

NOVEMBER 1, 2017

Education Interim Committee  
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## THE STATUS OF LEGISLATIVE POLICY LEVERS TO SUPPORT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS

### The Quality Educator Payment

The Quality Educator (QE) payment was added to Montana's funding formula in the special session of December 2005 along with three other 100% state-funded components: the at-risk payment, the Indian Education for All payment, and the Indian Achievement Gap payment. The payment for each district is calculated by multiplying the number of FTE educators in the district by a statutorily set amount. The amount was \$2,000 for FY 2007, and increased to \$3,036 in FY 2008, and to \$3,042 in FY 2009 through 2015, after which it was included in funding components receiving annual inflationary adjustments. The payment is \$3,185 for FY 18 and \$3,245 for FY 19. While not directly linked with teacher salaries, which are negotiated locally, this payment was created following the court decisions in 2004 and 2005 that found the funding formula to be constitutionally inadequate. Evidence presented to the court showed that teacher salaries in Montana had declined and were among the lowest in the nation. Since the payment was created, average teacher salaries in Montana have climbed from 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation to 29<sup>th</sup> according to [NEA data](#).

### The Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program

The Quality Educator Loan Forgiveness Program was created in Senate Bill 2 of the May 2007 special session and is codified in [Title 20, Chapter 4, Part 5, MCA](#). This program was tweaked by [House Bill 119](#) (Berglee) during the 2017 session at the request of the School Funding Interim Commission to target the program toward rural schools located farther from cities. It allows state funding to pay back up to \$12,000 in student loans over the course of three years for a teacher employed in a school identified as impacted by a critical quality educator shortage by the Board of Public Education. The repayment amounts may not exceed \$3,000 in the first year, \$4,000 in the second, and \$5,000 in the third. If funding is not adequate for all eligible teachers, loan assistance must be targeted toward teachers teaching in subject areas most impacted by quality educator shortages. Funding for the program was not part of the executive budget or added into House Bill 2 by the 2017 Legislature. The program has no funding for the 2019 biennium.

### National Board Certified Teacher Stipend

Since 2001, Montana has provided a stipend for teachers who earn certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Prior to FY 2018, the stipend was a one-time payment of \$3,000 from the state. During the 2017 session, [Senate Bill 115](#) (Moe) revised the program so that the stipend is paid annually to teachers with current national board certification. Additionally, the stipend amount of up to \$1,500/year is increased to up to \$2,500/year for teachers teaching in a high-poverty school or a school identified by the Board of Public Education as impacted by a critical quality educator shortage. A portion of the stipend amount is dependent on the teacher's school district providing a match. Only teachers earning certification or recertification after July 1, 2017, are eligible for the stipend. Based on expected certifications, HB 2 appropriates \$0 for FY 2018 and \$30,000 for FY 2019.