EXHIBIT 5
DATE 1-18-05
HB 124

Testimony

HB 124 / 2005 session
To: Select Committee on Education Funding
By Steve Meloy/ Executive Secretary/ Montana Board of Public Education

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Steve Meloy and I am Executive Secretary of the Montana Board of Public Education. On behalf of the Board, I would like to offer supporting testimony on HB 124.

In 2003, the Montana Board of Public Education issued a position paper on public school funding and structure. The Board suggested that solutions to the complex problems in the Montana K-12 education system, including funding, require a multi faceted, long-term approach. They further emphasized that the system needs to be examined in a holistic manner and that we work collectively and collaboratively to seek long-term viable solutions. Late in 2004 the School Renewal Commission reported to the Interim Committee on Local Government and Education a document that included 13 recommendations. Recommendation # 5 addressing Educator Recruitment and Retention adopted and supported the position that a statewide school district employee insurance pool with state incentives be adopted.

Of all of the concepts from the Renewal Commission HB 124 was and continues to be the most developed. Because HB 124 is specific to both the Renewal Commission findings and the Board of Public Education position paper, I ask that this bill be given favorable consideration on behalf of the Board of Public Education.