

## **Partnering with the K-12 Community to Address Issues In the “No Child Left Behind Act”**

### **State Need:**

- Montana’s K-12 schools face serious challenges as they make the changes necessary to respond to local, state and federal expectations in a resource-constrained environment.
- Federally imposed requirements regarding the specific preparation of K-12 teachers require Montana to develop creative solutions to meet these requirements and maintain maximum possible local autonomy.

### **Market Reality:**

- In Montana, there exists shortages of highly qualified teachers and administrators
- Teachers from rural communities who teach in broad field areas, such as science, may be forced out of those communities to larger districts where they can teach several sections in an area for which they have specific preparation.

### **Current Problem:**

- The existing teacher workforce needs access to the programs that will provide the necessary spanning of the gap that exists between their current preparation and the requirements of the “No Child Left Behind Act”
- Present campus resources do not allow for the concerted “SWAT Team” approach that will be necessary to meet this statewide need.

### **Proposed Solution:**

- **MSU-Billings** will expand its Internship and Endorsement Project to help practicing teachers and will provide a masters degree leading to Highly Qualified Teacher status for middle school teachers with elementary certification, but without a content-area major.
- **MSU-Northern** will partner with Hi-Line Tribal colleges to prepare more American Indians for teaching through Bachelor’s degree programs in Elementary Education and will assist practicing teachers by delivering cohort based masters degrees to improve effectiveness and pay scales.
- **MSU-Great Falls COT** will employ appropriately qualified teachers to expand its dual-enrollment programs to provide highly capable students the chance to start college or a high-skills career. In addition the COT will further develop its WebWriters program to provide an on-line system to giving students practice, evaluation and feedback on composition skills.

### **Required Investment:**

- Investments in these targeted areas will total **\$580,000**
  - **MSU-Billings - \$140,000**
  - **MSU-Northern - \$315,000**

- **MSU-Great Falls COT - \$125,000**

**Return on Investment:**

- Compliance with NCLB provisions, ensuring continued federal funding for K-12 schools; increased supply of appropriately qualified teachers, especially in rural and reservation schools; more American Indian teachers.
- Educational, professional, and salary incentives for teachers and administrators to stay in Montana.
- Improvements in writing skills and in writing instruction; more opportunities for high school students to challenge themselves academically and save money on postsecondary education.

**Selected Examples of Return:**

- Lower teacher recruitment costs will result in many smaller school districts if practicing teachers can easily meet NCLB requirements
- More natural progression into administrative positions can result for teachers if course work for administrative endorsements can be made convenient and predictable.
- Improved education will result in Reservation schools if the number of Indian teachers can be increased.
- Time to degree for students can be shortened for talented students if dual enrollment programs can be modeled by MUS units and K-12 districts.