

DRAFT

July 2008

TO: Various

FROM: G. M. Dennison, President, The University of Montana
G. Gamble, President, Montana State University

SUBJECT: Science and Mathematics Teacher Commitment in Montana

The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) has proposed a collaborative of member institutions to increase the number, diversity, and quality of science and mathematics teachers prepared annually to meet needs as the nation and the states strive to sustain the desired quality of life and global competitiveness. While no one knows the number for certain, the National Academies in a report issued two years ago estimated that the country will need 10,000 new science and mathematics teachers annually over the next few years. We do not know the precise number for Montana, but we know that Montana shares in this pressing need. To help address that challenge, we invite you to join us as a member of a planning group to develop more information and outline the plan for a responsive project for Montana. We believe the time has come for action because the need will become more challenging with every passing year. We seek your help to meet this challenge by joining us as a member of the planning group.

For your information, we have attached a copy of the [NASULGC position paper](#) describing the national challenge. While the paper requests a commitment to participate, and also suggests some specific strategies, it nonetheless recognizes that one size does not fit all and that each state must decide for itself how to proceed. We in Montana can decide for ourselves the critical issues and actions we deem appropriate. However, we should not, cannot, and will not allow the challenge to go unanswered.

First, we must inform ourselves about the actual and developing need in the State. Together, we can find and analyze the necessary data. Second, we need a straightforward plan of action to address the identified need. We know that such a plan will involve many stakeholders and players, will require great care in execution, and will not come cheaply. However, we also know that failure to address the challenge will prove even more costly.

Any plan this far-reaching in impact will lead to other considerations and concerns as implemented. We will need to find ways to ensure retention of current and future teachers for long-term success. We will have to develop innovative pedagogies and materials to enhance any success we might achieve. We must stand ready and eager to address these and other issues as well.

We intend to schedule a meeting in the next couple of weeks to begin the discussion. Please let us know as soon as possible if you will join us in this critical undertaking by calling Cathleen Collins at (406) 243-2311. Ms. Collins will then find a date and time that works, and we will identify a suitable and convenient place for the meeting.

Thank you very much in advance for your willingness to take on this challenge.

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