

1380 Wolverine Lane
Bozeman, Montana 59718
406-587-0455

House Select Committee on Education

RE: Opposition to SB 152

This bill states its intentions to define the COMPONENTS of a basic system of free quality public education. This was not the ruling of the Mt Supreme Court, they ruled the legislature needed to address state educational needs and define "quality" education not quality components to an educational system. Without a definition of what quality education is, how can any bill identify components that will help reach that goal? This bill does not define what a quality education is or should be. This bill is aiming at no goal so is hard to evaluate if it will help reach that goal or not. Meaningful debate cannot take place to evaluate this bill.

Also, this bill does not address the lack of legislative assessment of what educational needs we currently have if any that are preventing the delivery of a free quality education. This bill would be a better blueprint to use when making the assessment but is not good law because it does not discriminate between basic or foundational needs and supplemental wish lists. Having lots of computers, teacher aides and modern hallways does not guarantee that quality education will take place.

This bill makes law out of information that should be resources. It makes law out of evaluation points. It codifies an assessment tool.

While an assessment of educational needs may want to identify what components may impact a quality education, it is not a list that needs to be codified in Montana law. Mandating this all inclusive list of components will make educating our children too costly. Including all the bells and whistles that teachers and administrators could ever want is like turning an addict loose in his favorite store. We cannot give this blank check to the Education Department without great fiscal imbalance for the rest of the necessary services good government must provide. Please vote no on SB 152.