

## Virtual Academy Update

HB 645 Funding – \$2,000,000

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Approved by the legislature in July of 2009, the Montana Virtual Academy (MTVA) will provide innovative online coursework to Montana's K-12 students beginning in the fall of 2010. MTVA's relationship with the University of Montana is singly unique among the 33 other statewide virtual schools in the U.S. The other statewide virtual school programs are generally associated with state departments of education or may be an independent organization but have not been created under a partnership with a major university.

The MTVA courses will be delivered to students, online in an asynchronous system and will be available to students 24 hours a day 7 days a week. MTVA will serve Montana students and schools well. It will provide innovative curriculum opportunities and program equity to smaller schools across the state that face significant challenges in attempting to offer a comprehensive curriculum to their students. It will also offer all students a way to expand their horizons by taking unique and challenging courses as well as recovering a course credit to get back on track toward graduation.

The MTVA program is ramping up rapidly following a national search that resulted in the hiring of the first MTVA director Robert Currie, from Michigan, in December of 2009. Currie, who spent the last six years as the director of the Michigan Virtual School, began work at the University of Montana office of MTVA on January 4, 2010. In the ensuing six weeks the following has occurred:

- A curriculum specialist position has been filled with the hiring of a teacher from Capital High School in Helena. An administrative assistant has also been hired by MTVA.
- Forty courses have been identified and will become the MTVA course catalog to be offered in the 2010-11 school year. The courses will serve the needs of a wide range of Montana students from challenging upper level courses including advanced placement to credit recovery offerings which will help students regain credits necessary for graduation.
- An electronic communication was sent to all superintendents and principals in Montana informing them of the courses offerings introducing the new director and two staff members.
- A plan has been formulated by the director and the MTVA Board to work with local districts to ensure that MTVA courses will be taught by high quality, Montana-licensed instructors and aligned to state education standards, including Indian Education for All.
- A plan has been formulated to utilize the services of Montana educators to assist in the development, review and teaching of MTVA courses to Montana students.
- A communication plan has been developed to provide statewide web based presentations to introduce the MTVA program as well as information and training materials for students, parents, and school personnel.
- The expenditures of the FY 2010 budget have been made at a slower pace than may have been anticipated due to timing of the search process for the director. The three MTVA positions currently in place (i.e. the director, curriculum specialist, and administrative assistant) will have a six month budgetary impact in the current fiscal year. However there will be significant budgetary activity in the next four months of the fiscal year primarily in the areas of

course development, teacher recruitment and training, communication and outreach. Budget planning and forecasting is currently being completed by the MTVA director and Board.

- Currently, the one contract being executed is between MTVA and the Monterey Institute for Education (MITE) to secure a membership in the National Repository for Online Courses which will provide high quality course content for use by MTVA. This is a two year agreement totaling \$24,000. The agreement also ensures MTVA representation on the MITE advisory board which will allow significant Montana input into the development of new courses for the repository.

# Montana Virtual Academy Budget

HB 459 Funds -- \$2,000,000

	<b>Budget</b>
<b>Montana Virtual Academy</b>	
MTVA Teachers	\$350,000
Teacher Training & Professional Development	\$150,000
District Employment Cost (MTVA Teachers)	\$84,000
Operations -LMS license, Marketing etc.	\$140,000
Technology Hardware/Software	\$45,000
Content Development/Licensing	\$500,000
Personnel	
2.5 FTE (18 mos)	\$450,000
3 FTE (12 mos)	\$150,000
Operational Overhead Expense	\$131,000
<b>Total Project Budget</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>