**NEWS FROM: *Montana Small Schools Alliance***

**UPDATE: December 2024/January 2025**

Message from the Director:

Happy Holidays! 

First of all a big thank you to all of those that attended the November professional development. We had a great turnout for both the QPR and Character Strong sessions. Thank you for being so engaged with the presenters and for your ongoing work to be the best teacher you can be for your students. I know it isn’t easy to give up a Friday but your participation was appreciated.

Secondly, we got the news that our STOP School Violence grant was awarded for another three years! This is great news in keeping the programs already in place and expanding services to our schools. We will be sharing what those expanded services are in the months to come. In the meantime make sure to take advantage of what is currently being offered, free to our schools. You really should use them.

Thirdly, happy holidays! It is that time of year again when things can get a little crazy at school and at home. There are just not enough hours in the day to get all your school and home life things done. I hope you are not burning the candle at both ends and wearing yourself out. If it helps, I give you permission to NOT do one thing on your list. Will they really care if you don’t make the cookies and buy them instead? Or will they really care if the house isn’t decorated as much as usual? Or what about using gift bags instead of wrapping all those presents? Taking one thing off the list might just give you a few more minutes to enjoy your family, your students, your own December tradition, whatever it may be. I am going to try and take my own advice- I don’t think anyone will really care if we don’t have lights on the peak of the house- I am letting it go!

This newsletter includes the usual Counseling and Library newsletters as well as information from the grant and some PD opportunities. It also has language we developed for your Accreditation reports for professional development and curriculum. I hope you find this useful and it makes your life a little easier when doing the reports. Let me know if MSSA can help in any other ways.

Have a great winter vacation, and thank you for all you do for our students.

Sincerely,

Janelle

**Counties Feature**

Beaverhead County

Beaverhead County has seven rural schools, with a total of 89 students. Mike Miller County Superintendent.

Grant School #7- Penny Huxtable teacher, 7 students.

Jackson School #24- Alyssa Smith teacher, 2 students.

Lima School, Greg Iverson Superintendent and teacher, Heidi Diednor, Dawn Kindbeg, Cassidy Guinnane, Devienne Weeks, Alison Nichols, Lynn Schroder teachers with a total of 43 students K-12.

Polaris School #21- Kacin Shank teacher, 7 students.

Reichle School # 26- Becky Jensen and Leah Tucker-Helle teachers, 13 students.

Wisdom School #16- Caroline Geiger and Sara Kielley teachers, 10 students.

Wise River School #1- Felicia Luebeck teacher, 7 students.

In the fall, all schools had health screenings, with Dillon Family Dental and the Rotary doing dental and vision screenings. Basketball round robin tournaments happened and the Science Fair is being planned for the Keltz Arena with Grant school in charge.

Rural Friday’s are happening for Divide Alder, Reichle, Grant, Polaris and area Home School students at the University of Montana. This is a great experience for the students and for Western students getting teaching experience.

Currently all schools completed the MAST testing for the first window, Wise River, Grant and Reichle are going through the ESSER closeout process, and Wise River is looking for a full time teacher starting after the winter break. Wise River is having a Christmas celebration on December 20th.

**Accreditation Language for PD/Curriculum**

There is an attachment to this newsletter that includes language you can use in completing your accreditation reports for curriculum and professional development. OPI has looked at this document and gave their nod of approval. It will also be on the website under the Consortium section.

**February Zoom Workshops**

Sign up on the website today!

**February 6, 7, and 10, 2024**

**AI** with Jason Neiffer - 3 hours

**Cyber Security** with Carol Phillips - 3 hours

**\*\*\*\*\*\*Update- Math Standards Advisory Group\*\*\*\*\*\***

Due to the fact that OPI has put off the implementation of the Math Standards/Curriculum until 2026, the Math Advisory Group will not meet this year. I am very sorry if this causes anyone to rethink their involvement but until the OPI work is done we really cannot do our work. I will be checking in with those who signed up in the fall to check on your continued interest. And, if anyone else is interested in joining the committee, knowing the timeline is next school year, please let me know. I think there will be plenty of work to go around. Sonja Whitford will be leading this group through the process of taking OPI Standards and making them work for our small/rural/multi-grade classrooms and schools. If you are interested in being on the advisory group please email me at [jbeers@mt-ssa.org](mailto:jbeers@mt-ssa.org). A stipend will be paid. We will keep our planned Math PD in April.

**Parent Guidance Newsletter from the Cook Center**

At the Cook Center for Human Connection, we understand the challenges of parenting in today’s world. In the December Mental Health Newsletter ([English](https://d13whp04.na1.hubspotlinks.com/Ctc/5E+113/d13whP04/VVpZRk8m-5_nW4NKq727gY0yZW1HN78y5nQ_dBMJvQnv5nXHsW7Y9pgv6lZ3kRW95R7lH6mLT3PW2p5cbj6BcVjmW8y0w0l6DQFY3W7KXpv56X2dXhW6qV29d8_45m0W6VFXNq96csmYN47g6z9lVYJVW54wg7S99hpmGW3cC6J_1bdK3xW1-vNgr6f35CFN8kWwjvK0j8JW2NRJ271lp-T8W98sVfP2l4x0GW1bf3b864bw7GW1N9yvX4M4QfnW6tcRGQ8s2GtCW6Nldpx8flKr-W15h8Fv7WsPlFW6W8FpM8qt55lW10S8XV1XSYB2W4V1JWB1J_m0kW3cHmLB4jJ98FW62x5Xh5bwz4TW4dnzjY566J07W6NnPKr4T7nCPN5CxJyrFWs67W2j4WVp1w2zqyV85BhN5dyBX8W5pdzg85jc-KCVVF9rz8CZKwfW2RXl_Q1wkZfVW8c4rDl5W9q2gW6xylPz4d8TCpW5x-H5r6xFx9NW3Z_bVQ8DHcmgW1zmBxj76L-s3W98mJYw50KqZ0W58BlM74hv7N8W6WwMkw1vLrL4W78lsHq9b6mr-N1bK6Xm_7krMW8c5-mz4v0yYff8CHws404)/[Spanish](https://d13whp04.na1.hubspotlinks.com/Ctc/5E+113/d13whP04/VVpZRk8m-5_nW4NKq727gY0yZW1HN78y5nQ_dBMJvQnv5nXHsW7Y9pgv6lZ3kyW45-tMr9cQYSmW8fkKSg4lcMwxVFKSFv97rYS1V57VpC8G6NlGW3DKJl226p643W2kZpzQ3CHQMkW8Ln2xQ2P5_57W6zp8246H923NW3pDrS82xfr5jW1TS5071VxJr_V7ZtVC1bkJW7W6tRwtn8LMnjtN257D64RytWTW53r_BB1Ljvz6W8SkM44339ZmHW1Hc1XT5HTGLlN2SZF97cGP2XW2JQc8r6zGb0nW4FRrnB3X_vCFW7GRvyV4Tt2jyW6nKJBk1y2Z6tW3K--F919k1jSW2Z1PV252Nb7MW3dC40X143-SRW6T4hQ-907FJpVJpKvV3S5mzjW2Cjq-D68HJCjW1l40Xf3Nzw26W5cpQ3w4sppjKW7qRLz63QyrMWW1CP2VZ4DjW0lW3CJf-h5MQsTKW8pvWkJ6K_X0SW8cqd_V64N_nsW6Zt6cT5ZpdyCW1sL9j17P0SR7W181Kks2ZdNxKW5rSk0n2PY2FzW1_GWLt7ggtr6W5rxwWM4r78FPVL67bK55ht-FW5QhgFv6WxcyndJRfpg04)), we’re focusing on the profound impact of parental kindness and how it shapes the lives of kids and teens. In this newsletter, you’ll find insights and strategies to help you practice kindness in your parenting, creating a positive ripple effect that strengthens your child’s emotional well-being and resilience.

| **Montana’s AI Learning Cohort**  Opportunity from OPI-  “The Montana Office of Public Instruction is thrilled to announce the launch of our AI Learning Cohort beginning January 16. This innovative learning opportunity is designed to empower educators to explore and harness the potential of artificial intelligence in education. Together, we’ll navigate practical applications, ethical considerations, and transformative possibilities to enhance teaching and learning.  If you are interested in joining this learning journey, email [hazel@moderlearners.com](mailto:hazel@moderlearners.com) to secure your spot. Let’s learn together.” **Mental Health Resources** The Montana Cares grant has found some additional resources that may help your school and families. MT Pediatrics are providing families across MT with a lot of resources that coincide with many of our communities needs and MT Cares goals. They offer a variety of healthcare services. They bill Medicaid/insurance directly, but also have a donor-fund that helps support families w/out the means to pay. Could we please add them to the MT Cares Resource pages?   * Programs: Attached, you'll find digital versions of our current flyers for mental/behavioral health, complex care, and on-demand care. Details about each of these programs can also be found below:   + On-demand care: <https://www.montanapediatrics.org/how-on-demand-care-works/>   + Mental & behavioral health: <https://www.montanapediatrics.org/what-we-do/pediatric-mental-behavioral-health/>   + Complex care: <https://www.montanapediatrics.org/what-we-do/care-coordination/>   + [Bright by Text](https://www.brightbytext.org/Families) information I mentioned that's currently being deployed in Missoula. It appears this is only through age 8, but might be helpful to you!  |  | | --- |  |  | | --- |  |  | | --- |  |  | | --- |  |  | | --- | |
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