

The Montana Small Schools Alliance provides statewide professional development to “Consortium” members four times annually. MSSA has a schedule of K-12 curriculum which is reviewed and aligned each year to state standards according to a schedule on file with the OPI. Regional professional development for member schools follows that schedule. Member surveys prioritize what type of training will take place each year.

2023-2024 School Year-

In 2023-2024, MSSA members focused on Indian Education for All Training: Lessons for classroom use, and Federal Programs assistance in September. In November MSSA members focused on Writing Across the Curriculum and Discovery Education lessons focusing on Science and Social Studies. In February MSSA focused on Educator and Student Wellness, Stress and Resiliency and Brain Development, Trauma, and Balance Strategies and Tools. In April members were trained on Engagement Strategies and Aligning Unit and Lesson Plans to State Standards in art, writing and social studies. Additionally, member schools participate in MAPS training, focusing on using and understanding Assessment Data.

2024-2025 School Year-

In 2024-2025, MSSA members focused in September on learning the tools necessary for OPI programs and reporting, including early learning plans, federal programs, accreditation and graduate plans. In November MSSA members were trained on mental health issues with QPR certification training and training on use of the classroom curriculum Character Strong. In February MSSA will focus on technology including cyber security for classrooms, schools and students, AI and its place and future in education. In April members will focus on Mathematics, training on OPI Standards being implemented in 2025, specifically their use in lesson planning with small schools and multi-grade classrooms. Additionally, member schools participate in MAPS training, focusing on using and understanding Assessment Data. MSSA member schools also have the opportunity for book studies throughout the year focusing on improving their teaching skills through engagement strategies, sustaining their productivity and improving their planning.

A MSSA statewide planning team both reviews the training and the curriculum being reviewed each year. The review team consists of the MSSA Board, County Superintendents, and member teachers. The Executive Director reviews evaluations of each member from each conference during the year to assist in determining success and future planning. Montana Small Schools Alliance Conferences incorporate formative strategies for teachers to assess student achievement based on developed classroom lessons. MSSA conferences always try to deliver material, resources and lessons that are classroom ready for the unique demographics of member school districts. Each conference throughout the year focuses on the scheduled K-12 aligned core curriculum and is always based on “best practices” research and current pedagogy. Technology is integrated in all professional development. Each conference also includes a component addressing Indian Education for All- IEFA.