

**ITEM 143-101-R0609 Authorization for the University of Montana to Host the Montana Virtual Academy**

**THAT:** The Board of Regents authorizes The University of Montana to host the Montana K-12 Virtual Academy at its campus in Missoula and further authorizes the university, in coordination with the commissioner of higher education, to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the academy's statutory governing board to address such matters as space, reimbursement for space, and the respective roles and obligations of the parties in this endeavor.

**EXPLANATION:** The Legislature of the State of Montana enacted HB 459, creating the Montana Virtual Academy. The act specifies that "There is a Montana virtual academy at a unit of the Montana University System" to be governed by a board of five members, including the commissioner of higher education or a designee, the superintendent of public instruction or a designee, a Montana-licensed classroom teacher, a district administrator, and a school district trustee, the last three to be appointed by the Board of Public Education. The purposes of the academy are to make distance learning opportunities available to all school-age children through public schools; offer high-quality instruction; and emphasize core subject matters, advanced courses and enrichment courses.

The University of Montana was originally named in the legislation as the unit at which the Virtual Academy would be located. The legislation was amended to indicate simply that the program would be at a unit of the Montana University System in order to maintain long-term flexibility with regard to the program and to preserve regents' prerogative over the location of the program. At the time the legislation was amended, it was understood that the commissioner would support locating the program at UM, as the legislative sponsor envisioned.

**ATTACHMENTS:** HB 459, as enacted.