

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7

2 INTRODUCED BY D. SKEES

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4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO INVESTIGATE OPTIONS FOR REDUCING THE DUTIES
6 OF THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND RECONFIGURING MONTANA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL
7 DISTRICTS SO AS TO CUT THEIR NUMBER BY HALF; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF
8 THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 63RD LEGISLATURE.

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10 WHEREAS, Article VIII, section 12, of the Montana Constitution vests the Legislature with the
11 responsibility to ensure strict accountability of all revenue received and money spent by the state, counties, cities,
12 and all other local governmental entities; and

13 WHEREAS, redundancies exist between the work performed by the Office of Public Instruction and by
14 Montana's public school districts, and much of that work can be more cost-effectively done by the districts; and

15 WHEREAS, many other states operate on a far more efficient ratio of students per public school district
16 than Montana does; and

17 WHEREAS, decentralization of the administration of Montana's public schools, whenever feasible, is in
18 keeping with the spirit and wisdom of local control mandated in Article X, section 8, of the Montana Constitution;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, administrative efficiencies save money that may be used to enhance the educational system
21 and improve teacher compensation.

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23 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
24 STATE OF MONTANA:

25 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to
26 section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to determine the most salient lessons and
27 recommendations from past studies, solicit the current opinions of stakeholders, and make recommendations on
28 how to:

29 (1) identify duties conducted by the Office of Public Instruction that can feasibly be transferred to
30 Montana's public school districts, with the aim of achieving cost-effectiveness in a manner cognizant of the

1 comparative strengths of each and not disruptive, financially or otherwise, to the school districts; and

2 (2) reduce the number of Montana's school districts by half.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this study investigate whether options involving privatization,
4 vouchers, and charter schools that have upheld quality and cost-effective education in other states might feasibly
5 be implemented or improved upon in Montana.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this interim study provide ample opportunity for stakeholders in the
7 education community as well as citizens at large to participate.

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
9 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
11 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2012.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
13 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 63rd Legislature.

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