

**Cumulative Summary of Strategic Planning Session Topics Since 2003**  
**Updated for Legislative Council**  
**August, 2019**

**2017-18 Overview of Topics**

Legislator compensation, Legislator Handbook, House Survey items on pre-session and session calendars, outreach and Interim Committee travel, communication with and improving staff services, Legislator Email, Rules on revenue bills and bill limits, Presiding Officer Training, ideas for session in the first month and after transmittal regarding joint committee meetings, leadership, and presiding officers.

**1. Legislative Calendar**

- a. 2017-2018 - The session calendar topic of meeting on Saturdays was raised. Staff looked at the last 10 sessions, the Council considered this as agenda item. The Council looked at the last 3 sessions Saturdays' schedule to review what they liked and didn't like about Saturdays. A discussion on the merits of not having the first five Saturdays or so was held. The frustration experienced by some was that the schedule had not been established in a timely manner. Council discussed having the information for the next leadership so they could understand why the Council adopts the session calendar the way they do. There was a brief mention of changing the schedule of sessions within and between the two years.
- b. 2013-2014 interim produced reports on "Goals for a Legislative Calendar", four reports on annual sessions, and a notebook on "A study of other legislatures."
- c. 2011-2012 – legislators liked 10-day recess period for HB 2 in 2011 – no similar action in 2013 or beyond (2013, no HB 2 conference committee)
- d. 2011-2012 – provided more information about what was needed to meet transmittal deadlines to chairs, session staff.
- e. 2007-2008 – term limits, annual sessions were discussed

**2. Leadership & Training**

- a. 2017-2018 - An item from a survey of House legislators directed to leadership was a desire for a ½ day caucus/party session to discuss ideas and strategies for session, priorities, and areas of opposition. The discussion revolved around how this relates to open caucuses and may not be practical. There was a discussion about the Con Con's intent regarding caucuses.
- b. 2017-2018 - The Council discussed whether the majority leader ever meets with chairs of the committees as they heard that certain committees were difficult. Meeting with the chairs may make them more consistent on how chairs operate on a day-to-day basis.
- c. 2013 – introductory breakfast for outgoing and incoming leaders, 2013 directors working with Gov. chief of staff to assist in successful session.
- d. 2010 – first leadership training, different from each session
- e. 2009-2010 - leadership notebook prepared for leaders (ongoing)
- f. 2009-2010 – suggested transition meeting of outgoing and incoming leaders

### **3. Orientation and training**

- a. 2015-2016 -- Post-transmittal training combining policy and budget: House, Senate and Appropriation committees later in session to help legislators understand their role in the cycle of passing laws and rulemaking. Budget training should include what Executive can and can't do versus the legislative role in budget oversight of the Legislative Finance Committee. Use time after transmittal to focus on understanding the budget. Members of committees lock in room, and presenters go into the room to explain the budget process. Schedule 3 hours in morning to drill down into the different subjects and diff committees. Talk about structuring Saturday training and start with bills; first week, order of business in AM; ethics classes.
- b. Have anything for post transmittal. Training on what happens if your bill passed, help prepare freshman going into different house.
- c. 2013-2014 – additional training for chairs, additional training on Rules, Ethics, Budgets in December 2014
- d. 2009-2010 - improve legislator training and relationships – suggested mentor teams, social events, more training early in session (in 2013 used first week to provide topical training, in 2015 and 16 used first week of standing committees to provide more training)
- e. 2007-2008 – identify more need for opportunities for legislators to come together using caucus and orientation week early session leadership meetings, explore interim opportunities, enhance training opportunities and refreshers – 2008 orientation opened to all legislators from just first-year legislators
- f. 2007-2008 – added issue caucuses during orientation – not well attended and would need revision, Education and Local Government Interim Committee held an educational summit on the first Saturday.
- g. 2007-2008 – Chair and vice chair training – first held Nov 2008, continues
- h. 2007-2008 – Open caucus training – agenda item and discussion (Jan 2008)
- i. 2003-2004, 2005-2006 – create mentoring program for legislators (no direct action, created mentor groups in orientation)
- j. 2003-2004, 2005-2006 – increase training for legislators – 2009 - first time budgets were adopted for NCSL, CSG and dues.
- k. Law School for Legislators since 2005, Rules Workshops since 2004, New Legislator Orientation since 2004, Chairman Orientation since 2006
- l. 2003-2004 – provide Rules Training (since 2004)

### **4. Communications and outreach**

- a. 2017-2018 - Council discussed more outreach to communities and traveled to 5 different locations outside of Helena (Bozeman, Pablo, Polson, Butte, Lewistown). Additional funding was included in interim committee budgets by the 2019 Legislature to allow interim committees an opportunity to hold a meeting or two outside of Helena.
- b. 2015-2016 - Use TVMT and YouTube to have a comprehensive education program about the Legislature and extending the reach of TVMT to cover more meetings and consider more programming. Explore remote testimony.
- c. 2007-2008 – Need for feedback to legislators and assistance from Information Office (December 2007 Survey in The Interim, back page article by ED), ideas for DVDs on topics for legislators (one made on bill drafting), synopsis of LC discussions, weekly legislative report
- d. 2007-2008 – TVMT – seeking expansion to greater areas, TVMT Subcommittee (2007 session to Helena and 7 largest communities through Bresnan and 18 others through telecoms. 2009 session used

satellite transmission to 46 communities, RFP in July 2009 resulted in satellite transmission contract and channel on cable outside of Helena

- e. 2003-2004, 2005-2006 – promote TVMT, desire to provide for statewide expansion of TVMT distribution from 1 full-time channel (Helena) and 7 part-time channels in 2003
- f. 2005-2006 – idea for televised program about Montana Legislature to inform the public about role of legislature
- g. 2003-2004 – improve websites – identify low-cost ways

## **5. Standing committees and business processes**

- a. 2017-2018 - There was a request to talk about integration of standing committees, the concept of having house and senate “like” committees meet periodically during session as they usually know what central issues are going to be. Get topics ahead of time and ask staff for some information and issues, if any. Use the first month of session in a constructive way. It should be built into the calendar in the first week or two and formalized. It was discussed whether they want to do that at the beginning of session or at transmittal.
- b. 2017-2018 - Presiding Officer training - More presiding officer training is needed on agenda, manual, concentrate on House-Senate, more experience, rules protocols. The Council discussed whether the majority leader ever meets with chairs of the committees as they heard that certain committees were difficult. Meeting with the chairs may make them more consistent on how chairs operate on a day-to-day basis. It was suggested that training be beefed up for chairs, including how to handle public comment, with more discussion and training on what to do and what not to do. Training for chair really starts in the House and it seems that the House has gotten more chaotic in last couple of sessions. Leadership role is to observe those things. Vice chairs provide a chain of command for members.
- c. 2011-2012 – desire to work on business process for standing committee votes to be more accessible to legislators and public. Resulted in better training for secretaries and 2011 business report so votes were posted more quickly. Current (2017) phase of the SSR will complete a Committee Module that will allow for automated recording of votes by secretary and upon review, immediate posting of minutes with votes to the web.
- d. 2011-2012 – Proxies – provided research to leaders on numbers on committees related to member appointments, training for presiding officers to announce why proxies are needed.
- e. 2011-2012 – Recommended additional committee chair training regarding presentation of amendments with enough time for public to comment.

## **6. Administrative Rules/Executive Oversight**

- a. 2015 - 2016 - Council wanted to review the Legislature's oversight authority over the executive branch. The Council included an agenda item and received the Administrative Rule Review Process Flowchart, as sample of the ETIC Administrative Rule Review Authority Memo and reviewed the Legislature’s webpage on Interim Committee Rule Review Authority and Agency Oversight activities. The Council received additional information and samples of the various ways that the Interim Committees provide agency oversight, including statutorily required or staff-initiated reports and briefing papers, program evaluations and reviews.
- b. The members want more oversight on how executive branch agency responds to legislative oversight - discussed this in numerous agenda items.

## **7. Term Limits**

Term limits discussions are a perennial topic at the strategic planning sessions. More than once, including in 2015 and 2016, the Council has concluded Term limits issues are something that requires the entire Legislature to address, the Legislative Council can't do so alone.

## **8. Interim committee improvement**

- a. 2015-2016 - more communication on interim work and bill packages - summary and press release after adoption after interim is over, honor work coming out of interim committees, use TVMT to get the word out.
- b. 2009-2010 – more training in interim – budget training held March 2010, various ideas to use interim more effectively – no institutional changes, various interim committees have tried more field meetings, etc.
- c. 2007-2008 – consider interim committee field meetings – monitor budgets, adopt policy parameters
- d. 2005-2006 – increase legislator participation in interim committees.
- e. 2007 – first attempt to separate Education and Local Government Committee – successful in 2017. Two additional committees created – Water Policy and Fire Suppression -- in addition to two study bills and a mental health study appropriation (contracted).

## **9. Legislative Rules**

- a. 2017-2018 - Council discussed possible changes regarding bill limits and definition of revenue bills (no changes resulted)
- b. 2013-2014 Rules Subcommittee – recommended changes, some adopted
- c. 2009-2010 – suggested LC rules subcommittee, repeated each interim
- d. 2009-2010 – created searchable database, reference guides for floor action, included more cross-references
- e. 2007-2008 – subcommittee for rules review and rewrite

## **10. Staff support of legislators**

- a. 2017-2018 - Staff provided additional outreach to legislators to encourage them to visit staff during the interim when in Helena. Staff created a handout and training for legislators on staff services offered during the interim.
- b. 2017-2018 - at Council's request, staff included more background
- c. 2009-2010 – need for interdivisional staff teams identified.
- d. Staff guide for 2011 and subsequent Legislatures published. Since 2011, mentor teams with staff from all divisions are part of Legislator orientation.
- e. Ongoing efforts to have interdivisional staff teams during interim and session.

## **11. Bill drafts**

- a. 2015-2016 - more communication on interim work and bill packages - summary and press release after adoption after interim is over, honor work coming out of interim committees, use TVMT to get the word out.
- b. 2011-2012 - Timing – legislators wanted bigger bills earlier: additional training opportunity for caucus leaders to talk to caucuses
- c. 2011-2012 - Tools to help leaders identify multiple bills on same topics

- d. 2005-2006 – examined fiscal note process (2007 legislation unsuccessful, 2009, SB 18 successful)

### **12. Legislator Handbook**

2017-2018 - There was interest in a comprehensive Legislator Handbook such as in Wyoming. A side-by-side comparison was accomplished and most of the information resides in one or more publications produced by Legislative Services, the House or the Senate. There were areas that were not covered that will be considered for inclusion in one or more publications. Because Wyoming's publication is in a single format, it was discussed whether publishing all the books in a similar format may assist in understanding the work as a related whole.

### **13. Restore faith & trust in Legislative Branch & civic education**

- a. 2013-2014 - Idea for pilot road show/town hall meetings “Life in the Legislature” stakeholder comment on term limits, annual/biennial sessions. Use interim committees for more civic education, field hearings, and listening sessions/open houses.
- b. 2013-2014 - Possibilities for TVMT and social media (5-minute spots created in 2016 and currently on legislative website)
- c. 2003-2004, 2007-2008 – need to impress members to speak in positive manner about legislature
- d. 2007-2008 – decorum on floor and in committee hearings, providing public more access. Resulted in more audio/video ports in House and Senate for media, media training and handbook
- e. 2003-2004, 2005-2006 – increase public awareness on legislative issues – create a position to conduct and coordinate public outreach (resulted in approval of 1 FTE for LIO, hired in October 07)
- f. 2003-2004 – educate legislators on costs of drafting bills – since 2004, orientation covers process and staff resources involved

### **14. Permanent House and Senate staff**

- a. 2019 - Secretary of the Senate is working 1 day a week and as needed, and the majority has hired a part-time staff.
- b. 2017 and 2019 - Speaker continued to authorize Chief Clerk part-time throughout interim and in 2019 the majority also hired a part-time staffer.
- c. 2015 - President and Speaker authorized one staff member each to be present throughout interim.
- d. 2011-2012 – discussion regarding permanent staff for house and senate. LC bill introduced in 2015 (HB 251) was unsuccessful.
- e. If a staffer works over 6 months, they must be offered health insurance. It raises insurance and leave benefits questions from Dept. of Administration and has an impact on the budget.

### **15. Legislative Compensation**

- a. 2017-2018 - explore 3rd-party commission. There was also the idea that the concept of reducing the size of the legislature could be related and the Council would like a package of information to consider, including historical, legal, budgetary, and transition. (Council requested a bill draft to tie legislator compensation to a 5-state survey like Executive and Judicial Officers - bill did not pass.)
- b. 2015 - passed and implemented in July 2017, constituent services allowance, subsuming tech allowance
- c. 2015-2016 – State to provide computers/tablets instead of stipends, standardize the computers (no action – expanded stipend 2015)
- d. 2015-2016 - Studying legislator and legislative staff pay (Blue Ribbon Commission)

- e. 2011-2012 – recommend Governor/OBPP to split into separate bills, the pay plan and any changes to pay plan statutes (2013 - LC added section in pay plan on intent and how to implement pay plan)
- f. 2011-2012 – support use of various devices discussed. Included in legislator orientation, provide list of supported devices and contracted services for other devices and trouble-shooting.
- g. 2007-2008 – increase pay, stipend - reviewed past legislation (2007), other states' processes
- h. 2005-2006 - \$225,000 funding in 2007 session for laptops for legislators (IT allowance), continue Computer System Reserve Account (2008 – replaced vote systems, since used for SSR, and TVMT)

**16. Legislative space and related issues** (i.e. parking, media space)

- a. 2009-2010 – authorized space analysis, final recommendation for additional building and parking garage and resulted in a 2011 appropriation for HVAC improvement of the Capitol Building
- b. 2009-2010 – explored possibility of a parking shuttle (successfully implemented in 2015 and 2017 sessions in conjunction with Department of Administration and City of Helena/Capitol Transit)
- c. 2009-2010 – LC proposed and passed rule changes on media guidelines and process for media credentialing, and staff instituted media training.

**17. Legislator E-Mail**

2017-2018 - The OLIS staff conducted research to respond to legislator concerns regarding the mt.gov email system. The Legislative Council adopted a new email system by Zimbra and guidance for legislators. It provides archive capability, provides greater flexibility and safe passwords, and ability to link to other accounts. The Council adopted 5 years retention of emails following the end of a term.

**18. Session caucus costs**

- a. In 2013, tried to have separate postage budgets. In 2015 and 2017 reverted back to informal, separate budgets to allow more flexibility. In 2017, minority caucuses bought own bulk mailing permits.
- b. 2011-2012 – suggested separate budgets for leaders for projects (not same as leadership budget)
- c. 2011-2012 – expand legislator technology allowance to allow cell phones under allowance

**19. Legal review of bill drafts**

- a. Constitutional issues had always been noted in junque files. New process in 2013 – new use of protocol with requester, set format, and posting to web like a fiscal note.
- b. LC review in 2015 – no change for 2015, 2017 sessions, some committees include in bill folder with bill

**20. Session systems replacement process**

Appropriation vetoed in 2011 (HB 5), successful in 2013 (HB 10). SSR projects completed to date: MCA database conversion to XML, Annotations, Bill Drafting Request system, and modules completed. Codification is being used, entire process will be completed this fall, and improvements will be made. Bill drafting system is in design process and committee's system is being developed currently. Future projects may be chamber processes.

**21. Legislative Security**

2011-2012 – Since 2013, appropriation included in HB 2 to pay for full-time officer from Helena Police Department to be present in Capitol Building and on complex. Fund one officer for interim through

MOU with Department of Administration and ensures two officers in Capitol Building during session.

**22. Succession planning**

- a. 2009-2010 – monitored LSD succession planning and PA on ED
- b. 2007-2008 – no bench in research, legal, space issues. Added 2 FTE each to LSD and LFD for additional resources and ability to train prior to replacement. Discussed concept of pursuing code update/drafting process (in process since 2015). Training and manuals being developed to capture institutional knowledge. Legal opinions catalogued.
- c. 2005-2006 – develop plan for staff transition – established Retirement Reserve Account for leave liability (5-11-120, MCA, currently no balance).

**23. Revenue estimate**

2013 Rule adopted, Senate introduced SJ 2, 2015 Rule reverted to pre-2013 and process has remained since.

**24. Medicaid estimate**

2011-2012 – issue raised regarding joint revenue estimating process with EB.  
2013-2014 and 2015-2016 – LFD refining legislative estimate process.

**25. State Broadcasting (TVMT, now MPAN)**

2015-2016 - utilize broadcasting better than we are doing now. Blank spaces especially during interim. For amount of money, should be using more (LSD and MT PBS working on additional programming). Ideas: 5-minute clips from legislators (taken during orientation); FAQs segment of messages received on what's going on with Legislature and where find that information; giving caucus time to do information forum on term limits, Back to School, or historic perspectives on the Capitol building. Access (getting word out), financing options, video on navigating the Legislative Branch website, funding, service (cable) providers.