

Increasing access to high quality preschool for 4  
and 5 year old children in Montana

# STARS Preschool

# House Bill 639



- Section 11 and 12. Coordination instruction
  - One time, general fund appropriation to the DPHHS under the Human and Community Services Division – \$6 million over 2 years
  - To increase access to preschool for 4- and 5-year-old children
  - To test multiple delivery models



# Variety of facility types



Explorers Academy, Billings Head Stars

Mandy Berens – Kountry Kare



# Key STARS Preschool Criteria

- Provide a minimum of 5.5 hours per day, or 28 hours per week
- Teaching staff in public schools shall be licensed, non-public teaching staff shall have BA with 20 Early Childhood credits
- Classrooms must use a research based curriculum
- Programs are encouraged to prioritize at least 25% of classroom slots to children who are high needs
- Staff child ratios must be 1 adult to every 10 children with maximum classroom sizes at 18 students
- Program must show alignment to the Montana Early Learning Standards

# STARS Preschool Program Selection

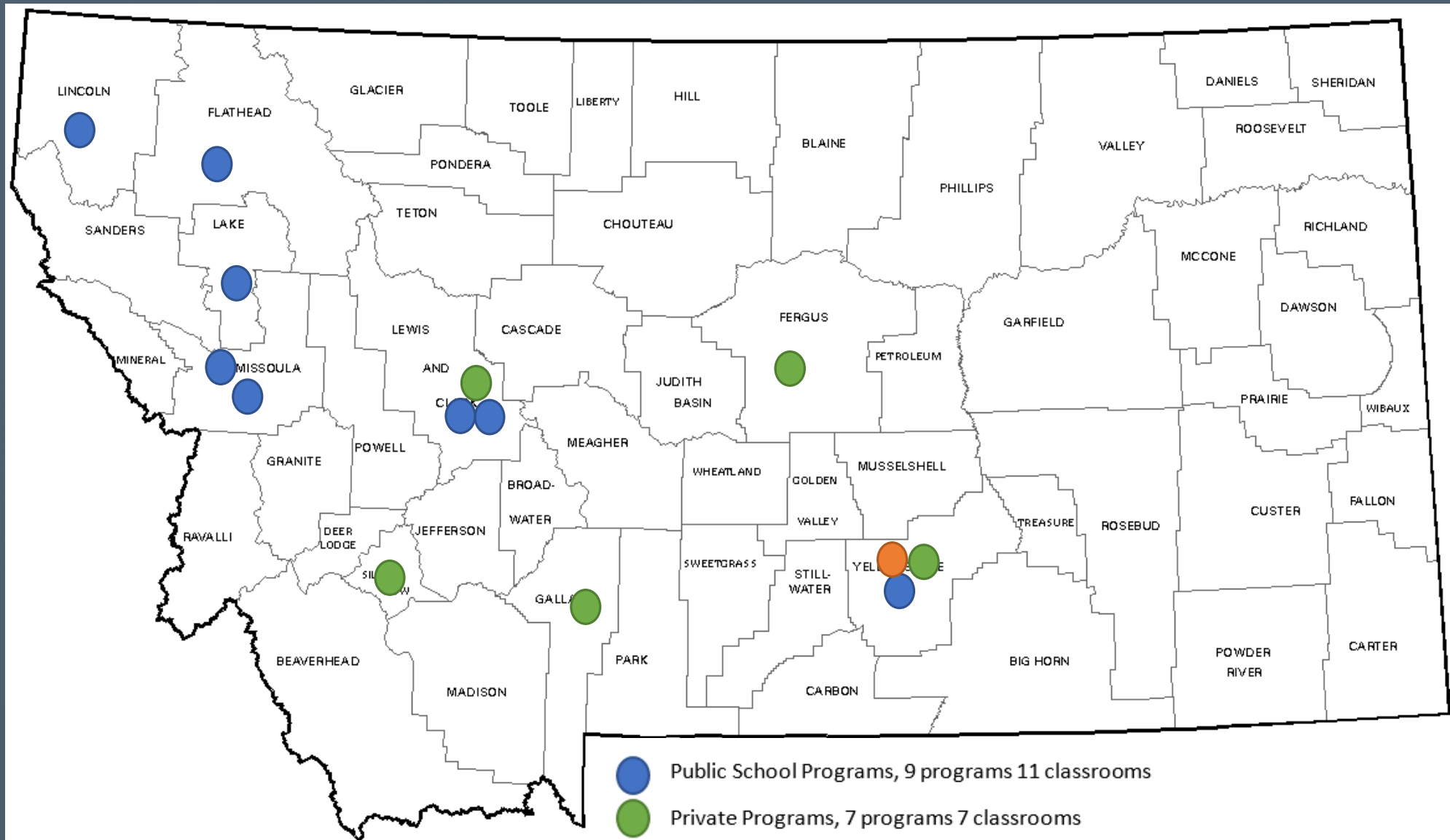
- In July, a selection committee reviewed 47 applications and selected 17 STARS Preschool programs
- Lockwood and Ronan SD support 2 classrooms
- Total of 19 STARS Preschool classrooms
- Explorers Academy, Billings Head Start plans to open a second classroom in Laurel, starting in January



Sink or float predictions,  
Early Childhood Center Flathead  
Community College, Kalispell

# Budget Allocation

- \$2.3 million allocated to programs directly
- \$700,000 allocated to infrastructure support for the early childhood classrooms through training, coaching, etc.
- Program awards range from \$27,190.00 to \$150,000.00
- Average awarded amount \$120,848.00



- Public School Programs, 9 programs 11 classrooms
- Private Programs, 7 programs 7 classrooms
- Head Start Program, 1 program 1 classroom



# STARS Preschool Programs

## Public

- Alberton Elementary
- Cherry Valley STARS Preschool Program, Polson
- Eastgate Elementary, East Helena
- Hawthorne Elementary, Helena
- Lockwood School District
- Marion Elementary
- Ronan School District
- W.F. Morrison Elementary, Troy MT.

## Private

- ABC Academy, Helena
- Beartooth Children Center, Red Lodge
- Discovery Place, Bozeman
- Early Childhood Center, Flathead Valley Community College, Kalispell
- Kountry Kare, Shepard
- Small Wonders, Lewistown
- Stepping Stones, Dillon

## Head Start

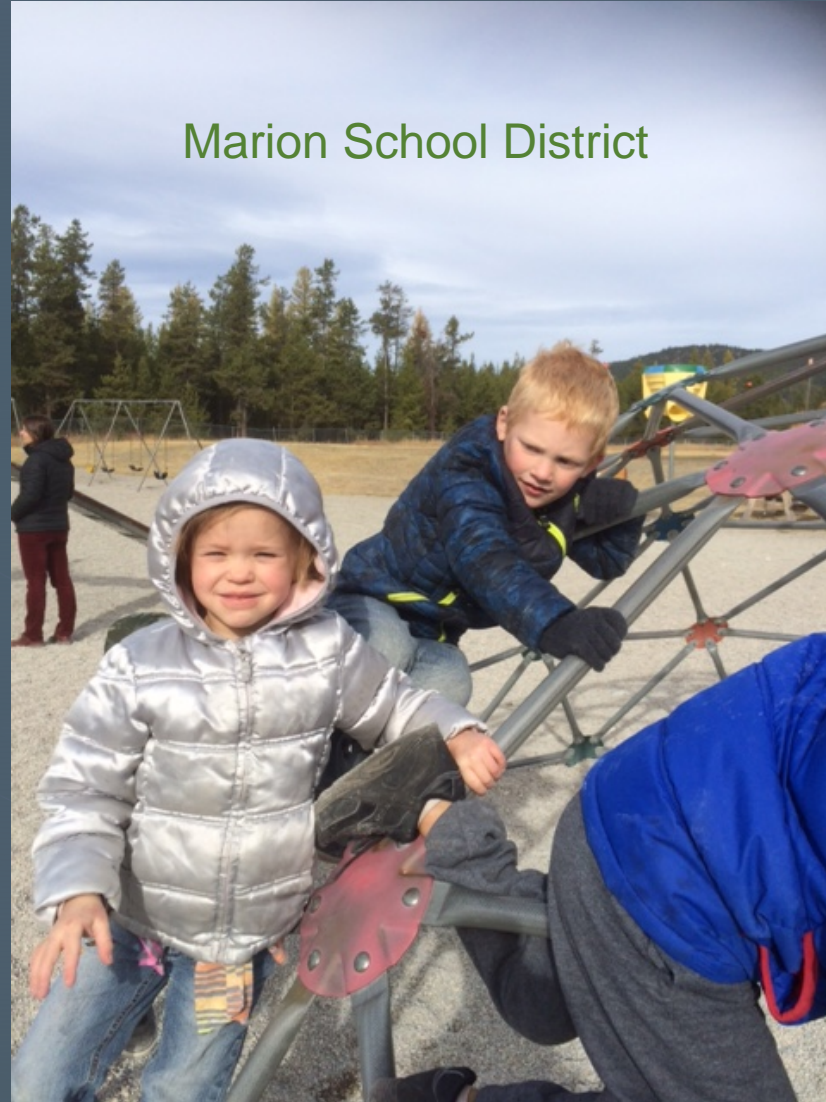
- Explorers Academy, Billings





STARS Preschool estimates serving 300 children in a high quality preschool setting the first year.

Marion School District



# How is the STARS Preschool criteria being monitored?

- Monthly on-site support and monitoring
- Quarterly Reports
- Assessments
- End of the year program and family surveys



# How is the STARS Preschool criteria being evaluated?

- Project Data

  - Facility Data

    - Health and Safety Inspections
    - Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)

  - Child Development and Outcome Data

    - Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE)
    - Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL)



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- For more information, please visit [starspreschool.mt.gov](http://starspreschool.mt.gov)



*Thank you*