



MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Academic Research and Student Affairs
Committee Report
Montana Board of Regents
Friday, November 18, 2017

Montana Rural Educator Recruitment and Retention Task Force

At the May 2016 meeting of the Montana Board of Regents, school administrators from the Hi-Line shared the challenges they face in their efforts to recruit and retain educators. In response to this conversation, Dr. John Cech, Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, convened the Montana Rural Educator Recruitment and Retention Task Force. The task force consists of the following individuals:

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 Broaddus, 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

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
Ms. Katie Spalinger, Program Coordinator

The task force has convened three times via telephone and subcommittees have been formed in the following areas: 1) data collection and 2) short term efforts. Significant data has been collected from campuses within the Montana University System in the areas of student-teacher placement, “grow your own” recruitment models, retention of education majors and graduation rates.

Additionally, a sub-group of the taskforce met to determine how to mitigate short-term teacher shortages in rural schools. Angela McLean of OCHE reached out to each of the schools in Montana that has a teacher working with an OPI emergency authorization to determine how the MUS help meet the educational needs of these individuals. Several schools directed to the appropriate programs in the MUS to help them proceed. Additionally, McLean, Dennis Parman and Bobbie Evans convened a work group around short-term solutions to develop what may be dubbed the **MREA-MUS Rural Educator Fellows**. This program will be launched Spring 2017 to ensure placement of the Fellows in rural Montana communities in the Fall 2017. Marketing the communities where each student will be placed is a key component of the Fellows program. Dr. Evans, in conjunction with the University of Montana, will develop brochures for each of the communities in need and the taskforce will work with local administrators and trustees to further develop the incentive to student-teach in rural Montana.

Next steps of the task force will be to: 1) determine how to provide more programming online; 2) grow an educator pipeline using educator prep classes and dual enrollment and bring it to scale; and 3) determine how our campuses can work with School Administrators of Montana, MREA and MEA-MFT to support newly hired teachers.

The work of the task force can be viewed online at <http://www.mus.edu/K-12/default.asp>. Here you will find the members’ names, meeting notes and news articles pertaining to the work of the group.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY ~ Campuses at Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls, and Havre
THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA ~ Campuses at Butte, Dillon, Helena, and Missoula
Dawson Community College (Glendive) ~ Flathead Valley Community College (Kalispell) ~ Miles Community College (Miles City)