

THE WEDNESDAY READER
February 7, 2024

Please note, due to changes in security protocols for State of Montana Outlook accounts, I need to change the way the Wednesday Reader is sent out. Therefore, I am now using my state Gmail account, eswenson@opiconnect.org, to send out The Wednesday Reader. Please add this email to your safe list. Please continue to use eswenson@mt.gov as my primary contact email. Thanks ~Eric.

Save the Date—Montana Council on Economic Education’s 2024 Summer Teacher Training

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the [Montana Council on Economic Education’s](#) (MCEE) 2024 Summer Teacher Training. This year’s event will be held June 27-28 in Bozeman on the MSU campus.

With the support of sponsors Robinhood Markets, Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation, Reach Higher, and First Security Bank in Bozeman, MCEE covers all associated costs for the program.

Watch for more information and registration to open soon.

Strengthening Career & Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) Public Hearing Notice

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) and the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) will jointly conduct public hearings for updates made to the [2024 Perkins State Plan](#). The purpose of a hearing is to afford all segments of the public and interested organizations an opportunity to present their views and make recommendations to the plan to be submitted to the federal Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) for approval.

--Public Hearing #1: Thursday, February 8, 5:30-7 pm (MST)

--Public Hearing #2: Thursday, February 22, 5:30-7 pm (MST)

Public hearings will begin with a briefing on significant changes to the State Plan and a timeline for the public hearings process, including follow-up after the hearing has been completed. Participants may present oral or written statements at the public hearing.

Visit the OCHE [Perkins State Plan website](#) for more information about the public hearings and to access the Zoom links.

Montana STEM Summer Institute—Call for Presenters & Registration Now Open

School Services of Montana and the MSU Science Math Resource Center are hosting the [6th Annual Montana STEM Summer Institute](#) at the MSU campus in Bozeman, August 5-7, 2024.

They encourage [Presenter Proposals](#) from K-12 teachers, informal and home school educators, school leaders, teacher educators, and other STEM enthusiasts! This year's conference theme of "STEM Across the Curriculum" is built around 3 strands:

- Planning STEM Learning Environments
- Implementing Ready-to-Use STEM-based Projects
- Reimagining STEM Learning.

Presenters and attendees interested in STEM learning at any grade level and in any discipline are welcome.

Please visit the [Montana STEM Summer Institute](#) website for more information regarding submitted presenter proposals, event registration, and schedule of events. Early-bird registration ends March 31, 2024.

[Apply Today for a Scholarship to Attend CSTA 2024 in Las Vegas](#)

The [Computer Science Teachers Association](#) (CSTA) announces the opening of [scholarship applications](#) to attend the [CSTA Annual Conference](#), July 16-19 in Las Vegas at Ceaser's Forum and Harrah's Las Vegas.

CSTA prides itself in promoting equitable access to the CSTA Annual Conference, their premier professional learning program for K-12 CS teachers, by offering scholarships that subsidize 100% of the program cost. These scholarships are intended to support teachers who could not otherwise attend the CSTA Annual Conference due to funding limitations. [Scholarship applications](#) are due April 1.

CSTA will award as many scholarships as possible to help deserving teachers join this excellent learning opportunity and will give priority consideration to:

- First-time conference attendees,
- Teachers of color,
- Teachers who teach underrepresented students in CS,
- Active CSTA members and volunteers, and
- Conference presenters (and those who submitted proposals).

Visit the [CSTA Annual Conference](#) website for complete event details and registration.

[Invest in Yourself with a Free Certification Course—NGPF Certification Cohort 41 Starts Monday](#)

Registration for the [Next Gen Personal Finance](#) (NGPF) [Certification Cohort 41](#) is now open. Cohort 41 begins February 12 with courses ending March 14 with an exam window March 15-22.

Cohort 41 will offer three (3) live courses—[Behavioral Economics](#), [Psychology of Money](#), [Career](#)—and one (1) on-demand course for [Credit](#).

Live courses will be offered on the following schedule.

- [Behavioral Economics](#): Tuesdays, February 13-March 12; 3-5 pm (MST)
- [Psychology of Money](#): Wednesdays, February 14-March 13; 3-5 pm (MST)
- [Career](#): Wednesdays, February 14-March 13; 5-7 pm (MST)

The on-demand [Credit](#) course will be available February 12 with modules needing to be completed by March 13.

Each live Certification Course combines nine hours of live virtual sessions focused on a core personal finance content area with a one-hour assessment exam. The whole course and exam window takes place over six weeks.

For the on-demand courses, there will be four self-paced modules that will take two hours to complete and one self-paced module that will take one hour to complete. All five modules will be available on February 12 and must be completed by March 13. There will be no live instructor for the on-demand modules nor a review session.

If you complete any of the NGPF training courses, work with your local district/school to receive OPI Renewal Units for your hours completing the course(s).

For more information and to register for any of the courses, visit the [NGPF Certification Courses](#) page.

Scholarship Opportunities for Your Students & CTSO Members

[Horatio Alger Association scholarships](#) range from certification to Doctorate and are worth \$2,500 to over \$52,000. General eligibility is AGI below \$65,000, GPA 2+, and extra-curricular and community service. Apply as a junior and/or senior in high school through application online. Can be used for both in and out of state schools.

[STAR a P.E.O.](#) - International high school scholarship for \$2,500. Family income is not part of the evaluation process. Process starts with being nominated by one of 81 chapters in Montana. Students should be a junior in High School, have a GPA of 3+, be a citizen of the US or Canada, plan to attend college (2 or 4 year) and exhibits excellence in leadership, extracurricular activities, and community service. Can be used for both in and out of state schools.

[Program for Continuing Education a P.E.O.](#) - International nontraditional student scholarship up to \$3,000. Process starts by being nominated by one of 81 chapters in Montana. Applicant should be a citizen of the US or Canada, enrolled in a certification or degree seeking program, has had at least 24 consecutive months as a non-student, and within 18 months of graduating. Can be used for both in and out of state schools.

Applications are Now Open for Code.org's Professional Learning Program—Scholarships Available for Montana Teachers

Applications are now open for Code.org's [Professional Learning Program](#) for middle and high school educators! Explore the CS curriculum and collaborate with educators of all experience levels to develop lesson plans and hone your teaching strategies for the 2024-2025 academic year.

What is the Professional Learning Program? Hosted by highly trained facilitators, our professional development workshops will prepare you to confidently bring CS to your students as well as connect with an online and in-person community of peers. Most workshops have scholarship funding available.

[Elementary teachers](#) can sign-up for a one-day workshop near you. Applications are not required for Computer Science Fundamentals workshops and take place throughout the country, year-round.

[Middle and high school teachers](#) will begin with a five-day workshop on Computer Science Discoveries, Computer Science Principles, or AP Computer Science A in the summer, with academic year workshops thereafter.

[Computer Science Discoveries](#) offerings—

- June 17-21: Boise, Idaho
- June 24-28: Virtual
- July 22-26: Virtual
- July 29-August 2: Tukwila, Washington
- August 17-October 2: Virtual

[Computer Science Principles](#) offerings—

- June 17-21: Boise, Idaho
- June 24-28: Virtual
- July 22-26: Virtual
- July 29-August 2: Tukwila, Washington

[AP Computer Science A](#) offerings—

- June 17-21: Boise, Idaho
- June 24-28: Virtual
- July 29-August 2: Tukwila, Washington

The cost of CSA, CSD or CSP is \$1,500/person. This covers the tuition of both the summer and academic year workshops (9 total days of training). Any travel, lodging, or food costs for in-person trainings are separate. Scholarship opportunities are available to cover the costs of Code.org training tuition for qualified applicants.

Scale to New Learning Heights at the Edtech Event of the Year—ISTELive 24

Registration and housing for [ISTELive 24](#), June 23-26, 2024, in Denver and online are now open. [ISTELive 24](#) will be held at the Colorado Convention Center in downtown Denver. [Lodging](#) for ISTE Live 24 is available at many downtown Denver hotels.

At [ISTELive](#), you will scale to new learning heights during 1,000+ strategy-packed sessions that will help you meet the needs of all students. Plus, become more confident with the latest tech for learning as you explore online tools during hands-on sessions, live demos, and how-to presentations.

Maximize your learning by adding the Leadership Exchange at ISTE Live, the 2024 ASCD Annual Conference, the 2024 ASCD Leadership Summit, or ISTE membership to your experience. You will save exponentially when you create a custom year-round PD plan.

Register now at our best price of the year; both the live and virtual [early-bird registration](#) rates end March 1.

New Substance Prevention Content from EVERFI

[EVERFI](#) has partnered with Truth Initiative, the public health organization behind the nationally recognized truth youth tobacco and opioid prevention and education campaign, to add two new lessons to [Vaping: Know the truth](#).

Why it matters: Vaping cannabis is on the rise. These new lessons address the health risks and consequences of short- and long-term cannabis use. The updated curriculum orients students toward choices they can make to better take care of themselves. *These modules will be available to students who have not started the course, are in progress, or who have completed the course previously.*

In addition to the two new modules, the original four modules underwent significant updates including content updates for factual accuracy, updating versions of existing interactive components, and ensuring the course meets our current accessibility standards.

Resources to Explore:

- [Course One Pager](#)
- [Vaping: Know the truth Webpage](#)
- [Cannabis Use Fact Sheet](#) (from *truth Initiative*)

Check out [EVERFI's Quick Start Guide](#), then get started at [everfi.net](#). Contact k12central@everfi.com with any questions.

Apply for a Montana Work-Based Learning Collaborative's 2024 Teacher Externship

Educator Externships are a unique professional development opportunity where teachers are immersed in a company to learn about the skills and competencies needed to succeed in that industry or career path. The experience strengthens an educator's teaching abilities and brings relevant, real-world context into the classroom. Externships are often transformative for educators, students, and industry partners. Impacting just one teacher allows a company to reach between 20-150 students each year.

Please complete the [2024 Montana Teacher Externship Application](#) to pre-register for the 2024 Teacher Externship Program. Pre-registration does not guarantee you an externship since there are limited spots available. You must pre-register through this site and complete registration to be considered for the externship. Upon completion of the externship, you will be eligible to receive a stipend paid by the Montana Work-Based Learning Collaborative and up to 20 OPI renewal units.

[See what the 2023 teacher externs have to say about their experiences.](#)

Register Today for the Montana Personal Finance Challenge

The [Montana Council for Economic Education](#) (MCEE), with support from the National Council for Economic Education, hosts the [Montana Personal Finance Challenge](#). The challenge is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge of personal finance by connecting with other students from across the state in an online competition.

How does the Personal Finance Challenge work?

Timing: Registration is open now and students can test anytime following independent course preparation. Testing must be completed by April 12, 2024, to compete for cash prizes, trip.

Who: MCEE encourages any classroom teaching personal finance to form teams and complement their instruction with a chance to win cash prizes. It is a low commitment with a great pay-off.

Teams of three-four students will have 35 minutes to complete a 30-question online exam covering the principles of personal finance including money management, credit, investing, and insurance.

Students earn 10 points for every correct response and 0 points for each incorrect answer. Every question must be answered to move on, and students are not able to go back to previous questions.

There will be a cash prize for the top three teams in Montana:

- 1st Place: \$500 per team
- 2nd Place: \$250 per team
- 3rd Place: \$100 per team

State champions are invited to compete in the national challenge. The 2024 National Personal Finance Challenge finals will be hosted in Cleveland, Ohio, on May 19-20, 2024. MCEE and its sponsors will cover airline costs while food, lodging, and all events are hosted by CEE.

[Register today](#); the Personal Finance Challenge ends April 12.

The Montana Economics Challenge Competition is Now Open—Students Can Win Cash Prizes

The [Montana Council for Economic Education](#) (MCEE), with support from the National Council for Economic Education, hosts the [Economics Challenge Program](#). The Challenge is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge of Economic Literacy by competing with other students across the state in online examinations. Student participants receive cash prizes, awards, and accolades.

There are two divisions in the Economics Challenge:

- Adam Smith: For returning competitors, AP, IB, and honors students.
- David Ricardo: For first-time competitors with no more than one course in economics.

How does the Economics Challenge work?

Timing: Registration is open now and students can test anytime following independent course preparation. Testing must be completed by April 12, 2024, to compete for cash prizes.

Who: MCEE would encourage any classroom teaching Intro or AP Economics to form teams and complement their instruction with a chance to win cash prizes. It is a low commitment with a great pay-off.

Teams of three-four students will have 35 minutes to complete a 30-question online exam covering a broad variety of economic principles.

Students earn 10 points for every correct response and 0 points for each incorrect answer. Every question must be answered to move on, and students are not able to go back to previous questions.

There will be a cash prize for the top three teams in Montana:

- 1st Place: \$500 per team
- 2nd Place: \$250 per team
- 3rd Place: \$100 per team

State champions are invited to participate in the regional competition where top teams travel to New York City for the National Economics Challenge.

[Register](#) your teams today.

Applications Now Being Accepted for Perkins Rural Reserve Grants for 2023-2024

Purpose: To create career awareness, recruit, and retain students within a CTE Secondary Program of Study that leads to a high skill, high wage, or in demand occupations.

There are currently 176 schools offering over 260 Career and Technical Education courses to students in grades 5-8 in our Montana schools. The most offered course is in career exploration. Montana does not allocate Perkins's funding for middle school programs this year's Rural Reserve Grant will be to encourage pathway work for the middle grades.

Schools could use the funds to help:

- establish innovative delivery methods for career exploration,
- expose students to employability skills earlier,
- establish foundational elements for work-based learning,
- improve transitions from middle grades into secondary Career and Technical Education pathways.

High School Awards: Grants of **up to \$5,000** each will be available to secondary Perkins eligible: school districts who receive less than \$15,000 in Perkins funding Schools will have had to complete the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) and E-Grant application as well.

Middle School Awards: Grants of **up to \$5,000** each will be available to secondary Perkins eligible school districts to support CTE work in the middle grades (5-8). Schools will have to complete the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) and E-Grant application as well for the 2023-2024 Grant cycle. Middle School programs will need to apply through their high school district to submit the application.

Districts are only eligible for a total of \$5,000 in awards, must have completed the Perkins Grant Application for Fiscal Year 24 and receive an allocation of less than \$15,000. Grant winners notified on an ongoing basis. First reviews will be January 2, 2024.

Use of Funds: Applicants need to show a middle school/ secondary program partnership. Money will be granted to the Secondary Program to use for Middle School CTE Development/Support.

Click [here](#) for the application.

Youth Serve Montana Scholarships 2024 Applications Now Open

The Governor's Office of Community Service, [Reach Higher Montana](#), and [Montana Campus Compact](#) are pleased to offer \$125,000 in scholarships for 2024 graduating seniors via the [Youth Serve Montana Scholarship](#) program.

Up to 100 seniors will receive scholarships for completing volunteer service hours in the 12 months prior to submitting their application. Students who have completed 50 hours are eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship, and students who have completed 100 hours are eligible for a \$1,500 scholarship.

Applications are now being accepted and closes January 31, 2024.

Visit the [Youth Serve Montana Scholarship](#) page for complete details and to apply.

NBEA's 2024 Convention Registration for Myrtle Beach is Open

Registration is now open for the [National Business Education Association](#) (NBEA) 2024 Annual Convention. The [NBEA 2024 Convention & Expo](#) will be held Tuesday-Friday, March 26-29, 2024, at the Sheraton Myrtle Beach Convention Center Hotel in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Both in-person and virtual participation options are available.

Get ready for a one-of-a-kind conference experience at the picturesque beach destination of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Join us for the 2024 NBEA Convention & Expo to combine learning, networking, and perhaps a little bit of sand. Soak up the sun, build valuable relationships, and gain invaluable knowledge as NBEA goes to the beach.

Now included with the in-person registration:

- Continental Breakfast Wednesday, Thursday & Friday
- Lunch Wednesday, Thursday & Friday Awards Luncheon
- Wednesday evening welcome reception
- Transportation on Wednesday evening to [Broadway at the Beach](#)
- Thursday Networking Event: Rooftop Dinner at RipTydz

Virtual registrants can attend sessions from the comfort of their own homes. Sessions will be broadcast live via ZOOM! Select whether you plan to attend the event live, in Myrtle Beach, or virtually when you register.

All attendees will have access to session broadcasts, and most concurrent sessions will be recorded and posted for later viewing for convention registrants.

The Early-bird, NBEA-member rate for in-person registration is \$499 and \$349 for virtual registration. The early-bird rates end February 27, 2024.

If participating in-person, rooms at the [Sheraton Myrtle Beach Convention Center Hotel](#) can be booked for \$159+taxes & fees. The convention room block ends February 26, 2024.

Visit the [NBEA 2024 Convention & Expo](#) page for complete convention details.

First Submissions for The Prospects 2024 Began Friday, December 1

The [Montana Chamber Foundation](#) is excited to announce the 2024 edition of [The Prospects](#), an entrepreneurship competition. With over \$75,000 in cash, prizes, and scholarships available, this is a great opportunity to get your students' ideas exposed to business leaders in Montana.

[Tiana Yates](#) (tiana@montanachamber.com), the Montana Chamber Empowered Coordinator, will be your main contact for this year's competition. You do not have to be teaching [Empowered](#) to participate in the contest.

[The Prospects](#) includes both a high school and a middle school division. The Fall competition is open now with submissions being accepted beginning December 1, 2023. Submission will be judged as they are submitted with finalists being announced on February 1, March 1, and April 1. The 2024 Virtual Awards Ceremony will be held April 24, 2024.

Key Dates for The Prospects 2024

- December 1: First Submission Date
- February 1, March 1, & April 1: Advancements Announced
- March 15: Final Submission Date
- April 25: Virtual Awards Show
- May 19-21: In-person competition in Bozeman for the Grand Champion prize

The Prospects categories for the High School level include

[Existing Business Idea](#): Any high school students already running their own small business. Pitch your business and how you intend to grow and sustain it moving forward.

[New Business Idea](#): Do you have the next big thing? We want high school students to reach for stars and come up with the next amazing, new idea.

[Hack My State](#): Take time to help us come up with solutions for one of our state's biggest concerns right now, Childcare. Come up with a solution that could help solve the problem for finding childcare all across Montana.

[School Enterprise](#): Does your school, class or club run a business? If so, tell us why it exists and ways to improve or expand to benefit your school.

At the Middle School level, the Junior Prospects competition categories include

[Design Challenge](#) (6th grade only): 6th graders will be tasked to combine three items and let their creativity shine. Create the next big thing and help innovate Montana.

[Hack My School](#) (7th & 8th grade): Let's be solution makers. We want you to take a deep dive into your school and come up with a realistic and attainable solution to make your school better for everyone.

[Vacant Lot](#) (7th & 8th grade): Like Hack My School, but we want you to look at your community to be the next generation of change makers. Look at the vacant lots, existing buildings, and other areas of your community and pitch to us your solution to make your hometown better.

[Existing Business Idea](#) (6th-8th grade): Any middle school students already running their own small business. Pitch your business and how you intend to grow and sustain it moving forward.

Eligibility: Any of Montana's high school and middle school students are encouraged to submit their innovative ideas and solutions or enter their existing businesses.

Submissions: Pitch Video (2 minutes or less), Business Summary (1,000 words max.), a Waiver Form signed by an Educator and/or Parent or Guardian, and a completed W-9 Form.

Complete contest and submission details can be found on [The Prospects page](#) of the Montana Chamber Foundation website.

For questions, please contact Tiana Yates at tiana@montanachamber.com.

Each participant will receive an extensive digital resource handbook specifically designed for this seminar. The handbook includes:

--Sample prompts and strategies for using AI tools to create engaging and personalized business lessons that cater to individual student learning needs

--Ideas and resources on how to make the best use of AI tools in your classroom

--Descriptions and overviews of the AI tools covered in the seminar as well as additional tools to consider for specific business ed content areas

--Ways to use AI to automate routine administrative tasks, allowing more time for teaching and student learning

--Practical strategies and tutorials to more effectively introduce AI tools to business ed students

Fun Facts & Trivia

Hawai`i Volcanoes National Park is located on the Island of Hawai`i, 96 miles from Kailua-Kona and 30 miles from Hilo.

Hawai`i Volcanoes National Park was established August 1, 1916, as Hawai`i National Park.

On September 22, 1961, the name was changed to Hawai`i Volcanoes National Park.

The Park displays the results of 70 million years of volcanism, migration, and evolution—processes that thrust a bare land from the sea and clothed it with complex and unique ecosystems and a distinct human culture.

The park encompasses 230,000 acres and ranges from sea level to the summit of the earth`s most massive volcano, Mauna Loa at 13,677 feet.

Kilauea, the world's most active volcano, offers scientists insights on the birth of the Hawaiian Islands and visitors views of dramatic volcanic landscapes.

Over half of the park is designated wilderness and provides unusual hiking and camping opportunities.

In recognition of its outstanding natural values, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park has been honored as an International Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site.

Created to preserve the natural setting of Kilauea and Mauna Loa, the park is also a refuge for the island's native plants and animals and a link to its human past.

Kilauea Crater is possibly the most famous and well-known feature of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

Research by scientists at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory has made Kilauea one of the best understood volcanoes in the world, shedding light on the birth of the Hawaiian Islands and the beginning of planet Earth.

Also within the park is the Thurston Lava Tube, a 500-year-old lava tube located near the incredible Kilauea Crater.

This lava tube was carved out by a 2000-foot lava flow creating the subterranean cavern that exists today.

The Kilauea Iki Crater is a great spot for hikers to explore a crater at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park via the Kilauea Iki & Crater Rim Trails.

What was once a boiling lava lake is now a hardened surface for hikers to enjoy an afternoon in the park.

The Chain of Craters Road is a 19-mile scenic drive that is one of the top things to do at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park complete with spectacular overlooks and otherworldly vistas.

Since its initial construction, segments of the Chain of Craters Road has been repeatedly buried by lava flows.

The Pu'u Loa Petroglyphs archeological site is a vast collection of over 23,000 petroglyphs located in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

Pu'uloa, translated as the "long hill" or "Hill-(of)-long-(life)" from Hawaiian, is a place considered sacred to the people of Hawai'i, and those of Kalapana in particular.

In geologic terms, the center of Pu'uloa consists of a volcanic pressure dome with outlying areas of ancient, relatively level fields of pāhoehoe lava bedrock (pāhoehoe, being one of the two types of lava found in Hawai'i, a rather smooth surfaced substrate), dated geologically between AD 1200-1450.

The Holei Sea Arch is a 90-foot-high arch created by a lava flow roughly 550 years ago located off of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park's Chain of Craters Road.

The arch can be viewed from an overlook located about 1,000 feet past the gate at the end of the Chain of Craters Road.

Issues of the Wednesday Reader are archived on the Montana Business Education Association (MBEA) website at www.mbea.info. The Wednesday Readers are under the Newsletter section and listed most recent first.

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"You don't make decisions because they are easy; you don't make them because they are cheap; you don't make them because they're popular; you make them because they're right." ~Rev. Theodore Hesburgh