

February 3, 2011

Joint Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

On behalf of Bozeman Public Schools and the 5700 students we serve in the Gallatin Valley, this message is to request your support in consideration of the OPI Budget Request in Program 9 [Local Education Activities as outlined in SB 79 (sponsored by Sen. Gary Branae)], to replace federal stimulus funding with state level funding, bring general fund spending to levels consistent with 2011 entitlements and apply inflationary increases to the entitlements.

The proposal in Program 9 restores the direct state aid to schools as was intended by the work of the Interim Education and Local Government Committee during the 2005 and 2007 interims. The Montana School Renewal Commission (2003 Interim) and Quality Schools Interim Committee (2005 Interim) clearly set the groundwork that led to the quality schools definition now codified in 20-9-309 MCA. The goals of the interim work, were to determine the cost of meeting the definition and to determine the State's share of funding. The 2005 Special Session and the 2007 Interim Education and Local Government Committee worked toward determining the State's share and applied an inflationary increase (on 2 parts of the 6 part funding formula -- per ANB and Basic Entitlement) to the K-12 state funding formula for the first time. The 2007 legislative session implemented this formula. In the 2009 session, this formula was amended to include State Fiscal Stabilization Federal Funds in the direct state aid, altering the intent and work of the previous Interims. Program 9 restores the state funding formula for K-12 education to the levels intended by the Interim Committee recommendations beginning in 2003 to the present.

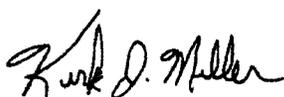
This impacts all public schools in our state and allows continued opportunities for over 142,000 students served. In Bozeman we have created an environment focused on improving student learning for all. We have been innovative, effective and efficient in using the funds we receive from our taxpayers. Evidence of this Journey to Excellence is found in our Biomed program, Welding, support of the Gallatin College Program, Instructional Coaching model, LRSP – Accountable and Transparent at [www.bsd7.org](http://www.bsd7.org).

Further, we have worked together with all school in the 4 Rivers area and 10 counties in Southwestern Montana to Optimize Resources. I'm sharing with you a Handout of those items we currently share that make us efficient and effective. We continue to meet together to determine ways to optimize our resources for the benefit of the students we serve.

Funding Montana's public schools is an investment in future economic development, jobs for Montanans, and an educated citizenry able to solve problems and create innovation. This program proposal is an investment in the children of Montana! The education of our children is a core value of our state. I trust that in your deliberation, you will support continuing the investment in this core value. Funding this program will position Bozeman Public Schools in such a way that we will be able to continue most of the excellent programs and staffing we offer to our students. To fund less, will require reductions to the quality of education the community and parents expect from their public schools in the Gallatin Valley.

Thank you for your consideration. I'm available to answer any questions you might have or follow up on data that would be helpful as you consider this program proposal.

Respectfully,



Kirk J. Miller  
Superintendent, Bozeman Public Schools  
Vice Chairman, Montana School Renewal Commission, 2003 Interim  
Member, Quality Schools Interim Committee, 2005 Interim  
Ex Officio Member, 2007 Education and Local Government Interim Committee  
30 year Montana Educator  
Parent of 3 Montana public school children