report is drafted

- Conduct and complete an analysis of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the accommodations provided for students with limited English proficiency.  
Target: October 31, 2010      Actual: Preliminary report is drafted.

- Provide professional development and training on the use of accommodations in the classroom and on the statewide assessment through webinars, an annual assessment conference (January 2010), and training materials for each school.  
Target: On-going      Actual: On-going

- Apply for grants to study accessible and valid assessment designs for students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency.
  - October 2009: OPI is a partner in the application and award of two Enhanced Assessment Grants.
    - Evaluating the Validity of English Language Proficiency Assessments (EVEA). Five state consortium - Washington is the lead state.
    - The Accessible Portable Item Protocol (APIP) Project will develop protocols for providing online testing with computer-based accommodations. Eight state consortium - Minnesota is the lead state.
  - June 2010: Activities continue on the two Enhanced Assessment Grants.
    - As part of the EVEA grant, the OPI has worked with its research partners to study the technical quality of the Montana English Language Proficiency Assessment, which will lead to recommendations for improvement.
    - As part of the APIP Project, the OPI has collaborated on a primer to help all states develop an understanding of Question and Test Interoperability (QTI) standards. The project will build on the QTI standards to define standard methods for tagging test content so that it is presented to students in a consistent manner within any computer-based test delivery system.

LFD Comment: This performance measure appears to be on track. The receipt of grants will aid in the continuation of the work. The legislature may wish to review the reports regarding accommodations for students once they are no longer in draft form.

## **V. Improving Assessments**

LFD 3501-09-G5: Enhance the quality of academic assessments

Program or Project Description: The statewide student assessment includes the administration of a criterion-referenced test in Reading and Mathematics to students in grades 3-8 and 10 and in Science in grades 4, 8, and 10. The USED, through a peer review process, has approved Montana's CRT and CRT-Alternate for Reading and Math. Approval of the CRT for Science is pending with USED.

Appropriation: Federal Assessment grant

### Action Steps:

- April 2009: Submitted evidence of the Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT) and the Criterion-Referenced Test -Alternate (CRT-Alt) to the USED for the Science assessment in Grades 4, 8, and 10. Approval is pending.
  - June 2010: Two issues remain outstanding. 1) Completion of a study of the appropriate use of accommodations for the Science assessment and 2) Completion of an alignment study on the extended benchmarks for the CRT-Alt.

- Provide professional development on the use of test results, Response to Intervention (RTI) and formative assessment through online classes, online learning communities, an annual assessment conference, and numerous presentations.

Target: On-going      Actual: On-going

- OPI contracted for and hosted a 15-week, on-line course FAME, Formative Assessment for Montana Educators. The course was created and conducted by Dr. Margaret Heritage, UCLA's Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing. Course was offered in August – December 2009. A second session of FAME is being offered September – December 2010.
- Conducted pilot tests of four online writing assessment programs to determine their potential in statewide use.
  - June 2010: Pilots are completed and recommendations are being compiled.
  - July 2010: Recommendations will be made to the Board of Public Education
  - Recommend to conduct second phase of the writing pilot
  - July-October 2010: Implementation Plan for phase 2 of the pilot,
  - November 2010: Prepare funding proposal
- Participate as a governing state in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, a group of 32 State Education Agencies awarded a USED grant of \$150 million for "comprehensive assessment systems." The grants run for four years. The comprehensive assessment systems developed with the federal money must be able to yield data that can be used to gauge the effectiveness of instruction.

Target: June 2010

Actual: Grant application submitted June 23, 2010. Grant awarded in September 2010.

LFD Comment: This performance measure appears to be on track. The legislature may wish to inquire about the plans to address the issues listed under the first bullet, approval for the CRT test for science. The issue regarding conducting pilot test for online writing assessment programs references an application for funding. The legislature may wish to inquire about the source of this funding.

## **VI. Support for Struggling Schools**

LFD 3501-09-G6: Support struggling schools

Program or Project Description: As part of its strategic direction to improve student achievement in struggling schools by providing leadership for school turnaround efforts across the state, the OPI has named a cross-agency team, which is charged with developing an implementation plan for the initiative.

Appropriation: \$9.8 million from ARRA monies

Action Steps:

- The OPI has identified likely schools and school districts eligible for the Turnaround Initiative, based on length of time in corrective action and/or restructuring among other factors.
- The OPI has expanded the school support team for targeted Title I schools to include a school coach to work with school leadership teams and an instructional coach to work with classroom teachers.
- The Superintendent of Public Instruction launched a statewide listening tour, "Communities Coming Together for Education" in which the Superintendent visited six targeted school districts in Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 to jumpstart community and school collaborations for school improvement.
- The OPI has received a \$9.788 million School Improvement Grant (SIG) to provide technical assistance and resources to 4 school systems with Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that have been identified as Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools (using a federal formula).
- The OPI has met with the school districts (school trustees, local union representatives, teachers and community members) that have Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools and created a Memorandum of Understanding to work with these five school districts. Four districts have signed the MOU.
- The OPI has hired a unit director for the SIG Unit Director and a SIG instructional specialist to work at OPI in Helena. OPI has also hired instructional coaches, school board coaches, community liaisons, transformation leaders, and a community youth coordinator to work in the school communities of Frazer, Lame Deer, Lodge Grass and Pryor.
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LFD Comment: This performance measure appears to be on track. The legislature may wish to be updated on the progress of the School Improvement Grants prior to session, including the status of the fifth and unsigned district.