



## State-Tribal Relations Committee

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### 64th Montana Legislature

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HOPE STOCKWELL, Lead Staff  
LAURA SANKEY, Staff Attorney  
LAURA SHERLEY, Secretary

August 10, 2016

To: STRC members  
Fr: Hope Stockwell, Research Analyst  
Re: Public comment on potential legislative proposals

A formal public comment period was held between July 20 and August 10 on the five potential statutory changes the STRC asked staff to draft for consideration at its August 31 meeting.

Attached are the seven comments received by August 10. Here is a summary of those comments:

- Two cannot be characterized;
- One supports the draft committee bill to cleanup the redundancy in the tribal college reimbursement statute;
- One supports language immersion proposal #1;
- One calls for an increase in funding if proposal #1 moves forward;
- Two support language immersion proposal #2;
- One provides qualified support for language immersion proposal #3;
- One comments on the current structure of language conferences;
- One supports language immersion proposal #4;
- One provides an alternative to the proposed funding increase in proposal #4.

Staff will continue to take public comment on the proposals between now and our meeting. Any public comment received will be forwarded to the committee.

**From:** [Dee Brown](#)  
**To:** [Stockwell, Hope](#)  
**Subject:** Re: State-Tribal Relations Committee Seeks Comment on Five Proposals  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 3:02:46 PM

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the devil is in the details....I will support some of these but want to read the language of the bills

Dee Brown SD2

On Wednesday, July 20, 2016 2:00 PM, State-Tribal Relations Committee wrote:

**You are receiving this as a subscriber to the State-Tribal Relations Committee email list.**

The State-Tribal Relations Committee is taking public comment until August 10 on five potential statutory changes related to tribal colleges and the state's Indian language immersion program. Links to the draft language are provided below and available on the committee's [website](#). Comments may be emailed to [hstockwell@mt.gov](mailto:hstockwell@mt.gov). The proposals and comments will be reviewed at the STRC's August meeting.

Tribal college reimbursement statute:

[Draft committee bill to remove redundant language](#)

Language immersion program proposals:

[Proposal #1](#): Expand program eligibility

[Proposal #2](#): Allow state funds to be used as matching funds

[Proposal #3](#): Provide funding for an annual conference

[Proposal #4](#): Fund an immersion program on each reservation and in Great Falls

If you have comments or questions, please contact committee staffer Hope Stockwell at 444-9280 or [hstockwell@mt.gov](mailto:hstockwell@mt.gov).

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Thank you.

**From:** [Rosalyn](#)  
**To:** [Stockwell, Hope](#)  
**Subject:** Immersion "language"  
**Date:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 6:09:14 AM

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Okii Hope,

I am writing to let you know I will be writing a letter/testimony regarding amending the state's immersion program. And I have asked the Leslie Harper, the President of the National Coalition of Native American Language Schools and Programs to also write testimony. (I am a founding organizer of the group). We helped write the federal Esther Martinez legislation and the federal definition of "immersion" education.

Thank you for your time and you will be hearing from us soon,

Rosalyn LaPier  
St. Mary's, MT  
406-241-3731

**From:** [Richard Littlebear](#)  
**To:** [Stockwell, Hope](#)  
**Subject:** comments on 5 proposed changes.  
**Date:** Monday, August 08, 2016 3:39:16 PM

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Tribal college reimbursement statute: Draft committee bill to remove redundant language.

The proposed removals are appropriate.

Language immersion program proposals:

Proposal #1: Expand program eligibility:

Not all reservations deal with just one language on each reservation; some have two and some have three. If the eligibility is expanded to allow funding for each language, then a commensurate increase in funding should also be appropriated.

Proposal #2: Allow state funds to be used as matching funds

If legislative language allows for state funding to be used as matching funds to secure assistance from federal or private sources, then this should be allowed.

Proposal #3: Provide funding for an annual conference

One comprehensive conference which show-cases all the language programs at one time would be much easier to do than the way the language programs are doing it now: a one day summit at differing tribal reservation locations. This arrangement needlessly expends funds that do not go directly to services for language learners or language learner resources. This not meant as a criticism of conference because these get-togethers enable the exchange of ideas, materials, and resources and a centralized, two-day conference would be sufficient.

Proposal #4: Fund an immersion program on each reservation and in Great Falls

Immersion programs should be provided that fund each language; not each reservation.

Refer back to Proposal #1 where often more than one language is served at the reservation where the languages are mostly spoken, reinforced, and where the efforts to perpetuate the language are located.

**From:** [terry@islandmtn.com](mailto:terry@islandmtn.com)  
**To:** [Stockwell, Hope](#)  
**Subject:** Proposal 1 Comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 09, 2016 8:37:19 AM

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STED Committee Members,

As a licensed Class 7 educator of the Gros Ventre Language, I am in total support of the amendment. As educators, you are the teacher and curriculum developer. This is an incredibly hard task. We are not afforded the availability of multiple publishers presenting packaged curriculum. Many tribes need time to develop an immersion program and planning is at the forefront with regards to immersion for it to be a true success. Every tribe is different based on the number of teachers and curriculum available. By removing this portion of the law, it will allow school districts to hopefully work towards 100% immersion. It may not be year 1, but by year 2 or 3 school districts will have time to prepare adequately for an immersion program. An example would be, there are many modern English words that need to be created and they need to be consistent with all teachers. That is just one small example, but the time to identify all the various words that exist in all content areas is immense. This takes time coordination and planning by all teachers of that specific language in order to ensure consistency to accomplish this immense feat. I am in 100% support of the proposal and saw it as one of the fallacies that existed initially. Thank you for proposing this amendment to the MCA code.

Respectfully,

Terry Brockie

Class 7 Certification Designee for the Gros Ventre Tribe

**From:** [terry@islandmtn.com](mailto:terry@islandmtn.com)  
**To:** [Stockwell, Hope](#)  
**Subject:** Proposal 2  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 09, 2016 8:44:36 AM

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STED Committee Members,

I am in full support of this proposed change to MCA code. As a Class 7 Teacher and former County Superintendent of Schools, I am fully aware of the educational shortfalls with regards to funding of our public schools. The more opportunities to reduce the financial burden on the district and taxpayers by allowing funds to be matched; at the same time enhancing the educational opportunities for our children is a win-win situation in my opinion.

Respectfully,

Terry Brockie

Class 7 Certification Designee for the Gros Ventre Tribe

**From:** [terry@islandmtn.com](mailto:terry@islandmtn.com)  
**To:** [Stockwell, Hope](#)  
**Subject:** Proposal 3  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 09, 2016 9:04:11 AM

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STED Committee Members,

This proposal I support, however, I would encourage each of you to focus your efforts on proposal 1, 2, & 4. Throughout the year there are many opportunities such as MEA, MIEA, & other language specific conferences that come up that provide opportunities for educators to meet; of all the proposals, this one I feel is of least importance.

Respectfully,

Terry Brockie

Class 7 Certification Designee of the Gros Ventre Tribe

**From:** [terry@islandmtn.com](mailto:terry@islandmtn.com)  
**To:** [Stockwell, Hope](#)  
**Subject:** Proposal 4  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 09, 2016 9:16:19 AM

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STED Committee Members,

I am in full support of this measure to increase funding for immersion in a public school setting. This will provide school districts with an additional funding resource to develop or enhance their immersion program in their respective district. The biggest factor with the past immersion bill is that it takes time to develop a proper program and there was little funding for the development of the process. Many school districts simply could not afford to implement an immersion program. In my own opinion, funding to allow districts a year to properly plan would be beneficial and would increase the chance of success. Unfortunately, this is more, but still rather meager when you identify all the needs, time, and resources in order to develop a truly successful immersion program. Of all the proposals, this one and proposal 2 would be my focus.

Respectfully,

Terry Brockie

Class 7 Certification Designee for the Gros Ventre Tribe