HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 25
INTRODUCED BY B. BARKER, T. BROCKMAN


WHEREAS, section 20-9-309, MCA, requires the Legislature to form the School Funding Interim Commission, pursuant to section 5-20-301, MCA, at least every 10 years, and the commission was last formed during the 2015-2016 interim; and

WHEREAS, the 2015-2016 School Funding Interim Commission prioritized "District Size, Structure, and Equity" among four topics it chose to focus on, but the commission ultimately concluded that "further study is needed" and urged that its work in this area be "used as a starting point and guide for future efforts"; and

WHEREAS, school funding is complicated and having a group of legislators cultivate greater understanding of school funding in advance of the "decennial study" will allow the School Funding Interim Commission to hit the ground running; and

WHEREAS, the Education Interim Committee and the Education Interim Budget Committee collaborated effectively during the 2021-2022 interim.

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

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to examine:

(1) the work of the 2015-2016 School Funding Interim Commission:

(a) generally, to gauge how the recommendations of the commission have or have not been utilized in the last decade; and
specifically, how the commission's work on the topic of "District Size, Structure, and Equity"
might be continued;

taxpayer equity in education, including the ways in which the existing school funding formula
succeeds and fails in ensuring the equality of educational opportunity for all school children, regardless of the
property tax wealth of the school district in which a child's family resides;
how the reorganization of school district boundaries might enhance educational opportunities
and student outcomes as well as result in increased operational efficiencies and lower property taxes; and

the formation of the School Funding Interim Commission under sections 5-20-301 and 20-9-309, MCA, including any statutory changes that might support a successful "decennial study" of school funding
during the 2025-2026 interim.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Education Interim Committee and the Education Interim Budget Committee are encouraged to collaborate if one of them is assigned the study.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 69th Legislature.