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EXHIBIT 11  
DATE 1/17/05  
HB \_\_\_\_\_

Monday, January 17, 2005

Representative Franklin and members of the Joint Sub-Committee on Education,

For the record, my name is Darrell Rud, Executive Director of the School Administrators of Montana.

I would like to convey my support and that of the School Administrators of Montana for strengthening resources for the Office of Public Instruction (OPI).

When I became a school administrator in Glendive, MT in 1979, one of my first opportunities to learn about OPI and our states' education was to attend a new leaders meeting in the Capitol. Having training and high quality orientation from talented specialists from the Office of Public Instruction gave me valuable insight into the issues that I would be facing in leading a school and in coordinating transportation for the Glendive School District. As important, was the pledge of support from these specialists to assist me in my challenging leadership roles.

After moving to the Billings area to become an administrator in the Lockwood and Billings School Districts, the staffs that I led continued to enjoy quality support from the specialists but found that ongoing cutbacks to the level of services, due to decreasing funding, thrust OPI into more of an enforcement role than had been previously been in place. This problem of inadequate numbers of support staff has increased to the point that during the last few years, OPI has simply not had the support specialists to offer schools the assistance as wanted and needed.

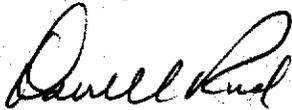
At the present time, these problems have become even more severe as nearly 1 out of every 5 Montana schools is not currently able to meet the Accreditation Standards, which is the baseline upon which quality education is to be built. In order to meet these important standards that have been adopted, schools have asked for help but, again, specialists have not been there to the level needed.

Even further compounding this shortage of helping specialists is the unprecedented Federal intrusion into our states' schools. The demands of *No Child Left Behind* and the ongoing under-funded nature of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* have left your states' schools pleading for help to resolve their difficulties in meeting the requirements of *Adequate Yearly Progress*, federally qualified teachers, etc.. The OPI staff certainly has the will and skill but not the manpower to deliver these necessary services!

Two other areas of very important curriculum have been inadequately supported during this time of understaffing in the Office of Public Instruction. They are *Indian Education for All* and Gifted Education. As a recently retired school principal, I can say that these critical areas simply need resources, including OPI specialists, if they are going to be more successfully integrated into our schools' efforts to provide quality education for all students!

Thank you for your consideration of this request to provide increased support for specialists and appropriate funding for the Office of Public Instruction.

Sincerely,



Darrell Rud  
Executive Director  
School Administrators of Montana