



AN ACT CREATING THE MONTANA VIRTUAL ACADEMY; PROVIDING FOR THE ACADEMY'S PURPOSES AND GOVERNANCE; REQUIRING A REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Montana virtual academy -- purposes -- governance. (1) There is a Montana virtual academy at a unit of the Montana university system.

(2) The purposes of the Montana virtual academy are to:

(a) make distance learning opportunities available to all school-age children through public school districts in the state of Montana;

(b) offer high-quality instructors who are licensed and endorsed in Montana and courses that are in compliance with all relevant education and distance learning rules, standards, and policies; and

(c) emphasize the core subject matters required under the accreditation standards, offer advanced courses for dual credit in collaboration with the Montana university system, and offer enrichment courses.

(3) The Montana virtual academy must be governed by a board with equal representation from:

(a) the commissioner of higher education or a designee;

(b) the superintendent of public instruction or a designee;

(c) a Montana licensed and endorsed classroom teacher appointed by the board of public education;

(d) a Montana licensed school district administrator appointed by the board of public education;

(e) a trustee of a Montana school district appointed by the board of public education;

(f) the dean of the school of education of the hosting unit of the Montana university system or a designee as a nonvoting member; and

(g) the two officers provided for in subsection (5) as nonvoting members.

(4) The governing board shall elect a presiding officer and vice presiding officer to 2-year terms without limitation on the number of terms.

(5) The governing board shall hire a program director and a curriculum director who shall serve as chief executive officer and vice chief executive officer respectively on the governing board in a nonvoting capacity. The program director shall develop and, upon approval of the governing board, implement policies and guidelines for the Montana virtual academy pertaining to:

- (a) course offerings;
- (b) software and hardware selection;
- (c) instructor selection;
- (d) partnering school agreements;
- (e) instructor training and curriculum development;
- (f) course evaluation;
- (g) grant opportunities; and
- (h) other activities that are essential to the success of a statewide distance learning program.

Section 2. Report to legislature. The governing board shall provide the 62nd legislature with a report that details:

- (1) how the line item funding in House Bill No. 645 cited in [section 4] was spent; and
- (2) future funding requirements and recommendations, instructor standards, curriculum development issues, and evaluation of the software for implementing a seamless educational distance learning continuum in the state of Montana.

Section 3. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 20, chapter 7, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 7, apply to [section 1].

Section 4. Coordination instruction. If both House Bill No. 645 and [this act] are passed and approved and if House Bill No. 645 does not include line item funding for the Montana virtual academy for the purposes of [this act], then [this act] is void.

Section 5. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2009.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HB 0459, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2009.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2009.

HOUSE BILL NO. 459

INTRODUCED BY GRINDE, AUGARE, BLEWETT, BONIEK, BOSS RIBS, COHENOUR, DICKENSON,
DRISCOLL, EBINGER, FLEMING, FRENCH, GLASER, HAMILTON, HANDS, HOLLENBAUGH, KOTTEL,
MALEK, MCCLAFFERTY, A. NOONAN, P. NOONAN, PEASE-LOPEZ, POMNICHOWSKI, REINHART,
ROUNDSTONE, VAN DYK, VILLA, WILSON, WISEMAN, BECKER, BELCOURT, FUREY, MACDONALD,
STEENSON, DI. BARRETT

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