
Montana CSPD

The Office of Public Instruction Special Education Endorsement Project was created to help school districts fill vacant special education teaching positions.

The project is part of Montana's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), which is included under Montana Administrative Rule (ARM) number 10.16.3135 in the Montana State IDEA Plan and is regulated by Accreditation and Licensure Rule 10.55.707. School districts and cooperatives participating in the OPI Special Education Endorsement Project are subject to all administrative rules of the Montana Board of Public Education.

Montana CSPD works to ensure that all education personnel are adequately prepared and receive continuing education.

For questions contact:
the OPI Special Education
Endorsement Project
Rene' Rosell Yarbrough
Project Coordinator

Montana State University Billings
Montana Center for Inclusive Education
1500 University Drive
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See our Website at:

<http://www.msubillings.edu/coe/OPI>

Revised Spring 2021



OPI Special Education Endorsement Project



Administered by
Montana State University Billings
Federally funded by the Montana Office of
Public Instruction under the Individuals
with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)



Criteria for Acceptance

- ◆ In order to serve the whole state of Montana, only one application from a district may be eligible for admission during each fiscal year. Applications submitted by September 1 will be given priority.
- ◆ The school district or special education cooperative must have advertised the special education vacancy statewide on the Montana Jobs-for-Teachers website for a minimum of one month: <http://jobsforteachers.mt.gov/> and provide documentation to that effect.
- ◆ The district must state that no special education endorsed applicants applied for the position.
- ◆ The teacher must hold a Class 1 or 2 Montana Teaching Certificate and have been offered a contract for the advertised special education teaching position.
- ◆ All teachers admitted to the project need a mentor for their first year and the district should identify the mentor. The mentor should have three years of teaching in special education and have completed training in mentoring. This training can be through their school district or through OPI training modules. If there is no mentor available within the district, then arrangements to locate a mentor will be made with the Project Coordinator.
- ◆ The teacher must complete their special education endorsement within three years of their project acceptance date. This includes the program requirement of student teaching in their own classroom.
- ◆ Teachers admitted to the project must hold a special education teaching position in Montana public schools for two years after obtaining the special education endorsement.

Once accepted, the teacher will be required to sign a contract with OPI that stipulates the following:

- ◆ Should the teacher fail to complete the required coursework to obtain the special education endorsement within three years from the date of the agreement, the teacher will be required to repay the stipends to OPI.
- ◆ Should the teacher fail to complete the required two years of service in a Montana school, the teacher will repay all sums paid by the OPI under the agreement.

Submit the following documents to: rene.rosellyarbrough@msubillings.edu

- ◆ Completed application form.
- ◆ Completed participation agreement form signed by all stakeholders.
- ◆ Letter from the school district or special education cooperative verifying the applicant has been offered a contract.
- ◆ Copy of the position advertisement.
- ◆ Copy of the teacher's Montana Teaching Certificate: Class 1 or Class 2.
- ◆ Copies of unofficial transcripts from all universities the applicant has attended which confirms the semester of student teaching and degree or degrees.
- ◆ Plan of Study from the participating Institution of Higher Education, signed by the advisor.

Participating Institutions of Higher Education

Carroll College

Ms. Kathleen Gilboy
406-447-4376
kagilboy@carroll.edu

Montana State University Billings

Dr. Susan Gregory
406-657-2152
sgregory@msubillings.edu

University of Montana

Dr. Trent Atkins
406-243-4978
trent.atkins@mso.umt.edu

Dr. Morgen Alwell

406-243-5512
morgen.alwell@umontana.edu

The University of Montana Western

Dr. Vikki Howard
406-683-7042
v_howard@umwestern.edu

Stipend Information

Stipends are available to offset the cost of tuition and fees and are dispersed based on the number of credits completed during a semester.

Stipends may not cover the total cost.