

Montana University System

Educator Recruitment and Retention Task Force

2016-2017

Executive Summary

In May 2016 a group of Montana Hi-Line School Administrators reported concerns regarding their ability to fill educator vacancies to the Montana Board of Regents. In fall 2016 the Montana University System Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education launched The MUS Educator Recruitment and Retention Task Force to examine and address the needs of rural Montana schools. The Task Force convened monthly by telephone and conducted and shared research and formulated plans that would mitigate school needs both in the short and long term. Campuses within the Montana University System as well as educator allies across the state responded rapidly and in an effective way to address pipeline concerns, placement issues and formulated a vision and programming to ensure induction and retention support of Montana's classroom teachers. MUS campuses are working independently, in partnership with other campuses and often times in partnership with Tribal Colleges and other educational leadership groups to address the concerns presented to the Board of Regents in May 2016.

The Task Force will be reconstituted in 2017-2018 to:

1. Follow up on work done 2016-2017 and monitor programming needs;
2. Establish systemic Dual Enrollment efforts around pre service education;
3. Continue research to support policy conversations around rural educator recruitment and retention; and,
4. Extend conversations to all Montana schools of education.

Demonstrated Success

The Hamilton Project. *Understanding and Addressing Teacher Shortages in the United States*, Thomas S. Dee and Daniel Goldhaber, April 2017 cites "several policies that will help increase the supply of teachers in places where shortages are a problem":

1. Increase the Use of Targeted Financial Incentives
2. Adopt Earlier, Aggressive Recruitment Practices
3. Recruit student teachers who meet anticipated needs
4. Provide teacher candidates with better information about job prospects
5. Create Meaningful Licensure Reciprocity With Other States

Montana has in this year adopted each of these "policies" in our efforts to mitigate the rural educator recruitment and retention issues.



- **Information Sessions for Teacher Candidates**

The Office of Field Experiences conducts required Information Sessions for teacher candidates one year prior to student teaching. During these presentations, candidates learn about the advantages of student teaching in rural communities including the MREA/MUS Fellows Scholarship Program, job opportunities, and the potential for student loan forgiveness programs.

In AY 2016-17, 146 teacher candidates received focused information regarding rural student teaching and employment opportunities. Three teacher candidates applied for student teaching placements through the MREA/MUS Fellows Scholarship Program.

- **Graduate Follow-up**

The Department of Teaching and Learning has collaborated with the Office of Field Experiences for data base revisions to begin tracking candidates who complete student teaching in rural Montana communities.

Data base revisions will occur in June 2017 to begin tracking this information for Department review each semester. Ongoing review and analysis of this data will support the department in building relationships with receiving schools as well as examining trends in rural placements.

The College looks forward to building and enhancing connections with Montana's P-12 rural school administrators seeking to mentor teacher candidates.

- **K-12 Recruitment Efforts**

The CoEHS is seeking additional opportunities to for recruiting Montana students to the teaching profession. For example, Peter Knox, Communications and Outreach Manager for the College joined other UM recruiters at the 2017 Montana School Counselor Conference in Bozeman to specifically speak with counselors about UM's teacher education programs including many from rural school districts.

More than 350 information packets were disseminated and Mr. Knox held over 100 individual conversations with school counselors seeking more information about UM's teacher preparation programs.

- **Special Education Educator Recruitment and Retention**

The OPI Endorsement Project began with grant funding in the late 1980s. The purpose of the project was and remains helping rural districts recruit and retain special education teachers. This project is a collaborative effort among MSUB, Western, Missoula, Carroll, and UGF. Local teachers who are interested in earning the special education license endorsement have three years to complete the PEPPS/license endorsement requirements. MSUB has served as the state administrator of the project since the mid 1990's.

Currently, there are 32 participants in this project throughout Montana. Completers are tracked for two years. Since 2014, participants have been required to sign a contract stating that they will continue to teach special education in Montana for three years following project completion. Since 2014, all have fulfilled the contractual obligation.

- **NSF Noyce Scholars and STEM Educators**

In 2011, MSUB submitted a planning grant to the NSF Noyce Scholars Program and subsequently received funding for a Noyce Scholars project. The purpose of this project has been preparing STEM teachers for high needs schools. MSUB has focused on schools on and near Reservations in Montana.

Before the beginning of the project, MSUB had one person complete a Biology major with the Teaching Option. The COE in collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences Department of Biological and Physical Sciences, reinstated a Broadfield Science Major with Teaching Option. Grant funding supported MSUB increasing the Broadfield Science Teaching Option completers to 15. In addition, two individuals completed the math major with a teaching option.

- **On-line course rotation/Place Based Learning**

MSUB is a leader in on-line course and program delivery in Montana. Over time, the COE has been gradually developing on-line rotations for most programs. Those programs for which the majority of courses can be taken on line include the following: On-line Instructional Technologies, Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction Licensure Option (Elementary), School Counseling, and Special Education (undergraduate and graduate) Early Childhood Endorsable Minor. Reading (undergraduate and graduate) is revising the program and developing increasing on-line delivery. This year, we have purchased four 360-degree cameras that will allow us to pilot supervision of field experiences through technology, rather than the traditional site visits.

The result of on-line delivery means that teachers who are adding endorsements or fulfilling the requirements for changing their licensure status from provisional to full, can accomplish their goals while teaching full time far from Billings. There is not a need to stop their livelihood and relocate to attend classes in Billings. Teachers employed on a provisional license can complete student teaching in their own classroom with appropriate university supervision, on site or through technology.



**GREAT FALLS
COLLEGE**

**MONTANA STATE
UNIVERSITY**

- **Associate of Arts (AA) to MSU-Northern**

From the GFC MSU Catalog: The AA with articulated coursework in Education is designed for students interested in a baccalaureate degree in Elementary Education at MSU-Northern.

The AS includes education across academic disciplines. Focusing on integration of information while increasing a student's employability, the AA is designed for transferability to a baccalaureate program.

Program requirements:

<http://catalog.gfcmu.edu/transfer-curricula/elementary-education/aa-msu-northern/#programrequirements>

- **Associate of Arts to University of Great Falls**

From the GFC MSU Catalog: The AA with articulated coursework in Education is designed for students interested in a baccalaureate degree in Elementary Education at the University of Great Falls.

The AA includes education across academic disciplines. Focusing on integration of information while increasing a students' employability, the AA is designed for transferability to a baccalaureate program.

Program requirements:

<http://catalog.gfcmu.edu/transfer-curricula/elementary-education/aa-univ-great-falls/>

- **Dual Credit – Introduction to Education**

GFC MSU is working with the Great Falls Public School District (GFPS) to offer a transferable Introduction to Education course as dual credit. We will offer EDU 200 at Charles Russell High School (CMR) beginning fall 2017.

GFC MSU has a vision to create a pathway for our local high school students who wish to remain in Montana by creating access in our community to the credentials they need to complete their teaching degrees. Our hope is to work closely with our MUS partners to create strong these pathways and build excitement and passion for becoming a rural educator.

of The University Montana Western

- **P3 Partnership with Blackfeet Community College**

Blackfeet Community College and UMW Office of Indian Education grant to train American Indian Educators currently enrolls 13 students in a P3 program. The grant scope has been expanded in second year to provide secondary certification, and special education endorsement

- **Streamlined Post-Baccalaureate Secondary Education**

Since the beginning of March 2017, we have been contacted by 37 individuals with bachelor's degrees interested in first-time certification. Individuals range from those with clear certifiable content area degrees to those with degrees in forestry, liberal studies and engineering.

Due to a limited ability to provide content area coursework distantly. We often advise individuals who need to take courses in their content area to go out of state due to extreme paucity in-state.

- **Online P3 Coursework delivery**

P3 and elementary education coursework is delivered online.

In the 2016-2017 school year we added several previously land based elementary education classes to our online offerings. The plan is to convert the remaining four courses to hybrid and online options next year. Our program serves almost 150 P3 students. Many of these educators will want to add the K8 endorsement. This additional distance coursework, added to grant funded P3 certification will expand the corps of qualified P8 educators.

The University of Montana Western would like to expand our general education courses to rural high schools, which would allow us to instruct many more community bound educators—who have no desire or ability to leave.

- **P3 Partnership with Aaniiih Nakoda College**

UMW's partnership with Aaniiih Nakoda College (ANC) is new and was driven by the fact that Aaniiih Nakoda's American Indian graduates are now attending UMW and are enrolled in the P-3 Bachelor's Degree classes online during spring semester 2017; UMW's Aaniiih Nakoda students are employed at Fort Belknap Head Start and hold Associate's Degrees in Early Childhood Education from Aaniiih Nakoda College.



- **Rural Education Colloquium and Rural Practicum Experience in Eastern Montana's Communities**

Inaugurated in Dec. 2016 with 10 superintendents from rural Montana school districts, the Rural Education Colloquium continues in April 2017 with 20 superintendents.

The colloquium provides a networking lunch, interactive panel conversation, and in-person interview opportunities for graduates to learn about the benefits of teaching in one of Montana's rural communities. Read about it [here](#). Communities for the Experience in Eastern Montana include Bainville, Froid, Culbertson, Fairview, Sidney and Savage. This project expands MSU's TEP clinical partnerships to the Bakken area where 13 students will complete practicum in rural schools, May 11-19, 2017.

- **EDU 101 Dual Enrollment**

With a Title II grant from OCHE, the Department is offering a "train the teacher" model to expand EDU 101 Teaching and Learning dual enrollment to 13 rural districts.

Introducing students to the teaching profession (complete with college credit) while in high school provides a clear pathway for students to envision their success in college and the opportunity to contribute to their home community by returning to teach.

- **Stevens Youth Center-A Day on Campus**

Five students from EDU 223 Educational Psychology & Adolescent Development traveled to White Sulphur Springs to work at the Stevens Youth Center.

14 students (K-7) participated in the 2nd Annual Day on Campus event which included a campus tour, taking part in a lab and college class, eating lunch, bowling at the SUB Recreation Center, and visiting the Bozeman Children's Museum.

- **Scholarships for Rural Teaching Placements**

In 2014-15 and 2015-16, a donor gave \$25,000 in cash scholarships to support rural student teaching scholarships. Since then, MSU has cultivated donations that have created a \$245,000 endowment, which allows \$7,500 in rural teaching scholarships in perpetuity.

- **Re-initiating the MSU Department of Education's Center for Research on Rural Education**

Three projects answer the following questions: 1) What do new rural teachers need to know and be able to do? 2) What are best practices for the preparation of new rural teachers? 3) How can we best support mentoring & induction for new rural teachers?



MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHERN

- **Attend the Hi-Line MAAS meetings**

A member of the initial program education faculty attends the monthly meetings of the Hi-Line MAAS superintendents to provide information provide information about the activities of the MSUN initial programs and to receive information about the activities of the school districts represented.

The Hi-Line MASS superintendents were informed of the re-instatement of the secondary education programs at MSUN and encouraged to send students to the programs. A May meeting with Hi-Line MASS superintendents will assist in collaboration toward meeting district needs for 2017-18.

- **Education Day**

The initial education program faculty are putting together activities for visiting students interested in education to give the students an idea as to what it is like to be an education student and an opportunity to sit in on program classes. The initial program faculty work with representatives from the admissions area to develop the program. This activity is designed to introduce aspects of the education program to encourage students to enroll in education.

- **Mock Interviews**

During the exit presentations by the student teacher candidates interested school districts are invited to participate in "Mock Interviews" of these student teacher candidates. In addition, students who are preparing to enter into student teaching are encouraged to participate.

This process often results in student teacher candidates setting up "real" job interviews with participating schools, most of them from the rural regions of the Hi-Line. In the last two academic years, 11 student teachers who participated in mock interviews accepted positions in school districts which had participated in the mock interview process.

- **Partnerships with Tribal Colleges**

Once students complete pre-requisites at Ft. Peck Community College they may be admitted into the MSUN education program. Once admitted, the students complete the professional education courses either through online course offerings or through the use of interactive television, PolyCom. Thus the students do not have to move to Havre and can complete the program in place. Thirteen students started the program in 2014 and to date 3 have completed their degree programs and are working for the Wolf Point and Poplar school districts. In addition, 5 more students are completing program entry requirements.

Montana Educator Recruitment and Retention Efforts

Educators Rising

<https://www.educatorsrising.org/what-we-offer/events>

MUS/MREA Rural Educator Fellows

<http://mrea-mt.org/mrea-rural-educator-fellows-scholarship-program/>

SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program & Montana State Leadership Induction Program

<https://elearningcenter.adobeconnect.com/a718294721/p40biivbj3i/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=norma>

Big Sky Pathways (Links to come)

Education

Pre K

Taskforce Membership

Dr. Roberta Evans, Dean, College of Education and Human Sciences, University of Montana
Dr. Jayne Downey, Associate Professor, Montana State University
Dr. Mary Susan Fishbaugh, Dean, College of Education, Montana State University Billings
Dr. Vikki Howard, Coordinator, Special Education Program, University of Montana Western
Dr. Carol Reifschneider, Dean, College of Education, Montana State University Northern
Ms. Alison Harmon, Dean, College of Education, Health and Human Development, MSU
Mr. Dennis Parman, Executive Director, Montana Rural Educators Association
Dr. Kirk Miller, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana
Ms. Mandy Smoker Broadbush, Director of Indian Education, Office of Public Instruction
Dr. Stacy Klippenstein, President, Miles Community College
Mr. Peter Donovan, Executive Director, Montana Board of Public Education
Ms. Kristine Thatcher, Educator Licensure Program Manager, Office of Public Instruction
Dr. Heidi Pasek, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Great Falls College
Mr. Tom Moore, Assistant Superintendent, Great Falls Public Schools
Mr. Tim Tharp, MBA, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
Mr. Marco Ferro, Public Policy Director, MEA-MFT

OCHE

Dr. John Cech, Deputy Commissioner, Academic & Student Affairs
Ms. Angela McLean, Director, AIMA & K-12 Partnerships
Mr. Erik Rose, Compliance and Workforce Data Analyst
Mr. Daniel Kaiserski, Temporary Program Manager

Special Thanks

Dr. Cindy O' Dell, Dean College of Education, Salish Kootenai College
Ms. Molly DeMarco, Student Representative to the Montana Board of Public Education