



MONTANA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INDIAN EDUCATION
ADVISORY TO THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education

September 2, 2026

Agenda

[Zoom Link](#) or in person at 1300 11th Avenue

Meeting ID: 883 0177 1594

Password: 201635

Mission: To provide for more effective and meaningful participation by Indian people in planning, implementation, and administration of relevant educational services and programs under the authority of local school boards.

MACIE Board Members: Jordan Lankford Forster (MFPE- Chairwoman), Dugan Coburn (Urban-Great Falls), Dawn Bishop Moore (Indian Impact Schools of Montana), Iris Kill Eagle (Little Shell Chippewa), Jeremy MacDonald (Chippewa Cree), Norma Bixby (Northern Cheyenne), Goldie Red Eagle (Fort Peck- representing Rena Lambert), Levi Black Eagle (Crow), Billie Jo Juneau (Urban-Missoula)

Ex-Officio Members: Dr. Brooke Beaverheart Gondara (Indian Education Director- OPI)

OPI Staff Members: Tyler Capece (Assistant Deputy Superintendent), Aislinn Brown (Chief Legal Counsel), Dr. Julie Murgel (Chief Program Officer), Michele Henson (TSAR), Mike Jetty (IEFA), Carrie McNab (IEFA), Jen Murphy (TSAR), Matt Bell (TSAR), Lindsay Mahoney (School Improvement Director)

Members of the Public: Brockton High School (Soni Owns Pipe, Thomas Black Dog, Braelynn DeMarrias), Seth Martin (Student Representative- Willard HS), Paige Sedahl (MT Safe Schools Center), Jennifer Jilot (IEFA Coordinator from Arlee HS), Mandy Smoker Broaddus (Education Northwest), Dr. Polly Lauer (University of Montana, Native American Studies Department)

Photos at OPI Studio (1227 11th Avenue)

9:40 AM



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Item 1: Call to Order

10:00 AM

- ❖ Welcome: Jordann Lankford Forster, Chairperson
 - Meeting called to order at 10:03 AM
- ❖ Flag Song
- ❖ Roll Call

Item 2: Approval of Minutes/ Old Business

10:10 AM

- ❖ July 23, 2026 Minutes
 - Motion: Dugan Coburn
 - Second: Jeremy MacDonald
 - Motion passed unanimously

Item 3: Ex-Officio Reports

10:15 AM

- ❖ Youth Leadership Development & Student Voice
 - Urban: Seth Martin representing Willard HS in Missoula (entering his Senior year)
 - Best part of attending: Seth stated that understanding and communication from everyone makes it a very different learning environment at Willard. He stated that there is barely any conflict because everyone is really understanding of each other and each other's needs. Seth states that his favorite part of attending Willard is there is no judgement.
 - What can schools do to support students academically?
 - *Seth stated that making students feel heard. Additionally, understanding that everyone's life situations are different and going through different things at different times.*
 - What can schools do to support student wellness?
 - *Seth stated that being understanding of people's home lives and situations. Additionally, being understanding of what is really*



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going on and understanding how much time they have to get things done.

- How can school best prepare for life after high school?
 - *Helping students to learn to manage responsibilities with classwork. Seth reports that has been difficult for him but he has gotten better over time about managing school work. Additionally, it is helping him manage the real world.*
 - What do you wish adults knew about your experience as a student?
 - *Seth states it's not as simple as it's portrayed to be and that everybody lives different lives and goes home to different things. He says some people might need different support than others. He also says people should be there for each other.*
 - Michele Henson asked Seth to explain more about the support he gets at Willard compared to other schools.
 - *Seth states that it is obvious how much the teachers strive to have connection and relationship with each student more than just a student-teacher scenario. He states its very community built unlike other schools, which makes it easier to go to school.*
 - Questions:
 - Dugan Coburn asked Seth to provide background for all schools he's been to. *Seth stated that he has lived all over Montana, including many schools in Missoula, Phillipsburg, and Potomac.*
 - Jen Murphy stated that she used to work at Willard and that there were many different learning styles there. She asked Seth to explain what that looks like. *Seth stated that it is very helpful as everyone learns and understands differently, and teachers are very understanding of that. This includes the ability to work outside. He feels like this is a better system even though it's different.*
 - Michele Henson gave Seth a shoutout on his assistance with the walkthrough form as Seth gave great input and feedback. Seth has been a strong leader in RISE and outside of RISE.
- Rural (Soni Owns Pipe, Thomas Black Dog, BraeLynn DeMarrias: students from Brockton High School)



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- Michele Henson shared that Brockton's students volunteered to lead the first student- led meeting of RISE next week and how instrumental they have been in RISE.
- What is the best part of attending your school?
 - *Students stated that learning new things everyday, seeing friends, and being in sports were the best part of attending their school.*
- What can schools do to support students academically?
 - *Chromebooks are only available in certain classes. It would be good for student's futures to be able to use them in all classes.*
- What can schools do to support student wellness?
 - *Students report more opportunities for mental health wellness as these are not really heard about at school. There is usually just one assembly and then students don't hear about it anymore.*
- What can schools do to prepare for life after high school?
 - *Students reported that schools could show that there are opportunities for jobs after school that are in demand that will match a student's persona.*
- What do you wish adults knew about your experience as a student?
 - *For a student it varies on how teachers expect students to do work in the morning as they are waking up. It would be good to give students time to wake up. Additionally, students shared that they wished adults knew that today it is harder to do work as there is not much research, working for 8 hours all day is stressful, and adults do not know how stressful it is to prepare for college. Additionally, adults think students have all the time in the world to study.*
- Questions?
 - *Jordan Lankford asked students what types of opportunities would you like to see for students to be able to address mental health issues. Students answered that more opportunities to talk to counselors and to have more people who know more about that area be able to come in to talk to students would be good.*



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- Matt Bell asked what ideas do students have to promote good attendance as well as support for students? *Brockton students reported a school period to catch up on missed work would be helpful to transition back after a missed day and promote a more inviting environment to students.*
- Michele Henson asked what would make a school feel more welcoming. *Students stated having a free period to sit and chill with friends before returning to class work would make students feel more welcome as well as pizza parties.*

❖ Indian Education Director

- Dr. Brooke Beaverheart Gondara shared an update on the following work from the Director's office:
 - Dr. Gondara stated she has spent a significant amount of time on the Intensive Assistance process and communications
 - Launch in early August included time to dig into data and accreditation scores and forming their community teams (outside of the school).
 - Intensive Assistance Implementation Administrator will provide comprehensive support to the process at least two days a week.
 - Dr. Gondara has been checking in with districts as they have been hosting internal and external meetings, at both Heart Butte and Lame Deer. The team will be providing professional development with Lame Deer on circle work.
 - Bi-weekly check-ins with the schools to provide time for schools to state what they need. Schools are working very hard on this process.

❖ IEFA

- Mike Jetty & Carrie McNab presented on the recent work of the IEFA unit:
 - Mike walked through the updated [IEFA website](#) including highlighting the search function, classroom resources, land acknowledgement and map, as well as the featured publications. Additionally, the link to the feedback portal is featured on the website.
 - Mike shared the updates with the DuBois Pablo settlement.



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- Carrie shared updates on the current work with the Shoshone Bannock Tribe including sharing knowledge and updating the map resource to show they are part of Montana.
 - Professional Development with school districts are set up
 - MCEL conference
 - MFPE conference
 - Hays-Lodge Pole, Havre
 - The team is following up with schools that scored low on the IEFA rubrics for accreditation.
 - The portal is still open for feedback on IEFA, and the team follows up on the feedback both positive and negative.
 - PDUPs applications for hosts and instructors are open. The criteria is posted on the [website](#).
 - Julie Jeffers started a fall newsletter that comes out quarterly.
 - Previous Professional Developments provided to school districts include Circle, Bigfork, Miles City, Plevna, and Terry.
- ❖ Tribal Student Achievement
- Michele Henson, Jen Murphy and Matt Bell presented updates from the TSAR unit. Michele Henson provided a report with data.
 - American Indian Student Achievement Gap report data was presented with information on English language learners, exclusionary discipline (out of school suspension), homeless population, mental health (felt sad or hopeless, attempted suicide), school safety, attendance rates, graduation, preschool enrollment, and college enrollment.
 - Matt Bell presented updates regarding language and culture work:
 - Professional development with schools
 - Indian Language Immersion Program grant applications are being sent out to qualifying schools and districts.
 - The last round of the Montana Indian Language Preservation grants is being wrapped up. There have been many great projects.
 - Intensive Assistance Launch
 - Matt has sent more titles to the MCPS Book Club
 - Matt will be presenting to the Community Choice Schools on IEFA.



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- Updating the Little Shell Class 7 MOU & resolution at the next Board of Public Education meeting.
- Will be working with the Yellowstone Boys & Girls Club in the future.
- The team will be presenting at the MFPE conference & the Language Matters Class 7 Conference in Billings.
- Jen Murphy presented on the Alternatives to Discipline: A Culturally Responsive Educator's Decision Deck
 - Scenarios for student behavior including defiance/refusal, disruption, anger/escalation, fighting/conflict, absence/skipping, disrespect/swearing, and repeated behaviors. Additionally, reentry protocol and cultural connection were discussed.
 - Jordann Lankford asked if modeling and demonstration will be offered for teacher development? *Jen said she hopes to.*
 - Jordann Lankford stated this would be a beneficial HUB course for teachers.
- Jordann Lankford provided a thank you to the entire team.

❖ Superintendent's Update

- Aislinn Brown, Chief Legal Counsel, provided an update on the recent settlement agreement for the DuBois Pablo Settlement
 - Preliminary approval
 - The ACLU will be sending communication to all school district superintendents regarding communication to students and families regarding the settlement.
 - December 14, 2026 there will be a final approval hearing after an objection period.
 - Aislinn Brown reviewed each area of the requirements for the Office of Public Instruction in the settlement agreement including:
 - Accreditation rubrics
 - Negotiated rulemaking committee membership
 - Expenditures including OPI publishing online the list of schools out of compliance with IEFA spending.



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- Content Standards
- Tribal Consultation
- MACIE funding and support from OPI & BPE
- Teacher training
- Creation of new OPI resources
- Annual report
- Document production & monitoring
- Jordann Lankford stated that as members are reviewing the settlement agreement they can put any concerns in an email to bring to future MACIE meetings.
- Tyler Capece provided an update from the Superintendent's office:
 - Schools received their individual school and student- level reports via the Kite Educator Portal on August 27. There will be a statewide public release in mid-November.
 - The new Accreditation cycles have begun. The schools in the North Central, Northeast, Hi-Line & Southeast region will be completing the entirety of the accreditation process. Schools in other regions will be completing a shorter accreditation process. The OPI team will be on the road providing support for school leaders in Great Falls, Glendive and Havre.
 - The MIC-3 and OPI are accepting applications for nominations for:
 - Purple Star designations for schools
 - Purple Star champions for individuals who go above and beyond to serve Montana's military families.
 - Nominations are due by October 31st. Contact katie.bloodgood@mt.gov or jewel.sullivan@mt.gov with any questions.
 - Version 2 of AI Guidance was recently released by the MTDA & OPI.
- ❖ Presentation on Peak Attendance Study- Lindsay Mahoney, OPI & Paige Sedhal, Safe Schools Center
 - Lindsay Mahoney & Paige Sedhal presented data and information regarding attendance including:
 - Key drivers for absenteeism



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- Montana has a 36% chronic absenteeism rate, making it the 7th lowest in absenteeism.
- Defining chronic absenteeism, which is missing 10% or more of school.
- September is a key month for attendance indicators; students missing 2-4 days in September are 5 times more likely to be chronically absent throughout the school year.
- OPI supports with attendance by:
 - Advanced research through the PEAK Study
 - Statewide attendance task force
 - Developing comprehensive guidance and resources
 - Built a statewide attendance website and toolkit
 - Partnering with schools and districts
 - Strengthening cross-sector education partnerships
- The Pathways to Elevate Attendance and Knowledge Research Project (PEAK) is a three-year statewide study focused on improving student attendance in Montana's CSI (Comprehensive Support & Improvement) schools. Led by UM's PJW College of Education and Montana Safe Schools Center in collaboration with OPI. PEAK works directly with schools, students, and caregivers to uncover local successes, deepen understanding, and implement meaningful, community- chosen strategies to promote stronger student engagement.
 - Project goals:
 - ◆ Identify school-based practices that successfully promote regular attendance and student connection.
 - ◆ Explore how factors such as school climate, belonging, health and safety, and academic engagement contribute to regular attendance across both elementary and high school settings.
 - ◆ Support schools in designing and testing targeted strategies rooted in their own data and community insights.
 - Big picture revealed by the data:
 - ◆ Attendance improves when students are:



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- Connected (peers and adults)
- Engaged (interested in learning)
- Supported (emotionally and physically)
- Able to access school (transportation, routines, weather)
- Attendance declines when these are unstable
- Big takeaways:
 - ◆ Students who miss just two days per month are at risk of becoming chronically absent.
 - ◆ Schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) have chronic absenteeism rates that are significantly higher than the statewide average.
 - ◆ Improving attendance is one of the most effective ways to increase student achievement without changing curriculum or adding instructional time.
- ❖ Presentation on Intensive Assistance Launch- Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI
 - Dr. Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer, provided an update on the implementation of the [Intensive Assistance program](#).
 - Currently there are 5 schools in the Intensive Assistance process, however there could be additional schools in the future based on this year's accreditation scores as they are currently in Deficient status.
 - The support network meets virtually every other week after school hours.
 - Implementation Coach: the OPI is working with Dr. Rob Watson at School Administrators of Montana on the Implementation Coach. The coach is intended to assist and support school leaders with redesign and implementation of redesign plans that infuses culture and language. Additionally, the coach will be inclusive of tribal communities and consultation. They will also assist with communication.
 - This Friday one of the school leaders has a scheduled discussion with Superintendent Hedalen regarding the financial aspect of the Implementation Coach.
 - Once community engagement and system analysis phases are completed, then schools will identify their redesign plan. Following, the



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implementation begins over the next few years (accreditation cycle in 2028-2029).

- Dr. Murgel reported that it is important that we are being aware of not adding more to the plate of schools.
- Timeline for the process is documented on the overview, including reports to the Board of Public Education. The schools will need to report out their system analysis in January of 2027 and the redesign plan in May of 2027 to the Board of Public Education.
- Worked closely with Education Northwest to design the launch meetings. School Board Chairs, Superintendents and Principals attended together. Additionally, at the launch the schools discussed what it would take to get out of Intensive Assistance. Schools analyzed data based on assurance and performance standards of accreditation.
- Dr. Murgel reviewed the tasks completed as well as the next steps.
 - MOU with School Administrators of Montana to be signed by schools. The Implementation Administrators will be hired and contracted through School Administrators of Montana.
 - Schools will be scheduling and hosting the Circles of Agreement process for Phase One.
 - The OPI will publish the approved external partner list from the RFI for external partners who are interested in working with schools.
- Questions?
 - Norma Bixby asked
 - Jordann Lankford asked who was in charge of hiring the coaches?
 - ◆ *Rob Watson at School Administrators of Montana is in charge of hiring the coaches. He has worked with each administrator of Intensive Assistance schools to identify what the qualities and characteristics of the individuals they'd like to ensure that the Implementation Administrator is a good fit for each community. Additionally, ensuring that the Administrator is geographically close enough to work in the schools two*



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days a week. He has worked with school superintendents and school boards to find the right fit.

- Jordann Lankford asked if the school administrators or school board members get to sit in on the interview for the Implementation Administrator.
 - ◆ *It is not clear if this is an interview process. Rob has been vetting known individuals that are quality.*
- Jordann Lankford asked who is responsible for providing the communities with information regarding the accreditation status of each school.
 - ◆ *The Superintendents and Principals in these schools have already begun having communication with the community including parents, teachers and students. The OPI will also be providing support to help facilitate the community engagement phase.*
- Norma Bixby asked who is in charge of the contract.
 - ◆ *School Administrators of Montana is in charge of the contract for the Implementation Administrator.*
- Norma Bixby asked about the schedule for the network meetings.
 - ◆ *The network meetings are every other Wednesday and include the school implementation team, the OPI, Education Northwest, BPE and School Administrators of Montana.*
- Jordann Lankford shared concerns that schools may have difficulties with an outside entity making them do or this [non-accreditation] may happen and they did not ask for this to happen to them. It may be hard to find the right fit for a Coach for the communities. This alienates the community and these coaches may seem punitive.
- Mike Jetty shared he hopes these coaches have had experience working with tribal schools and students.



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Lunch

12:30 PM

- Lunch began at 12:45 PM. Returned for lunch at 1:15 PM.

Item 4: Old Business

1:00 PM

❖ 2026 Schedule

- There will be no October meeting, but a newsletter will be sent out as well as meeting minutes from September.
 - Motion: Iris Kill Eagle
 - Second: Dugan Coburn
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Item 5: New Business

1:15 PM

❖ 2026/2027 Schedule: tentative schedule

- November 4th
- No meeting in December
- January 6
- February 3
- March 3
- April 7
- May 5
- June no meeting
- July joint meeting with the BPE

❖ MACIE Membership

- Vacancies:
 - Blackfeet
 - Tyler Capece has reached out regarding filling this position
 - Class 7
 - A flyer will be made to recruit at the Class 7 conference in Billings.
 - SAM
 - Tyler Capece has reached out to Dr. Rob Watson regarding the appointment that will be filled soon.
 - MIEA



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- Jordann Lankford asked MACIE members about the status of MIEA.
- Tribal Head Start (Ex-Officio)
 - Tyler Capece has reached out regarding filling this position and had heard back for an appointment.
- MTSBA
 - Jordann requested that MACIE members help spread information regarding openings
- ❖ Presentation- NASX 280 Indian Education for All Semester-Long Project, Dr. Polly Lauer, University of Montana
 - Dr. Polly Lauer from the University of Montana provided a presentation on a semester-long project for undergraduate students. This project will include taped interviews with elders and knowledge keepers in the Missoula area.
 - Dr. Lauer and the MACIE Board discussed what appropriate honorarium would include.

Item 5: Chairperson Report

2:00 PM

- ❖ Community Share
 - Tyler Capece on behalf of Norma Bixby:
 - Information regarding upcoming event on September 10th at the University of Montana with Carol & Denise Juneau titled The Montana Constitution: The Work Between the Worlds
 - Reception starts at 6 PM, Dialogue begins at 7 PM
 - Virtual and in person options available
 - Iris Kill Eagle:
 - Metis celebration will be in Winnet during Labor Day weekend (moved from Lewistown)
 - Dawn Bishop Moore:
 - Large majority of Indian Impact Schools will be attending conference in DC to advocate for Impact Aid Fund
 - Mike Jetty:
 - Last Chance Community Powwow: September 26



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- Area schools will be doing cultural presentations
- Dugan Coburn:
 - Great Falls Community Powwow: November 14 at CM Russell Fieldhouse
 - November 17: Bison Harvest
 - October 21-22: 4th Grade Event at Great Falls, all 4th graders will learn traditional games and stories.
- Norma Bixby:
 - Labor Day Powwow at Ashland starting Friday
 - Skate park recently built in Lame Deer and an opening ceremony was recently held.
 - National JOM Conference in Scottsdale, AZ in December 7-10, 2026
- ❖ Chairperson Report
 - Next meeting: November 4th

Item 6: Public Comment

2:30 PM

This is an opportunity for any member of the audience to bring to the attention of the Council questions or relevant comments concerning matters not on the agenda. Please note that the Council is bound by ethical practice, bylaws, and Montana statutes. The Council may not take any action on matters brought to the attention of the Council during the public comment portion of the meeting unless specific notice of that matter is included in a properly noticed agenda. Therefore, in the Open Agenda portion of the meeting, the Council will not discuss or take any action, but may refer a matter presented to a future agenda. The following criteria exist for the public comments.

- The public may not discuss items on the current agenda at this time.
- The public may only discuss matters within the jurisdiction of the Council.
- No action may be taken on a matter raised during the open agenda.
- The public may not comment in a boisterous, disorderly, hostile, or aggressive manner.
- Each member of the public may address the Council once.



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Public Comment:

- Anonymous Public Comment:
 - Concerns regarding Lane Deer & Heart Butte Intensive Assistance process.

Item 7: Adjournment

2:45 PM

Motion: Dugan Coburn

Second: Dawn Bishop- Moore

Meeting adjourned at 2:14 PM

Times are approximate.