

September 6, 2011

TO: All high school Administrators, Teachers and Counselors

**An Invitation to Participate:
The Next Step in the Big Sky Pathways Process
or for New Big Sky Pathways, the First Step**

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Office of Public Instruction are pleased to extend this invitation for high schools funded through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, 2006 to join Perkins funded colleges, the Office of Public Instruction and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education for the Big Sky Pathways workshops being held in regional areas throughout the state. The ultimate goal of the workshops and future Big Sky Pathway initiatives include smooth transitions from high school to work or college; enhancing academic momentum; decreasing remediation rates; and increased persistence and graduation rates.

The workshops will be conducted by Gene Benson who is nationally recognized for his extensive experience with Perkins legislation. Gene co-authored the 79 sample programs of study for the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education. Gene Benson is a former Superintendent who has worked with local districts, community colleges and state agencies to implement Career Clusters. Recently, he guided instructors participating in Montana's Rigorous Programs of Study Grant through the process of using the national Career Clusters knowledge and skills statements to search out improvements in both rigor and relevance in program course sequences.

The 1-½ day Montana Big Sky Pathway workshop will let you take the Big Sky Pathway that you developed last year and refine it to meet all State and Federal Perkins requirements to elevate your program and your students to the next level. If you did not participate last year no problem, we will work with you to bring you up to speed with a quality Big Sky Pathway for your students also. We will also take a look at where and how far we have come, what we can do to make your Big Sky Pathway even better and where the Program of Study initiative is headed in the future. You will be provided tools to make your task easier and to produce a quality final product. There will be plenty of time for hands-on Pathway validation. You will have the guidance of Montana's Big Sky Pathway implementation experts working with Gene to provide you with the technical assistance essential to a quality Pathway for implement in your school. High quality Pathways will give your students an important advantage in transitioning from secondary to postsecondary and careers. Be prepared to evaluate your Big Sky Pathway and make improvements if necessary. The two days will be mostly informal so bring your questions, comments, ideas and an expectation that you will leave with better products to help your students transition from high school to college and into their chosen career.

Why is it important to attend?

This process is the foundation for all future Big Sky Pathway initiatives and is a **key** step in this multi-year project. All future initiatives will require this process, before funding future Big Sky Pathway activities.

This process will be offered every year for new Pathways, and for those needing to work through this process. However, this will be the only year Gene Benson will lead the process.

The workshops are designed to help local level Big Sky Pathway Teams see the relevance of academic courses to Career Technical Education programs and students. It will demonstrate the necessity for secondary, postsecondary cooperation and involvement to empower students to achieve their goals.

Additionally, in order to meet state and federal requirements for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, each school/institution must develop and implement a minimum of one (1) Program of Study in order to receive designated funds. Continued Perkins funding to school districts and institutions will depend on alignment of Programs of Study that meet federal requirements. For Montana, this process is developing a Big Sky Pathway.

Who should attend this workshop?

Big Sky Pathway Teams for existing or new Pathways will include the following:

- A postsecondary Career Technical Education faculty member,
- For each high school Big Sky Pathway, the following team members will include:
 - 1 Career Technical Education teacher
 - 1 academic teacher
 - 1 counselor per pathway
- High schools developing or improving more than 1 Big Sky Pathway may have to share academic teachers and counselor team members

What do Big Sky Pathway Teams need to bring to the workshop?

- *Secondary CTE & Academic Teachers:* National/State/Curriculum Cooperative standards, course syllabi and **descriptions**.
- *Counselors:* district graduation requirements
- *Postsecondary CTE Faculty:* Syllabi and Course Catalog, course and program outcomes
- *OCHS and OPI Staff:* Career Clusters.org & Pathways knowledge & Skills will be provided to each attendee on site.

When, where and what expenses are covered?

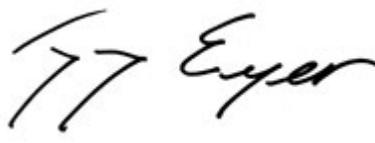
Logistical information is included as an attachment to this letter.

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Office of Public Instruction look forward to working with the Big Sky Pathway Teams in developing a seamless education-delivery and workforce-transition model; a model supporting different learning styles, valuing diverse interests and students, adapting and responding to technology and workplace needs, and preparing all learners for career success through multiple pathways. For questions, please feel free to contact bsp@montana.edu.

Thank you,



John E. Cech, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year &
Community College Education



TJ Eyer
Career and Technical Education
Division Administrator

The Next Step in the Big Sky Pathways Process Logistics & Reimbursement

Registration: To register to attend the Next Steps process, go our [Big Sky Pathway website](#).

Registration Deadline: September 28, 2011

Session Dates & Locations: Specific meeting locations will be identified on the registration page.

- October 10, 8 am – October 11, noon: Great Falls
- October 12, 8 am – October 13, noon: Havre
- October 26, 8 am – October 27, noon: Kalispell
- November 7, 8 am – November 8, noon: Billings
- November 9, 8 am – November 10 noon: Miles City
- November 14, 8 am – November 15 noon: Missoula
- December 5, 8 am – December 6, noon: Helena
- December 7, 8 am – December 8, noon: Butte

Credit Opportunities: 15 OPI Renewal Units or 1 Graduate Credit offered for \$150 through Montana State University Billings.

Reimbursement: The high school will be reimbursed for up to 3 high school members for each Pathway selected for the following expenses: (Note: participants will only be reimbursed if attending both days.)

- 1 vehicle per high school for every 4 participants – mileage for each vehicle will be paid at the current state rate of \$0.555 per mile for the mileage to and from the training site
- For participants traveling more than 60 miles
 - 2 nights hotel stay at the negotiated rate (the rooms will be direct billed to the host college)
 - 2 nights dinner per diem of \$12/night or \$24 per person (continental breakfast & lunch will be provided both days)
- Substitute pay for 1 CTE and 1 academic participating teacher per Pathway (If counselors serve as half-time teachers, they may submit for substitute reimbursement as well.)

Questions or to Learn More: For newcomers to Big Sky Pathway and those who want to know a little more, a Webinar Training session is scheduled for 3:30 pm on Tuesday, September 13. This Webinar will be recorded. All answers to questions from the Webinar or submitted to bsp@montana.edu can be found on the [Montana Big Sky Pathway Website](#).

Upcoming Big Sky Pathway Events: (limited to Big Sky Pathways who complete this workshop)

- **Winter 2012:** “Effective Business Partnerships Through Joint Big Sky Pathway Advisory Councils”
- **Early August 2012:** one week Session I [Math-In-CTE](#) kickoff
- **Fall 2012:** 2 day Session I [Math-In-CTE](#) follow-up
- **Fall 2012:** Big Sky Pathway Annual Gap Analysis & Alignment Workshop for new Big Sky Pathway Team partners
- **Spring 2013:** 2 day Session I [Math-In-CTE](#) follow-up
- **Spring 2013:** Big Sky Pathway in Advising and Counseling Initiative
- **May 2013:** final 1 day Session I [Math-In-CTE](#) follow-up
- **2013-2014:** [Literacy-In-CTE](#)