

NEWS FROM: *Montana Small Schools Alliance*

UPDATE: December 2022

Message from the Director:

Seasons Greetings!

I hope you are all staying warm and healthy as we enter into the **cold, colder, coldest** part of the season. Having lived in Montana only 16 of my adult years, it has always amazed me how cold it gets without feeling “that cold”. In Oregon I feel bone cold at temperatures in the 30’s, but in Montana it takes the teens and below to feel that way. The drier air makes it seem more manageable, at least for me. Of course at my age I am not exactly out “playing in the snow” so I am sure that makes a big difference. So, keep yourself and your students warm during these cold months. It can be a challenge I know!

With only a few weeks left until winter vacation I know the students can be excited and anxious. Try to keep as many normal routines as possible, and as I said in the November newsletter, remember holidays are not always the most positive times for our students. If you have serious concerns please reach out to our Counseling Specialist.

Enjoy some downtime later this month, and get ready for a wonderful new year!

Happy Holidays,
Janelle

*****Small Schools Financial Survey*****

Linda has agreed to keep the Financial Survey open until December 9th. She needs at least 13-14 more schools to participate to make completing the process possible. Please get this done to help you and your fellow schools with valuable financial information for decision making. Thank you

MSSA and WMPLC Grant Position

MSSA and WMPLC received the federal Stop Act Grant to deliver resources and services to Montana’s underserved schools. With that grant comes the hiring of a full-time credentialed School Counselor to serve as the Mental Health Resource Navigator.

The position is currently being advertised on the MSSA Website, with the School Counselors Association and on the OPI job board. If you are someone you know is interested, please apply. Job opened until filled.

“Kindness is like snow. It beautifies everything it covers.” Kahill Gibran

MSSA Teacher and District Scholarships

The 2023 MSSA District and Instructor Scholarship applications are now available on the MSSA website. Due date is January 9, 2023. Each scholarship is worth \$1500.

A short application, and budget page are all it takes. Consider applying to fund a new school or teacher project. (As of December 1, 2022 we only have one application.)

February Workshops- Zoom presentation

Register Now!

An Integrated Framework for Teaching Interdisciplinary Literacy

Monday, February 6, 2023

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

Friday, February 10, 2023

School Safety and Wellness: The Montana Safe and Supportive Schools Committee is inviting all Montana high school students to join the conversation about supporting student wellness in Montana. Student responses to the questions in this survey will be shared with schools, health providers, and decision-makers from across the state. Our goal is to assure every student is safe and well! **This survey will close on 12/31/2022.** You can access the survey here: [Montana Students Speak Out: School Safety and Wellness](#)

Chapter 55: School Accreditation

The Board of Public Education at their meeting on November 18, made some decisions regarding the recommendations from OPI. They accepted many of the recommendations but did not accept the Counseling, Library or Instructional Assistant ratios. The current ratios will stay in place as was the recommendation of the Task Force and the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee. Overwhelming public comment was a large factor in their decision. Thank you to all you submitted written and oral comments.

Math Content Standards Review

The Board of Public Education has opened the Montana Mathematics Standards for review. If you are interested in being involved in this important process, please fill out the [Montana Math Standards Review Interest Survey](#) For updated information on the Math Standards Review, please visit the [K-12 Content Standards](#) webpage. If you have questions, please contact Sonja Whitford at sonja.whitford@mt.gov

Montana Fall 2022 student counts show there are 149,717 public school students.

Golden Triangle Textbook and Vendor Fair

January 30, 2023, from 8:30 AM- 4:00 PM, Golden Triangle Curriculum Cooperative is sponsoring a Textbook and Vendor Fair in Great Falls. Individual presentations, and sponsored textbook and learning materials will be available.

The event is free, covers all subject areas, provides lunch and snacks and you can earn up to 7 renewal units. To register follow the link below:

<https://forms.gle/tDnNemfCEtc4tSht8>

Special News or Events

If your school has a special event or some news to share please let me know. We would like to feature schools, events, teachers, etc, on our website and in my monthly newsletters. Just email me at jbeers@mt-ssa.org or call me at 406-988-0164.

“The magic of Christmas never ends and its greatest of gifts are family and friends.” *Unknown*