

# **NEWS FROM: *Montana Small Schools Alliance***

## **UPDATE: April 2025**

### Message from the Director:

Happy Spring!

As I am writing this we have had snow, grapple, blue skies, and the great Montana wind, all in the span of 2 hours. It is definitely Spring in Montana! As much as you want to, do not plant those outdoor flowers yet, resist! Use me as your guide, it has taken me many years to learn this lesson. Hopefully this year I will wait, but I really can't make a guarantee.

A couple reminders for this message:

1. If you have not already signed up for the April workshops, you can still do so but we cannot guarantee you will get lunch. We had to turn numbers in by April 1.
2. Sign up ASAP for both MAPS and Standards workshops. They are early in August and you must sign up ahead of time. Standards are mandatory for all schools in the Library or Counseling Standards programs. It is non-negotiable and a requirement that OPI puts on MSSA to keep this program for you. No exceptions. If you are the person who is required to attend and something comes up you MUST find someone to take your place.
3. All of the workshops for next year are on our website and you can sign up for all of them now. We are still looking at possibly adding a venue in September and I should know more on that in the next week.
4. The Math Curriculum work will begin next school year. If you previously signed up, I still have your information. If you did not, and want to be part of the committee there will be time in the fall to add your name to the group.
5. If you are interested in leading the ELA Standards/Curriculum work for MSSA, please let me know. I will be working on moving this group forward and need someone with expertise to lead this work. Reach out to me via email if you are interested. I will be asking for experience and expertise in the form of a resume or write up. The position comes with a stipend.

Congratulations to Seth Coombe, from Cardwell, who is the Montana Rural Teacher of the Year. Seth will represent Montana at the National Rural Education Conference. Read about Seth on the website and in the attached information.

Spring is a busy time of year. Take care of yourself so that you can be there for your students. I know it is easier said than done, but please make an effort to take some ME time. It pays off in the final push to the end of the school year.

Thanks for all you do every day for our students and our schools.

Sincerely,

*Janelle*

## **April In-person Workshops**

### **Preparing for the New Montana Mathematics Standards**

#### **Part 1: Energizing Your Classroom Through the Montana Mathematical Practice Standards**

<b>April 9, 2025</b>	<b>Miles City, Miles City Community College</b>
<b>April 11, 2025</b>	<b>Lewistown, Yogo Inn</b>
<b>April 14, 2025</b>	<b>Helena, University of Montana Campus</b>
<b>April 16, 2025</b>	<b>Kalispell, Red Lion Inn (<u>change of venue</u>)</b>

## **Counties Feature**

This month we are featuring news from one of the remaining Lincoln County Schools presented by Suzy Rios, County Superintendent. Last month we featured McCormick and Yaak schools. This month follow the link to find out about Trego school. Please find the link below regarding Trego School. It is written by a board member and longtime supporter of the school. They are very proud of the unique history of the school.

<https://tregomountaineer.com/2025/03/04/education-the-last-50-years/>

## **2025-2026 MSSA Workshop Schedule**

The professional development schedule for 2025-2026 is on the website and workshops are ready for sign up.

### **MAPS- August 12, 2025**

Beginner and Advanced Tracks- sign up now!

## **STANDARDS WORKSHOP**

9 AM- 12 Noon- Library

1:00 PM- 4:00 PM- Counseling

August 4, 2025- Miles City- Miles Community College

August 6, 2025- Big Timber- Ambulance Barn

August 8, 2025- Helena- U of M Helena Campus

August 11, 2025- Kalispell- Springhill Suites

Attendance is **MANDATORY** if you are in the MSSA Standards program.  
No exceptions!

## **Spring Book Study Information**

Rural Readings #2-

What Great Teachers Do Differently, by Todd Whitaker (3rd addition)

Begins Monday, April 14, 2025

4:30-5:30 PM

Sign up on the website or email me at [jbeers@mt-ssa.org](mailto:jbeers@mt-ssa.org)

6 weeks total, 13 renewal units

Once you are signed up I will email you with more specifics.

You must purchase your own book.

(If I don't have five sign ups by April 9, 2025, the Spring Book Study will be cancelled.)

## **SPED and Case Management Services**

If you are looking for SPED, 504 or other case management services, MTPLC offers those services for a cost. Attached to this newsletter are flyers outlining their services, cost and how to contact them.

**\*\*\*Save the Date: The 27th Annual August Institute\*\*\*  
July 30-August 1, 2025, DeSmet School in Missoula  
Join in-person or virtually. More to come!**

## **From OPI's Monthly Newsletter**

In case you do not have the opportunity to read the OPI Monthly Newsletter, I wanted to share just a couple sentences for the Superintendent, Susie Hedalen's message that may reassure you for the next school year.

"Last week we attended the Council of Chief State School Officers conference in Washington, D.C. This event provided valuable opportunities to hear federal updates and engage with our counterparts from other states. We are pleased to share that we received written reassurances from the Department of Education confirming that Title Funding and IDEA funding will remain unchanged."

# OPI 2025 SUMMER INSTITUTE REGISTRATION NOW OPEN:

[REGISTER HERE](#)

**Only \$69**

Parking, on-campus housing, and graduate credit are also available for an additional cost.

[Learn More about OPI 2025 Summer Institute Here](#)

**Tracks for:** Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Educators, Administrators, Mental Health, Behavior, MTSS, Special Education

**2025 FULL SCHEDULE AVAILABLE HERE**

**Sessions on:** MAST, Proficiency-Based Education, AI, Indian Education for All, Restorative Practices, ELA and Math, Evidence-Based Practices, Data-Based Decision Making & Data-Based Individualization, Cell Phone Policies & School Safety Issues, Federal Programs & IDEA Compliance, Career Technical Education, and more.

## Empower Tomorrow's Leaders: Register Now for American Legion Boys and Auxiliary Girls State

Montana high school juniors have a unique opportunity to develop leadership skills, gain firsthand experience in government operations, and make lifelong connections at the American Legion Boys State and Auxiliary Girls State programs. These premier programs provide students with an immersive, hands-on education in civic engagement, preparing them to be the leaders of tomorrow.

### What is Boys and Girls State?

The American Legion Boys State and Auxiliary Girls State are weeklong programs where students create and operate their own state government. Participants campaign for office, draft and debate legislation, and engage in problem-solving scenarios that mirror real-world governance. Through this experience, students develop a deeper understanding of government structures, public service, and civic responsibility.

### Why Participate?

- **College & Career Readiness:** Many colleges and employers recognize Boys and Girls State as a prestigious program that enhances applications and résumés.
- **Scholarship Opportunities:** Attendees may qualify for college scholarships, including the Samsung American Legion Scholarship.
- **Networking & Leadership:** Participants meet peers from across the state, building friendships and professional networks that last a lifetime.
- **Civic Engagement:** Students gain a greater appreciation for democratic processes and public service.

**Who Can Apply?** Current high school juniors in Montana who are interested in government, leadership, and civic engagement are encouraged to apply. Schools are encouraged to nominate students who demonstrate leadership potential and an interest in public service.

**Program Cost Covered:** The \$300 program fee is fully covered by American Legion Posts and Units across the state, ensuring that all eligible students have the opportunity to participate without financial barriers. For more information or to register, visit our website [Here \[mtlegion.org\]](http://mtlegion.org)

## **Parent Guidance Newsletter from the Cook Center**

At the Cook Center for Human Connection, we recognize the challenges parents face in managing stress while fostering resilience in their families. In this April Mental Health Newsletter ([English](#) / [Spanish](#)), we explore actionable strategies to help you understand and manage stress effectively. From identifying stress signals to incorporating relaxation techniques and family-friendly activities, this guide offers practical tools to support your well-being.

We're also excited to share resources from [ParentGuidance.org](#), a platform designed to help you navigate mental health challenges your child may face. Whether you're looking for expert advice, practical tools, or a supportive community, ParentGuidance.org is here to empower you every step of the way.

## **Jeremy Bullock Safe Schools Summit**

August 5 and 6, 2025

Ben Steele Middle School

Billings, Montana

To Register go to:

<https://jeremybullocksafeschools.com/register/>

We are honored to welcome **Nicole Hockley, co-founder and CEO of [Sandy Hook Promise](#)**, as our **opening keynote speaker**. After losing her son, Dylan, in the Sandy Hook tragedy, Nicole turned grief into action, leading a national movement to prevent school violence. Under her leadership, the Know the Signs programs have helped avert at least 16 planned school attacks and empowered over 23 million students and educators. Join us as she shares her powerful message on school safety and violence prevention.