



# STARS Preschool

Increasing access to high quality preschool for 4 and 5 year old children  
in Montana

# House Bill 639

- Section 11 and 12. Coordination instruction
  - One time, general fund appropriation to the DPHHS under the Human and Community Services Division – \$6 million over 2 years
  - To increase access to preschool for 4- and 5-year-old children
  - To test multiple delivery models

# Variety of facility types

Discovery Place



Troy Elementary

Mandy Berens – Kountry Kare

Explorers Academy, Billings Head Stars

# Key STARS Preschool Criteria

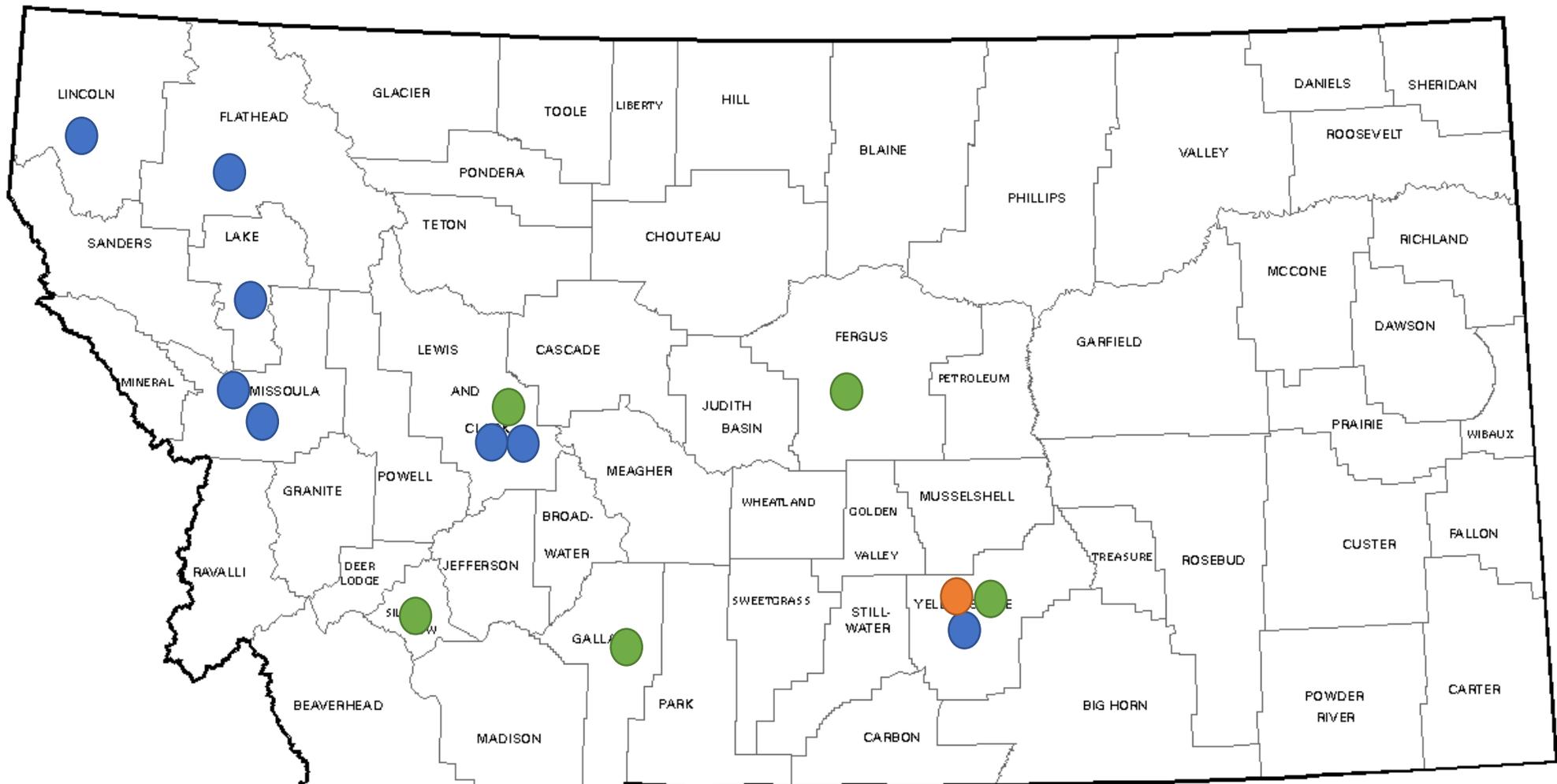
- Provide a minimum of 5.5 hours per day, or 28 hours per week
- Teaching staff in public schools shall be licensed, non-public teaching staff shall have BA with 20 Early Childhood credits
- Classrooms must use a research based curriculum
- Programs are encouraged to prioritize at least 25% of classroom slots to children who are high needs
- Staff child ratios must be 1 adult to every 10 children with maximum classroom sizes at 18 students
- Program must show alignment to the Montana Early Learning Standards

# STARS Preschool Program Selection

- In July, a selection committee reviewed 47 applications and selected 17 STARS Preschool programs
- Lockwood and Ronan SD support 2 classrooms
- Total of 19 STARS Preschool classrooms
- Explorers Academy, Billings Head Start plans to open a second classroom in Laurel, starting in January

# Budget Allocation

- \$2.3 million allocated to programs directly
- \$700,000 allocated to infrastructure support for the early childhood classrooms through training, coaching, etc.
- Program awards range from \$27,190.00 to \$150,000.00
- Average awarded amount \$120,848.00



- Public School Programs, 9 programs 11 classrooms
- Private Programs, 7 programs 7 classrooms
- Head Start Program, 1 program 1 classroom

# STARS Preschool Programs

## Public

- Alberton Elementary
- Cherry Valley STARS Preschool Program, Polson
- Eastgate Elementary, East Helena
- Hawthorne Elementary, Helena
- Lockwood School District
- Marion Elementary
- Ronan School District
- W.F. Morrison Elementary, Troy MT.

## Private

- ABC Academy, Helena
- Beartooth Children Center, Red Lodge
- Discovery Place, Bozeman
- Early Childhood Center, Flathead Valley Community College, Kalispell
- Kountry Kare, Shepard
- Small Wonders, Lewistown
- Stepping Stones, Dillon

## Head Start

- Explorers Academy, Billings

STARS Preschool  
estimates  
serving 300  
children in a  
high quality  
preschool  
setting the first  
year.

# How is the STARS Preschool criteria being monitored?

- Monthly on-site support and monitoring
- Quarterly Reports
- Assessments
- End of the year program and family surveys

# How is the STARS Preschool criteria being evaluated?

- Project Data

- Facility Data

- Health and Safety Inspections
    - Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)

- Child Development and Outcome Data

- Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE)
    - Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL)



- For more information, please visit [starspreschool.mt.gov](http://starspreschool.mt.gov)

*Thank you*