

July 1, 2025, THROUGH June 30, 2027

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

between the

**THE STATE OF MONTANA
BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
MONTANA STATE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
AND THE BLIND**

and the

**MSDB FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
LOCAL #4027, MFPE, NEA, AFT, AFL-CIO**

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PREAMBLE

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this 8/31/2025, between the State of Montana, Board of Public Education, Montana State School for the Deaf and the Blind, hereinafter referred to as the "Employer" and Montana State School for the Deaf and the Blind Federation of Teachers Local #4027, MFPE, NEA, AFT, AFL-CIO, hereinafter referred to as the "Federation." It is the intent and purpose of this Agreement to assure sound and mutually beneficial working relationships between the Employer, its employees and the Federation and to record mutually established terms and conditions of employment.

ARTICLE 1.
RECOGNITION

Section 1. The Employer recognizes the Federation as the exclusive representative of all state employees at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind for purposes of collective bargaining who are titled Teacher, Cottage Counselor, Activities Director, Teacher on Special Assignment, Paraeducator, Licensed Practical Nurse II, Interpreter-Tutor, Librarian, Media Clerk, Braille Transcriptionist, Communications Technician, ASL Specialist, Special Education Coordinator, Outreach Consultant, Guidance Counselor, Behavior Specialist, and Transition Coordinator.

Section 2. It is recognized that the Federation is required both under law and under this Agreement to represent all of the employees in the bargaining unit fairly and equally without regard to whether or not an employee is a member of the Federation. Inasmuch as the terms of this Agreement have been made for all employees in the bargaining unit, it is fair that each employee in the bargaining unit assume their fair share of the obligation along with the grant of equal benefits contained in this Agreement.

ARTICLE 2.
MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

Section 1. It is understood and agreed that any of the rights, powers, or authority the Employer had prior to the signing of this Agreement are retained by the Employer except those specifically abridged, granted, or modified by this Agreement. The Federation and bargaining unit members recognize the prerogative of the Employer to operate and manage its affairs in such areas as, but not limited to:

1. direct employees;
2. recruit, hire, promote, transfer, assign and retain employees;
3. relieve employees from duties because of lack of work or funds or under conditions where continuation of such work is inefficient and non-productive;
4. maintain the efficiency of government operations;
5. determine the methods, means, job classification, personnel by which government operations are to be conducted;
6. take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the missions of the School in situations of emergency;
7. establish the methods and processes by which work is performed.

ARTICLE 3. FEDERATION RIGHTS

Section 1. Spokesperson. The Federation shall designate officers or members to act in the capacity of official spokesperson for the Federation on any matter. Such a designation shall be made in writing and shall specify the period covered by the designation.

Section 2. Federation Business. The internal business of the Federation shall not be conducted by employees during work time. Such business may be conducted during regular breaks, lunch period, and before and after work. Internal business of the Federation including communication via phone and email should happen using personal devices, personal emails, and outside of duty time. Use of state property including email should be limited.

Section 3. Consultation. The staff of the Federation shall be permitted to confer with bargaining unit members during school hours as long as such visitations do not disrupt school and comply with Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind visitor policies.

Subsection 1. During the course of new employee orientation, MFPE or local officers/representatives shall have access to newly hired bargaining unit members in order to distribute MFPE information and application for membership. Local representatives of MFPE and management shall coordinate on such orientations.

Section 4. Meeting Rooms. The Federation shall be permitted to use meeting rooms within the school as long as there is no conflict with previously scheduled activities and enough notice is given to the Employer for scheduling purposes. Facility Use form should be filled out and given to the main office before meetings take place.

Section 5. Communication. The Federation shall have the right to use the District email, inter-school mail facilities, and school mailboxes. Except as provided by § 2-2-

121, MCA, neither school mail nor e-mail may be used by the Federation for the purpose of supporting/opposing or informing its members about any ballot issue or candidate for public office. All mail sent by the exclusive representative shall be clearly identified as being issued by the Federation. The Federation shall have exclusive use of some portion of a bulletin board currently used for employee notices.

Section 6. Arbitration Hearings. Upon Management approval, the President of the Federation Grievance Committee may be permitted to attend a grievance arbitration hearing without loss of pay, provided the president has an integral role in such proceedings.

Section 7. Leave for Federation business. The Federation president, or designee, shall be allowed to use, in minimum increments of one hour, seven days per school year for Federation business in legislative years and five days in non-legislative years without loss of regular pay upon prior approval of the immediate supervisor.

Section 8. The official board agenda for each Board of Public Education meeting shall be provided to the Federation.

Section 9. Leave for BPE meetings. Federation officers may use personal leave as provided for in this Agreement to attend regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Public Education. Upon request, an interpreter/s shall be provided according to BPE practice in order to facilitate participation by employees who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Section 10. Board Agenda. Representatives of the Federation shall be permitted to submit agenda items to the Board in accordance with its regular procedures.

Section 11. Disciplinary Representation. Whenever an employee is subject to a disciplinary interview, which may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee, such employee shall have the right to have a Federation representative present during the interview. When such an interview involves termination proceedings, the employee shall receive 24 hours prior notice except under circumstances where the health, safety, and welfare of the students or other employees is immediately threatened by the employee's continued presence on the job.

Section 12. Interpreter/Disciplinary Session. During disciplinary sessions involving employees who are deaf or hard of hearing, the Employer shall ensure communication is facilitated by providing an interpreter when necessary.

Section 13. In-Service plan. The school administration and a committee of bargaining unit members shall meet annually to develop an in-service plan for academic staff.

Section 14. Nothing in this Article shall be construed to deny or restrict the rights accorded employees covered by this Agreement under Montana or Federal law unless specifically provided for otherwise.

Section 15. Interpreter/Bargaining Session. During bargaining sessions involving employees who are deaf or hard of hearing, the Employer shall ensure communication is facilitated by providing an interpreter when necessary.

ARTICLE 4. FEDERATION SECURITY

Section 1. Within 15 working days of the execution of this Agreement the Employer shall furnish the Federation a list of all employees within the bargaining unit. Said list shall be updated on an annual basis and provided to the treasurer of the local Federation.

Section 2. Upon written authorization from a member of the bargaining unit, the Employer shall deduct from the pay of that employee the monthly dues as certified by the secretary of the Federation and shall deliver those dues to the treasurer of the Federation. The Federation has an annual "window period" during which employees may revoke the aforementioned written payroll deduction dues authorization. In situations where net pay after taxes and other deductions is not enough to fund dues deductions, no deduction will be taken. In order for a deduction to be deducted for a given month, the Employer's business manager must receive the authorization form no later than the last day of the previous month. Changes in the dues rate shall be certified to the Employer in writing over the signature of the authorized officer of the Federation at least two payroll periods in advance of such change.

Section 3. The Federation will indemnify, defend and hold the Employer harmless against any claims, demands, suits, or other forms of liability, including the cost of defense, that shall arise out of or as a result from any action taken by the Employer for the purpose of complying with this Article.

ARTICLE 5. MANAGEMENT SECURITY

Section 1. There shall be no strikes or lockouts of any kind during the term of this Agreement except that unit members shall have the right to strike over economic matters during the Legislative session.

Section 2. In the event of any strike, including those authorized in Section 1 above, the Employer is free to take any recourse that may be available in law or in equity.

ARTICLE 6. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Section 1. Sick leave. Sick leave will be granted on a pro rata basis in accordance with § 2-18-618, MCA. The Employer may require written substantiation of sick leave usage in the form of a physician's certificate.

Section 2. Professional Leave. Teachers shall be granted two days per school year of approved professional leave, without loss of salary, to attend the annual teachers' convention or other professional meetings. The School shall work to access the Great Falls Public School staff development opportunities and workshops throughout the school year. Teachers who do not use leave for attendance of approved professional meetings or the annual teachers' convention shall forfeit such leave.

Section 3. Study Leave Without Pay. Leave of absence for up to 12 months without pay may be granted by the superintendent at the recommendation of the principal to those teachers who are seriously planning on returning to employment with the School.

Subsection 1. Any faculty member who has been employed as a faculty member at Montana School for the Deaf and Blind for at least five school years, may apply for, and the superintendent and Board of Public Education may grant, a leave of absence without pay for up to one calendar year for the purpose of taking study leave.

Subsection 2. The study leave must be taken for the purpose of pursuing studies in an area related to the faculty member's work at Montana School for the Deaf and Blind. The determination as to whether the proposed subject area for study is so related falls within the discretion of the superintendent.

Subsection 3. The faculty member will not receive increment credit for time spent on leave granted for study.

Subsection 4. Only one study leave may be granted for each five years employed as a faculty member at Montana School for the Deaf and Blind.

Subsection 5. In no case shall the leave exceed one calendar year.

Subsection 6. Application for such leave should be made not less than three months prior to the effective date.

Subsection 7. Teachers on study leave without pay shall be reassigned to the same or equivalent position as when the leave commenced. Returning teachers shall receive the same salary they received prior to the study leave plus applicable pay adjustments and appropriate lane changes. The returning teacher will be given preference for any equivalent position which is open. If the teacher opts not to take the open position, the leave without pay shall terminate.

Subsection 8. A teacher on study leave without pay may have insurance benefits continued for the duration of the leave by self-payment of the insurance premium. Arrangements may be made through the business office.

Section 4. Prolonged illness. If an employee has exhausted all accrued sick leave, the Employer may permit the employee to be placed on a leave without pay status in accordance with state policy and the Family Medical Leave Act. Eligible Employees will be allowed to participate in the State Employees Sick Leave Fund as established in the

Montana Operations Manual Sick Leave Policy. A copy of state policy and the Family Medical Leave Act will be on file in the superintendent's office.

Section 5. Personal Leave. Full-time bargaining unit employees shall earn three days per school year and with prior administrative approval, employees may use up to six accrued personal leave days during the school year subject to the following rules:

1. Three personal leave days shall be credited to each full-time employee each school year.
2. Personal leave will be credited to part-time/part-year employees on a prorated basis.
3. Six unused personal leave days per year may be carried over to the next school years to a maximum accumulation and usage of six personal days.
4. Personal leave days not taken or carried over to the subsequent school year by the end of the school year shall be compensated as shown in the table below.

Title	2025 - 2027
Teachers	\$31.50/hr.
Interpreters	\$26.50/hr.
Paraeducators	\$26.50/hr.

Section 6. Bargaining unit members may request leave to attend functions or fulfill appointments related to education. All other participation in functions or organizations to which an employee may receive an appointment shall be voluntary and, while beneficial to the school, shall be subject to other leave as defined in this Agreement.

Section 7. Staff is encouraged to avoid absences or leave during PIR days or the first and last week of any semester. Leave requests during PIR days or during the first and last week of any semester will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be granted only when the administration, in its discretion, is convinced that the merits of a specific leave request justify a staff member's absence.

ARTICLE 7. EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

Section 1. Seniority. Seniority shall be determined by an employee's length of service at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind from date of hire. Class seniority shall be determined by an employee's length of service in each job title listed in Article 1, Recognition.

Subsection 1. Seniority shall be considered unbroken for:

1. Layoffs not exceeding 12 months.
2. Voluntary quits for five days or less.

3. Authorized paid or unpaid leaves of absence.

Subsection 2. Within 30 days of the execution of this Agreement, the Employer shall prepare a roster listing bargaining unit employees. The roster shall list employees' most recent date of hire, current job title, and dates of appointment to present job. Such roster shall be made available to the Federation and shall be updated no later than each October 1st. Bargaining unit employees and Local #4027 shall have 30 calendar days in which to identify roster errors.

Section 2. Probationary Period. Employees hired at the start of an academic year shall serve a nine-month probationary period. Employees hired during an academic year shall serve a 12-month probationary period. Probationary employees may not be discharged for reasons of illegal discrimination. Employees on probation who are dismissed shall be notified in writing. No employee who has successfully completed the probationary period may be disciplined or discharged without just cause.

Section 3. Discharge of tenured and non-tenured teachers.

Subsection 1. Teacher tenure - Whenever a teacher has been **offered and accepted a contract for the fourth consecutive year** of employment, the teacher is considered to be reelected from year to year as a tenured teacher at the same salary and in the same or a comparable position of employment as provided by the last-executed contract with the teacher.

Subsection 2. Employment contracts with teachers may be offered for less than 12 months.

Subsection 3. The employment of a tenured teacher or a teacher under contract may only be terminated for good cause.

1. Whenever the Board of Public Education (Board) receives a recommendation for dismissal from the Superintendent, the Board shall notify the teacher of the right to a hearing before the board. The hearing will be held at the Board's next available meeting. The teacher may, in writing, waive the right to a hearing.
 - a. The recommendation must state clearly and explicitly the reason or reasons leading to the recommendation for termination. The teacher will be given a copy of the recommendation by certified mail or by personal notification for which a signed receipt is returned.
2. The Board of Public Education shall conduct a hearing on the recommendation and will render a decision within 30 business days of the conclusion of the hearing to dismiss the teacher or to reject the recommendation for dismissal.

Subsection 4. Any teacher who has been dismissed may, in writing, within 20 business days appeal the dismissal to an arbitrator under the guidelines set forth in Article 16.

Section 4. Reduction in Force. Whenever it becomes necessary to decrease the number of employees for reasons such as pupil population or expiration of any state or federal funds the following shall prevail:

1. In selecting employees within each program or specialty area within each program to be terminated as a result of a reduction in force, when qualifications and experience are equivalent, class seniority shall be the determining factor.
2. Recall from layoffs shall be in inverse order in accordance with the considerations outlined in "1" above. Employees shall be eligible for reinstatement for up to 12 months after the reduction in force.
3. Employees with permanent status and satisfactory job performance who are subject to layoffs and are qualified to fill a vacancy shall be given first consideration for the vacant position. Such vacancies shall be exempt from any posting requirement.
4. No new permanent appointments may be made while there are bargaining unit employees in layoff status who are available and qualified to fill vacancies. An employee may secure other employment during the period they are laid off.

Prior to any reduction in force of bargaining unit members, the Employer will notify Local #4027.

Section 5. Notification of Teacher Reelection. MSDB shall provide written notice by June 1st to all teachers who have been reelected. Any teacher who does not receive notice of reelection or non-renewal is automatically reelected for the ensuing school fiscal year (pursuant to Article 7, Section 3, Subsection 1.) Any teacher who receives a contract for the ensuing school fiscal year shall provide MSDB written acceptance of the conditions of the contract within 20 business days after the receipt of the contract, and failure to notify MSDB within 20 business days constitutes conclusive evidence of the teacher's nonacceptance of the tendered position.

Section 6. Personnel Files. An employee's official personnel file shall be established and maintained in the administration office. The file shall contain all personnel-related documents pertaining to the employee. Employees shall have the right to inspect their personnel files and to receive a copy of any of the contents therein. Authorized Federation representatives shall also have the right to inspect an employee's personnel file after receiving written permission from the employee to do so and only in cases involving an official dispute between the employee and the Employer.

Subsection 1. If the employee desires to submit a brief written statement in explanation or mitigation of any entry in their permanent personnel file, the statement shall be attached to the entry and included in the personnel file. An

employee may enter awards of recognition or achievement into their permanent personnel file.

Subsection 2. An employee may request the Employer to remove letters of warning or reprimand which have remained in their personnel file for more than three years. Such requests shall be granted unless such items are pertinent to any disciplinary or legal action still pending or arising from more recent employee actions or behavior patterns.

ARTICLE 8. TRANSFERS

Section 1. A list of known vacancies shall be circulated internally via email for job opening notices. Request for transfer by current employees shall be through the State of Montana hiring website. Such requests will be considered prior to the commencement of external advertising.

Section 2. All bargaining unit vacancies shall be posted internally in a designated place, at least five working days prior to public advertisement of the vacancy. A notice of such vacancies shall be sent directly to the President(s) of the Federation. In-house applicants will be considered before external posting. When filling bargaining unit vacancies, via in-house transfer, with current employees where experience, qualifications and evaluations are equal, MSDB seniority shall prevail. Federation representatives may be invited to participate in recruitment, interviews and hiring decisions.

Section 3. Job posting notices shall include a description of the job, minimum qualifications for the position, and the due date for application submittal.

Section 4. Employees who are unsuccessful applicants shall be notified in writing upon the completion of the selection process.

Section 5. When involuntary transfers occur between program areas (school for the deaf, school for the blind, or student services) they shall be based on seniority within the program area provided the employee has the proper qualifications and certification.

Section 6. Compensation for Reassignment or Transfer. When an employee is reassigned or transferred, the employee will move the contents of their room during the regular school day when they are able to do so without using student or preparation time. With administrative approval, employees unable to complete the move during the regular duty day will be compensated at true hourly rate for eight hours moving out of their current room and an additional eight hours moving into and setting up their new room.

ARTICLE 9. COMPENSATION

Section 1. The compensation addressed in this Article and Addendums A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5, and B represents the total compensation due employees.

Subsection 1. Addendum A-1. This addresses the pay for Teachers. It includes a Placement Schedule to be used for initial placement of new hires. It also addresses stipends, statutory pay increases, and longevity.

The term “Teacher” as used in Addendum A-1 shall include Activities Director, Librarian, Special Education Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, Behavior Specialist, Transition Coordinator, Cottage Counselor, Communication Technician, ASL Specialist, and Outreach Consultant.

Subsection 2. Addendum A-2. This addresses the pay for Paraeducators, Media Clerks, and Braille Transcriptionists. It includes minimum hourly rates, stipends, statutory pay increases, and longevity.

Subsection 3. Addendum A-3. This addresses the pay for Interpreters and Tutors. It includes a salary schedule, statutory pay increases, and longevity. Interpreting and tutoring time will normally not exceed 40 hours per week. Any authorized time beyond 40 hours per week or eight hours in a day will be compensated at the rate of one and one-half times the employee's true hourly rate.

Subsection 4. Addendum A-4. This addresses the compensation for extracurricular activities, including sports, class sponsors, and clubs.

Subsection 5. Addendum A-5. This addresses fee stipends for Braille Transcriptionists, Interpreters, and LPNs. LPNs will receive two hours of compensatory time for each eight-hour shift they are placed on-call. If actually called in to work, LPNs will receive a minimum of two hours compensatory time and two hours pay at true hourly rate.

Subsection 6. Addendum B. This states the rules for administering Teachers’ salaries. The term “Teacher” as used in Addendum B shall include Activities Director, Librarian, Special Education Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, Behavior Specialist, Transition Coordinator, Cottage Counselor, Communication Technician, ASL Specialist, and Outreach Consultant.

Subsection 7. Compensatory Time for Non-Exempt Employees. Many Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind employees are exempted by one or more of the overtime exemptions delineated in the Fair Labor Standards Act. Certain other Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind employees are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. For each pay period, Fair Labor Standards Act non-exempt employees shall designate on a form to be developed by the business office whether they wish to be paid overtime at one and one-half times their normal hourly rate for each hour worked over 40 hours per week

or earn compensatory time at a rate of one and one-half hours for each hour worked over 40 hours per week. An employee must have administration approval prior to working overtime. The Employer and the employee shall arrange for the use of compensatory time by mutual agreement and in accordance with School policy. Compensatory time earned and when used will be recorded in no less than one-half hour increments. Compensatory time may be accumulated to a maximum of 40 hours. Unused non-exempt compensatory time at the end of a school year will be carried over to the next school year.

Section 2. The monthly Employer contribution for group benefits will increase to \$1080 for the 2026 plan year and \$1107 for the 2027 plan year.

The monthly State of Montana employee contributions will increase for 2026 and 2027 plan years. The tables below break out the monthly increase both before and after the wellness incentive which increased to \$60 per month for the 2026 and 2027 plan years.

The cost of employee-only coverage will be covered by the Employer contribution, after the wellness incentive is applied.

Employee Monthly Contributions Before Wellness Incentive		
Contribution Type	2026 Plan Year Contribution	2027 Plan Year Contribution
Employee Only	\$60	\$60
Employee and Spouse	\$318	\$326
Employee and Children	\$134	\$138
Employee and Family	\$397	\$407

Employee Monthly Contributions After Wellness Incentive		
Contribution Type	2026 Plan Year Contributions	2027 Plan Year Contributions
Employee Only	\$0	\$0
Employee and Spouse	\$198	\$206
Employee and Children	\$74	\$78
Employee and Family	\$277	\$287

The monthly Tobacco Surcharge will increase to \$60 for the 2026 and 2027 plan year.

The State has the discretion to manage all aspects of the State Health Plan, to include, but not be limited to, deductibles, coinsurance levels, and maximum out-of-pocket levels. Member contributions will only increase beyond the rates established above if the Risk-Based Capital (RBC) level is at or below 300%.

Subsection 1. The State contribution for group benefits shall be in accordance with the provisions of state law. School year employees may choose to have the employee share of the insurance premium for the summer months deducted from

their paychecks over the pay periods between February and the end of the school term. School year employees choosing not to use payroll deductions to pay the employee share of summer months' insurance premiums must submit payment prior to payroll dates.

Section 3. Effective July 1, 2023, employees shall be entitled to longevity as set forth in this Section and Addendums A-1, A-2, A-3, and A-5.

Subsection 1. Longevity is accrued through consecutive years, in the same position, at MSDB. In determining whether there has been a disqualifying break in service, service shall not be interrupted by authorized leaves of absence.

Subsection 2. Service shall be calculated as follows:

1. A full-time employee shall be credited with 2,080 service hours for each year the employee is employed for a "full contract year."
2. The service credit for an employee who does not work full-time and for a full contract year shall be prorated.
3. A "full contract year" consists of approximately 185 days.
 - a. An employee who works less than 130 days per school year shall be considered to have worked less than a full contract year and will be subject to longevity being prorated.
 - b. An employee who works 130 days or more per school year shall be considered to have worked a full contract year.
4. An employee may be contracted to work less or more than eight hours per day during the contract year.
 - a. An employee who works less than four hours a day shall be part-time and will be subject to longevity being prorated.
 - b. An employee who works four or more hours per day shall be full-time.
5. Proration shall be based on comparison to a full-time employee being credited with 2,080 service hours for each full contract year of 185 days.
6. The maximum number of service hours per year is 2,080 (regardless of whether the number of hours worked exceeds this amount).

Subsection 3. The timing for the calculation of service hours shall be annually after a contract year is complete. The first calculation of service hours under the terms of this MOU shall occur after the 2023-2024 contract year is complete.

Subsection 4. The first payment of longevity under the terms of this MOU depends on the employee's position.

1. Starting on June 28th, 2025, all employees under Addendums A-1, A-2, A-3, and A-5 are subject to longevity benefits.
 - a. Following calculation of service hours, an employee will be reviewed to determine whether they are eligible to start receiving longevity pay for the first time. If eligible, longevity pay would start the next contract year at a threshold of the service hours listed with pay increases in their Addendums.
 - b. Example:
 - i. At completion of 2024-2025 contract year, employee has 11,000 service hours (over 5 service years) and crossed the 10,400 service hours (5 service years) threshold for the first time that year. Employee is eligible to start receiving longevity pay on the 2025-2026 contract.
2. Once an employee has started receiving longevity pay for the first time, the employee will continue to receive longevity payments. The service hours at the end of each contract year will be evaluated to determine the increase to base rate for the next contract year.

ARTICLE 10. EXTRACURRICULAR COMPENSATION

Section 1. Extracurricular compensation shall be in accordance with Addendum A-4 attached and dependent upon Legislative approval.

ARTICLE 11. TRAVELS, MEALS, LODGING

Section 1. Employees covered by this Agreement shall be subject to Montana statute regarding reimbursement for travel, meals, and lodging.

Section 2. Employees covered by this Agreement may receive travel advances for approved reimbursable expenses in excess of \$50 by making written request to the Employer at least two weeks prior to the travel date or upon notification of assignment.

ARTICLE 12. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Section 1. The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind will establish an Evaluation Procedure and Instrument Advisory Committee. One half of the committee's membership will be members of the bargaining unit as determined by the Federation.

This committee will review relevant state and school policies, accreditation standards, relevant research and other data to recommend evaluation instruments and procedures to management. This committee shall meet at times mutually agreeable to the parties.

Section 2. All written evaluation reports will be placed in the employee's personnel file. The evaluation reports will be discussed between the employee and administration. The employee shall have the opportunity to sign the evaluation, acknowledging its receipt before it is placed in the file. The employee shall be provided the opportunity to write a rebuttal to the evaluation that will be attached to the evaluation report.

Section 3. Each employee shall be evaluated by their immediate supervisor in accordance with Board policy. An employee who is dissatisfied with the results of their evaluation can request a second evaluation and can write a rebuttal to be included in their personnel file. In the case of evaluations that include a formal observation as part of the evaluation process, any employee-requested second evaluation will include a formal observation by a different evaluator.

ARTICLE 13. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1. All mail addressed to staff member(s) and marked "Confidential" or "Personal" shall be placed in the individual's mailbox unopened. Employees, may not, however, receive personal mail at school on a regular basis.

Section 2. Applicable materials received concerning fellowships, grants, travel, research, or related educational opportunities for teachers, counseling staff, and professional employees will be posted by the administration.

Section 3. Letter of Reference. If any teacher or professional employee requests a letter of reference from the superintendent or any other supervisory employee, and the superintendent or other supervisory employee agrees to write one, the employee shall receive a copy of said letter of reference.

Section 4. All teachers shall be scheduled for an uninterrupted duty-free preparation time of one class period every day or its bi-weekly accumulative equivalent, with the understanding that every effort will be made to respect that schedule. Should any teacher not receive regular preparation periods, that teacher may go directly to their supervisor to mutually arrange a different schedule that includes preparation time.

Section 5. Each full-time employee is entitled to one floating holiday each calendar year (not academic year). Each part-time employee is entitled to one floating holiday each calendar year that must be calculated proportionately to the floating holiday allowed to a full-time employee.

Subsection 1. Unused floating holiday leave expires at the end of each calendar year, does not accrue, and is not paid out to employees on termination of

employment. Short-term workers or student interns may not receive a floating holiday.

ARTICLE 14. LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (LMC)

Section 1. A Labor-Management Committee shall be formed which shall consist of no more than four bargaining unit representatives selected by Local #4027 and noticed to the MSDB Administration. Meetings may be called by either party and, upon notice and agreement of agenda items to be discussed, shall be held at mutually acceptable times and places. This Committee shall not take the place of the grievance procedure, but shall be used to discuss items, including schedules, which are of a group rather than individual interest and cannot be easily solved or answered through established supervisory channels. The Committee shall meet once a quarter with agenda items solicited and established in advance of the meeting. The superintendent shall confer with the Federation president or designee to establish meeting dates.

Section 2. Disposition of matters covered in the Labor-Management Meetings shall not contradict, add to, or otherwise modify the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 15. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Section 1. Investigatory Interview. Upon request, an employee has the right to a federation representative at an investigatory interview called by the Employer. Employees seeking representation are responsible for contacting their representative. The Employer must inform the employee of the purpose of the investigatory interview. The Employer must also inform the employee if there is a possibility of disciplinary action. At the conclusion of any investigation where the Employer elects not to take disciplinary action on the employee being investigated, the employee will be provided with a notification that the investigation is completed and that no discipline will be imposed on them and that the employee's file shall not contain any reference to such incident. An employee may also have a federation representative at an investigatory or pre-disciplinary meeting. Pre-disciplinary meetings will be conducted prior to imposing any discipline up to and including termination.

Section 2. Disciplinary Actions. While some disciplinary actions will begin at an informal conversational stage, some situations may warrant disciplinary actions at higher levels up to and including employment termination. Levels of progressive discipline include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Verbal warning with a plan of improvement
2. Written warning with a plan of improvement
3. Suspension with pay

4. Suspension without pay
5. Termination of Employment (Teacher termination subject to Montana State Law)

Depending on the severity of the situation, the progressive discipline process may look different from these steps listed above.

ARTICLE 16. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Section 1. Definitions.

1. A grievance shall mean a complaint by an employee that there has been a violation of one or more specific provisions of this Agreement.
2. As used in this Article, the term "employee" shall mean:
 - a. one employee,
 - b. a group of employees having the same grievance, or
 - c. the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind Federation #4027.

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible administrative level, equitable solutions to any grievance(s), which may arise. Nothing herein contained will be construed as limiting the right of any employee of the bargaining unit to discuss any matter informally with the appropriate member of the administration.

Section 3. Grievance Procedure.

STEP 1

Within 10 working days after a grievance occurs or could likely have been discovered, the aggrieved employee(s) or the Federation representative(s) shall discuss the grievance with the appropriate school supervisor. It shall be discussed verbally and if settled, no further action will be taken.

STEP 2

If such grievance cannot be settled, it may be submitted in writing as a formal grievance to the school superintendent within 10 working days of Step 1. (See Addendum C - Grievance Form.) The school superintendent shall respond in writing within 10 working days. The superintendent may, at their discretion, hold a hearing on the grievance.

STEP 3

If no settlement can be reached at Step 2, the grievance may be presented in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Public Education within 10 working days of Step 2. The Chairman of the Board of Public Education or designee/representative shall meet with Federation representative(s) to discuss the grievance, or in the alternative, the Chairman of the Board shall respond in writing within 30 days.

STEP 4

Should the aggrieved employee or employees and the Federation consider the decision of the Board to be unsatisfactory, the Federation shall, within 21 calendar days of receipt of such decision, notify the Chief, State Office of Labor Relations and the Board of Public Education in writing, of its intention to have such grievance referred to arbitration.

STEP 5

After notification of arbitration, the State Office of Labor Relations (OLR) will work with the Union and management to determine if there is a mutually acceptable resolution that can be found or if the matter should go to mediation. If OLR determines the parties cannot resolve informally or through mediation, the decision should proceed to final and binding arbitration. If there is a cost associated, the parties will share it equally. The timeline for the grievance processing will be put on hold until the mediation is final or the decision is made to move to arbitration.

Within 15 calendar days after such written notice of intention to arbitrate the Federation shall submit a written request to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to provide a list of seven arbitrators with a contemporaneous copy of that request supplied to the State Office of Labor Relations Chief. The list of arbitrators may be requested from the Board of Personnel Appeals if mutual agreement exists. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding on both parties.

Section 4. Rules of Grievance Processing.

Subsection 1. Timeliness. A grievance not filed or advanced by the grievant within the time limits provided shall be deemed permanently withdrawn. Failure on the part of the Employer's representative to answer within the time limit set forth in any step will entitle the employee to the next step.

Subsection 2. Alternative procedures.

1. As recognized in § 49-2-512, Title 49 of Montana Code Annotated establishes the exclusive remedy for acts constituting an alleged violation of the Montana Human Rights Act. In the event of a grievance based upon an alleged violation of this Act, the statutory procedures of filing a claim with the Human Rights Bureau shall be the exclusive remedy.
2. As recognized in § 2-18-1011, Title 2 of Montana Code Annotated establishes the exclusive remedy for an alleged violation of classification or

compensation. In the event of a grievance based upon an alleged violation of this provision, the statutory procedures of filing a claim with the Board of Personnel Appeals shall be the exclusive remedy.

Section 5. Rules of Arbitration.

Subsection 1. Selection of Arbitrator. The parties shall request a list of seven arbitrators from the Board of Personnel Appeals and shall alternatively strike names from the list. The last remaining name shall serve as the arbitrator.

Subsection 2. Arbitrator's limitations. No grievance which fails to meet the requirements of Section 3, Subsection 3 of this Article shall be determined to be arbitrable. The arbitrator may not add to, subtract from, or modify the terms of this Agreement.

Subsection 3. The parties agree either party may file pre-arbitration dispositive motions or request a bench decision from the arbitrator.

Subsection 4. Each party shall share equally the cost of the arbitrator. In the event one of the parties wants transcripts from the proceedings of the arbitration, the party requesting the transcripts shall pay the entire cost. If each party requests a transcript, they shall equally share the cost.

Subsection 5. The arbitration location shall be in Helena, Montana unless otherwise mutually agreed by the parties.

ARTICLE 17. NOTIFICATION

Section 1. The Employer shall insure the Federation and each employee covered by this Agreement reasonable access to an employee handbook and state policy manual of rules, regulations and policies on employment related matters that apply to bargaining unit members. The Federation shall be given written notification of any proposed changes or additions to such personnel rules, regulations and policies.

ARTICLE 18. SEVERABILITY

Section 1. In the event that any provision of this Agreement is declared invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision does not invalidate the entire Agreement, it being the expressed intention of the parties that all other provisions not declared invalid or unenforceable shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 2. When a provision is invalidated, as described above, the parties agree to submit the matter to negotiations should it be the desire of either party to renegotiate the matter.

ARTICLE 19. TERM

Section 1. This Agreement shall be effective on July 1, 2025, and shall remain in full force through June 30, 2027.

Section 2. Should either party seek to modify this Agreement, it shall give written notice of such intent no earlier than 120 days, nor later than 60 days prior to the expiration date of this Agreement. If the parties reach a tentative pre-budgeted agreement, such agreement shall be subject to legislative concurrence and funding.

THIS AGREEMENT is signed and dated this 8/31/2025.

THE STATE OF MONTANA:

DocuSigned by:



2D5DD66996020493...
Paul Furthmyre, Superintendent
MSDB

Signed by:



97EB528B1867465...
Dr. Tim Tharp, Chairman
Montana Board of Public Education

Signed by:



382B3999E2BE4DB...
Karol Anne Davis, Chief Negotiator
State Office of Labor Relations

THE FEDERATION:

DocuSigned by:



AC0C0F8470D444A...
Shelli Lavinder Schwalk
MFPE Field Consultant

DocuSigned by:



FFD309A162384F9...
Denise Rutledge, MFPE Local #4027

DocuSigned by:



6B113E78DF27417...
Yvette Smail, MFPE Local #4027

ADDENDUM A-1. Placement Schedule

This schedule is to be used for initial placement of new hires.

Note: Placement on the below pay schedules is governed by the pay plan rules contained in Addendum B.

		0.03	0.06	0.11	0.14	0.17	0.2	0.25
STEP	B.A.	BA + 10	BA + 20	MA	MA +10	MA +20	MA +30	EDD/PHD
0	1.000	1.030	1.060	1.110	1.140	1.170	1.200	1.250
1	1.003	1.033	1.063	1.113	1.143	1.174	1.204	1.254
2	1.006	1.036	1.066	1.117	1.147	1.177	1.207	1.258
3	1.009	1.039	1.070	1.120	1.150	1.181	1.211	1.261
4	1.012	1.042	1.073	1.123	1.154	1.184	1.214	1.265
5	1.015	1.045	1.076	1.127	1.157	1.188	1.218	1.269
6	1.019	1.050	1.080	1.131	1.162	1.192	1.223	1.274
7	1.023	1.054	1.084	1.136	1.166	1.197	1.228	1.279
8	1.027	1.058	1.089	1.140	1.171	1.202	1.232	1.284
9	1.031	1.062	1.093	1.144	1.175	1.206	1.237	1.289
10	1.035	1.066	1.097	1.149	1.180	1.211	1.242	1.294
11	1.039	1.070	1.101	1.153	1.184	1.216	1.247	1.299
12	1.043	1.074	1.106	1.158	1.189	1.220	1.252	1.304
13	1.047	1.078	1.110	1.162	1.194	1.225	1.256	1.309
14	1.051	1.083	1.114	1.167	1.198	1.230	1.261	1.314
15	1.055	1.087	1.118	1.171	1.203	1.234	1.266	1.319
16	1.059	1.091	1.123	1.175	1.207	1.239	1.271	1.324
17	1.063	1.095	1.127	1.180	1.212	1.244	1.276	1.329
18	1.067	1.099	1.131	1.184	1.216	1.248	1.280	1.334

2025-2026

STEP	B.A.	BA + 10	BA + 20	MA	MA +10	MA +20	MA +30	EDD/PHD
0	47690	49121	50551	52936	54367	55797	57228	59613
1	47833	49268	50703	53095	54530	55965	57400	59791
2	47976	49415	50855	53254	54693	56132	57571	59970
3	48119	49563	51006	53412	54856	56299	57743	60149
4	48262	49710	51158	53571	55019	56467	57915	60328
5	48405	49858	51310	53730	55182	56634	58086	60507
6	48596	50054	51512	53942	55400	56857	58315	60745
7	48787	50250	51714	54153	55617	57081	58544	60984
8	48978	50447	51916	54365	55834	57304	58773	61222
9	49168	50643	52118	54577	56052	57527	59002	61460

10	49359	50840	52321	54789	56269	57750	59231	61699
11	49550	51036	52523	55000	56487	57973	59460	61937
12	49741	51233	52725	55212	56704	58197	59689	62176
13	49931	51429	52927	55424	56922	58420	59918	62414
14	50122	51626	53130	55636	57139	58643	60147	62653
15	50313	51822	53332	55847	57357	58866	60376	62891
16	50504	52019	53534	56059	57574	59089	60604	63130
17	50694	52215	53736	56271	57792	59313	60833	63368
18	50885	52412	53938	56483	58009	59536	61062	63607

2026-2027

STEP	B.A.	BA + 10	BA + 20	MA	MA +10	MA +20	MA +30	EDD/PHD
0	49170	50645	52120	54579	56054	57529	59004	61463
1	49318	50797	52277	54742	56222	57701	59181	61647
2	49465	50949	52433	54906	56390	57874	59358	61831
3	49613	51101	52589	55070	56558	58047	59535	62016
4	49760	51253	52746	55234	56726	58219	59712	62200
5	49908	51405	52902	55397	56895	58392	59889	62384
6	50104	51607	53110	55616	57119	58622	60125	62630
7	50301	51810	53319	55834	57343	58852	60361	62876
8	50498	52013	53527	56052	57567	59082	60597	63122
9	50694	52215	53736	56271	57791	59312	60833	63368
10	50891	52418	53944	56489	58016	59542	61069	63614
11	51088	52620	54153	56707	58240	59773	61305	63860
12	51284	52823	54361	56926	58464	60003	61541	64105
13	51481	53025	54570	57144	58688	60233	61777	64351
14	51678	53228	54778	57362	58913	60463	62013	64597
15	51874	53431	54987	57581	59137	60693	62249	64843
16	52071	53633	55195	57799	59361	60923	62485	65089
17	52268	53836	55404	58017	59585	61153	62721	65335
18	52464	54038	55612	58235	59809	61383	62957	65580

- The table above is to be used for the placement of newly hired teachers.
- The tables above include the statutory increase given during the 69th Legislative session for each year.
- The 2025-2026 table reflects a one-time addition to the base of \$5818 as a result of the STARS Act. Employees filling the roles identified in Article 9, Section 1, Subsection 1 that held a contract in 2024-2025 will receive a one-time addition to their base of \$5818.

- Step 18 is the maximum step at which new teachers may enter MSDB.
- Advancement in lanes is addressed in Addendum B.5.3.
- Any statutory increase given during a contract year will be added to the current base (BA Step 1) on the first day of the next fiscal year.
- Increases in annual salaries will be in accordance with those determined by the 69th Legislative session, retroactive to July 1, 2025.
- The following table shows the service thresholds and corresponding increases to base pay rates:

Service Hours	Service Years	Increase to Base Rate
10,400	5	1.5%
20,800	10	3.5%
31,200	15	5.5%
41,600	20	7.5%
52,000	25	9.5%
62,400	30	11.0%
72,800	35	12.5%

*The calculation of longevity is further addressed in Article 9 (Compensation), Section 3.

ADDENDUM A-2.
Paraeducators/Braille Transcriptionist/Media Clerk Wages

July 2025 - June 2027

Paraeducators, Braille Transcriptionists & Media Clerk Wages

	2025-2026	2026-2027
Starting Pay Rate	\$19.38	\$20.38

- The tables above include the statutory increase given during the 69th Legislative session for each year.
- The 2025-2026 starting rate reflects a one-time addition to the base pay of \$1.30 per hour as a result of the STARS Act. Employees filling the roles identified in Article 9, Section 1, Subsection 2 that held a contract in 2024-2025 and not currently receiving the maximum pay identified in the states market analysis will receive a one-time addition of \$1.30 to their base.
- Increases in yearly salary will be in accordance with those determined by the 69th Legislative session, retroactive to July 1, 2025.
- The following table shows the service thresholds and corresponding increases to base pay rates:

Service Hours	Service Years	Increase to Base Rate
10,400	5	1.5%
20,800	10	3.5%
31,200	15	5.5%
41,600	20	7.5%
52,000	25	9.5%
62,400	30	11.0%
72,800	35	12.5%
83,200	40	14.0%
93,600	45	15.5%
104,000	50	17.0%
114,400	55	18.5%
124,800	60	20.5%
135,200	65	21.5%

- *The calculation of longevity is further addressed in Article 9 (Compensation), Section 3.
- Effective July 1, 2023, paraprofessionals hired before January 1, 2003, will receive a stipend of \$3,000 annually. The stipend will be split into two payments

with the first being payable with the first full pay period in December and the second in May.

- Individuals who voluntarily separate from employment prior to the end of the school year for reasons other than medical, or discipline shall be required to reimburse (or have the amount withheld from the final check) an amount prorated to reflect days, worked days remaining at the time the bargaining unit member leaves employment.
- Transcriptionists are guaranteed a minimum of one hour of protected transcription time per day.
- When substituting for a teacher, employees will receive \$5/hour increased compensation. They will also receive a duty-free lunch and prep time if they substitute the entire day.
- Effective January 1, 2023, certified braille transcriptionists will receive \$5/hour increase during the hours they work as a braille transcriptionist for a minimum of one hour per day, or actual time worked, whichever is greater.
- Certified braille transcriptionists will receive a \$750 one-time increase in their permanent salary for hours they work as a braille transcriptionist.

ADDENDUM A-3. Interpreter/Tutor Salaries

July 2025 - June 2027

ASL Educational Interpreter/Tutor Salaries

EIPA Score	Starting Pay Rate * 25-26	Starting Pay Rate * 26-27	Bachelor's Degree**	Master's Degree***
No score, or working toward 3.5	\$27.85/hr.	\$28.85/hr.	3%	5%
3.5 – 3.9	\$29.20/hr.	\$30.20/hr.	3%	5%
4.0 – 4.5	\$30.90/hr.	\$31.90/hr.	3%	5%
4.6 – 5.0	\$32.71/hr.	\$33.71/hr.	3%	5%

- The tables above include the statutory increase given during the 69th Legislative session for each year.
- The 2025-2026 starting rate reflects a one-time addition to the base pay of \$1.30 per hour as a result of the STARS Act. Employees filling the roles identified in Article 9, Section 1, Subsection 3 that held a contract in 2024-2025 will receive a one-time addition of \$1.30 to their base.
- An interpreter that is hired with a RID (NIC) certification and/or their BA or MA, and who is waiting for their EIPA score will be placed at the “no score, or working toward 3.5” until the score arrives. Once the score is submitted to the superintendent’s office, the individual will be placed accordingly to the above chart. The interpreter will be paid retroactively for all hours worked during the current fiscal year, except hours for extracurricular activities.
- Bachelor and Master Degrees must be from accredited interpreting programs.
- Increases in yearly salary will be in accordance with those determined by the 69th Legislative session, retroactive to July 1, 2025.
- The following table shows the service thresholds and corresponding increases to base pay rates:

Service Hours	Service Years	Increase to Base Rate
10,400	5	1.5%
20,800	10	3.5%
31,200	15	5.5%
41,600	20	7.5%
52,000	25	9.5%

62,400	30	11.0%
72,800	35	12.5%
83,200	40	14.0%
93,600	45	15.5%
104,000	50	17.0%
114,400	55	18.5%
124,800	60	20.5%
135,200	65	21.5%

- *The calculation of longevity is further addressed in Article 9 (Compensation), Section 3.

ADDENDUM A-4.

Extracurricular Compensation

Section 1. Due to student population, MSDB may or may not have teams in these areas. In the event MSDB does not have a team/event in any sport, MSDB will participate in a sports co-op/partner school. The total monies spent in this area shall not exceed what the legislation has approved. Other sports or activities (such as golf) will be bargained on a case-by-case basis whether the sport occurs at MSDB or through a sports co-op/partner school. Employees having extracurricular coaching assignments will be compensated as below.

Student accessibility support (interpreters, etc.) services may also be paid from extracurricular compensation funds. It is understood that all extracurricular coaching assignments are compensated prior to funds being used to pay student accessibility support services.

	CURRENT
Cheerleader Sponsor	\$1,250.00
Boys/Girls Basketball Head Coach	\$3,125.00
Assistant Coach	\$1,500.00
Girls Volleyball Head Coach	\$3,125.00
Assistant Coach	\$1,500.00
Middle School Girls Basketball Head Coach	\$750.00
Youth Sports Programs Girls	\$500.00
Boys	\$500.00
Boys Football Head Coach	\$3,125.00
Assistant Coach	\$1,500.00
Middle School Boys Basketball Head Coach	\$750.00
Boys and Girls Track Head Coach	\$1,875.00
Assistant Coach	\$1,500.00
Middle School Boys/Girls Track Head Coach	\$750.00
Boys and Girls Cross Country Head Coach	\$2,500.00
Assistant Coach	\$937.50
Goal Ball Head Coach	\$2,500.00
Assistant Coach	\$1,200.00

Section 2. Employees sponsoring selected extracurricular activities will be compensated as follows:

Class Sponsor (9 to 12 - each grade)	
Freshman class	\$187.50 each
Sophomore class	\$312.50 each
Junior class	\$562.50 each
Senior class	\$687.50 each
Junior N.A.D.	\$625 each
Cane Club	\$625 each
Newsletter	\$1,875 (one sponsor)
Yearbook Coordinator/Sponsors	\$937.50 each
Expressions of Silence, Director maximum of two directors	\$3,750 each
Visually Impaired Performers, Director	\$625 each
Academic Bowl, Sponsor	\$625 each
Close-Up, Sponsor	\$625 each
Mustangs Flying Hooves	\$625 each
Moving Mustangs	\$625 each
IEFA	\$625 (one sponsor)
Computer Club	\$625 each
Swimming Club	\$625 each
Mustang Center Coordinator	\$1,875 (one sponsor)
Braille Challenge Coordinator	\$625 (one sponsor)
4-H Coordinator	\$625 (one sponsor)
Concession Manager	\$625 (one sponsor)
CED Coordinator	\$625 (one sponsor)
Sound / Light Manager	\$187.50 (one sponsor)

Unless otherwise indicated, all of the above involve at least 2 sponsors.

**ADDENDUM A-5.
Fee Stipends**

Braille Transcriptionists/Interpreters/LPNs

Section 1. Upon proper and sufficient documentation submitted to the Business Manager within 30 days of payment, the Employer will reimburse the cost of one examination fee for the EIPA exam.

Section 2. Recertification or Renewal. The Employer will also provide reimbursement equal to \$50 per year for recertification or renewal of certificates for:

- 1. Teachers with certification as Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists,
- 2. Educational Certified Interpreters
- 3. Licensed Practical Nurses.
- 4. Other unique and required certification reimbursement will be mutually determined on a case-by-case basis by MSDB and Local #4027.

Section 3. Nurses at MSDB are identified as Licensed Practical Nurse 2 and are in anchor band four of the 2024 Market Analysis 025.

	2025-2026	2026-2027
Starting Pay Rate	\$33.53	\$34.53

- The table above includes the statutory increase given during the 69th Legislative session for each year.
- The 2025-2026 starting rate reflects a one-time addition to the base pay of \$5.35 per hour as a result of the STARS Act. Employees filling the Licensed Practical Nurse II roles identified in Article 9, Section 1, Subsection 5 employed at MSDB during the 2024-25 school year will receive a one-time addition of \$5.35 to their base.
- Increases in yearly salary will be in accordance with those determined by the 69th Legislative session, retroactive to July 1, 2025
- The following table shows the service thresholds and corresponding increases to base pay rates:

Service Hours	Service Years	Increase to Base Rate
10,400	5	1.5%
20,800	10	3.5%
31,200	15	5.5%
41,600	20	7.5%
52,000	25	9.5%
62,400	30	11.0%
72,800	35	12.5%

83,200	40	14.0%
93,600	45	15.5%
104,000	50	17.0%
114,400	55	18.5%
124,800	60	20.5%
135,200	65	21.5%

- *The calculation of longevity is further addressed in Article 9 (Compensation), Section 3.

ADDENDUM B.

Rules for Administering Teachers' Salaries

1. Teacher Employment Requirements

All teachers employed at Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind shall meet the following minimum requirements:

Minimum Educational Qualifications and Licensure. In accordance with § 20-4-202, MCA, all teachers shall possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and a teaching certificate/license or other required license issued by the Montana Office of Public Instruction. Proof of authorization to teach in the State of Montana shall be provided to the administration of the school by registering the person's certificate with the county superintendent and submitting the signed copy of the certificate to the administration. If a teacher or specialist does not register their certificate with the county superintendent within 60 calendar days after they begin to perform services, they are not eligible to receive any further compensation under the contract of employment until the person has registered the certificate.

2. Contract Year

A contract year consists of approximately 180 teaching days plus 5 PIR days plus any annual leave and holidays to which the employee is entitled and is defined by the teaching calendar adopted by the Board of Public Education; however, some contracts may be for terms less than or greater than the full teaching contract year. The schedules used to compensate teachers on contract for the full contract year are attached. Annual salaries for employees not under contract for the full contract year shall be determined as follows:

- A. Less Than Full Contract Year. An employee under contract for less than the full contract year shall have a prorated annual salary.
- B. More Than Full Contract Year. An employee under contract for more than the full contract year shall have an annual salary equal to the number of days contracted divided by the number of days in the full contract year times the appropriate salary on the teacher schedule.
- C. Part-time Teachers. The salary of an employee contracting to work part-time shall be prorated to reflect the percent of time worked.

3. Teacher Salary Schedule

The attached salary schedule, Addendum A-1, shall be used for initial placement of teachers and certain professional employees employed at Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind.

4. Placement of Employees on the Schedule

For the purposes of compensating teachers new to the system, MSDB will use the salary schedule, addendum A-1, to determine initial placement of new hires. Initial placement of any new employee shall be at entry level according to their education and degree. Credit shall be granted for up to 18 years previous contracted teaching or administrative experience.

Increases in yearly salary will be in accordance with those determined by the 69th Legislative session.

5. Advancement of Teachers on Addendum A-1

A. Educational Credit advancements

1. For salary purposes, each educational unit of recognized graduate study beyond a Bachelor's degree shall constitute no fewer than 15 quarter credits, no less than 10 semester credits or the equivalent combination thereof. Quarter credits are converted to semester credits through multiplying by 0.666 (two thirds) and semester credits are converted to quarter credits through multiplying by 1.50 (one and one half).
2. Credits earned must have prior approval from the school administration before entering the educational process in order to assure receipt of salary credit for the following year. Credits will not be recognized for salary purposes until accepted by the school administration.
3. Effective July 1, 2023, credits beyond the required degree or endorsement shall be recognized for salary enhancement of 3% per educational level as follows: B.A.+10, B.A.+20, 5% for M.A., and 3% M.A.+10, M.A.+20, M.A.+30, and 5% PHD/EDD, only if the credits pertain to the employee's assigned area of instruction or if credits are applied toward a higher degree in a related field, which means acceptance and graduate standing at a university or college.
4. Graduate credits applied to earning the bachelor's degree may not be re-applied or used again to gain additional education credit dollars from the teacher salary schedule.
5. Official transcripts of credits for additional professional preparation if sufficient to advance the teacher's preparation status shall be submitted to the Office of the Superintendent not later than December 1 of the school year in which a change is to become effective. When the official transcript is presented, the teacher shall advance to the new preparation level and shall receive the retroactive pay to the beginning of the school year.

When the official transcript is issued after the December 1 deadline, the teacher shall advance to the new preparation level and shall receive the new salary amount in the next pay period, as per predetermined payroll deadlines, without retroactivity.

6. Annual Driving Stipend for Outreach Consultants

On August 20, 2025, any current member identified in Article 9, Section 1, Subsection 1 at the time of ratification AND currently receives an annual driving stipend will receive a one-time addition to their base pay of \$2000. No one hired after August 20, 2025, is eligible for a driving stipend.

7. National Board Certification Stipend

Teachers who achieve or renew their certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards on or after July 2017, shall receive an annual stipend of up to 85% of the quality educator payment amount provided in § 20-9-306, MCA, for each applicable year. The District shall contribute 10% of the maximum amount and the State of Montana shall reimburse the District up to 75% of the maximum amount per year, as per the provisions of § 20-4-134, MCA. Percentage could change depending on the District's status as an impacted school as defined in § 20-4-502, MCA.

Or should the school meet the requirements of high poverty or critical quality educator shortage as per the provisions of § 20-4-134 (2) (a) and (b), MCA, then the teacher shall receive a stipend of \$2500.00. The District shall contribute \$500.00 and the State of Montana shall reimburse the District the balance up to a maximum contribution of \$2000.00 per year for the high poverty or critical quality educator shortage stipend, as per the provisions of § 20-4-134, MCA.

Solely for the purposes of the Teachers' Retirement System, the stipend contribution from the State of Montana may not be considered regular salary and may not be used in the calculation of retirement benefits, as per § 19-20-101, MCA. District contributions will be considered salary and shall be used in the retirement benefit calculation.

8. Doctoral Stipend

On August 20, 2025, any current member identified in Article 9, Section 1, Subsection 1 at the time of ratification AND currently as earned a doctoral degree will receive a one-time addition to their base pay of \$2574. No one hired after August 20, 2025, is eligible for a doctoral stipend.

ADDENDUM C. Grievance Form

STATEMENT OF GRIEVANCE

_____ Grievant _____ Date

STEP 1

REPLY: _____

_____ Immediate Supervisor _____ Date

___ I accept this decision ___ I wish to appeal this decision

_____ Grievant _____ Date

STEP 2

REPLY: _____

_____ School Superintendent _____ Date

___ I accept this decision ___ I wish to appeal this decision

_____ Grievant _____ Date

STEP 3

REPLY: _____

_____ Chairman, Board of Public Education _____ Date

___ I accept this decision ___ I wish to appeal this decision

_____ Grievant _____ Date

STEP 4: I have been notified of the grievant's intention to have this grievance referred to arbitration.

_____ Date

_____ Date

_____ Date

_____ Date

Chief, Labor Relations Bureau and Board of Education

* If additional space is needed, please use the back of this page or attach additional sheet(s)