



EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE 67th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Edith (Edie) McClafferty
Shannon O'Brien
Daniel Salomon
Russel (Russ) Tempel

HOUSE MEMBERS

Fred Anderson
Moffie Funk
Ed Hill
Sara Novak
Linda Reksten
Tyson Running Wolf

COMMITTEE STAFF

Pad McCracken - Research Analyst
Bethany McDowell - Secretary
Laura Sankey Keip - Attorney

MINUTES LOG

March 14, 2022
Room 317
Helena, Montana

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video recording of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of the meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

Access to an electronic copy of these minutes and the audio or video recording is provided from the Legislative Branch home page at <https://leg.mt.gov>. From the home page, select the "Committees" drop down menu at the top, then select Administrative or Interim, and the appropriate committee. The written minutes log can be located by expanding the accordion menu for the date of the meeting. Links to the audio/video files can be located by selecting the Video/Audio button on the same page, then the "past/current recordings" button. From there, use the calendar to select the date of the meeting you wish to view/listen to. The written Minutes Log, along with links to the audio and video recordings, is listed by meeting date on the interim committee's web page. Each of the Exhibits is linked and can be viewed by clicking on the Exhibit of interest. All Exhibits are public information and may be printed. Please contact the Legislative Services Division at 406-444-3064 for more information.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Fred Anderson, Vice Chair (R)
Rep. Moffie Funk (D)
Rep. Ed Hill (R)
Rep. Sara Novak (D)
Sen. Shannon O'Brien (D)
Rep. Linda Reksten (R)
Sen. Daniel Salomon (R)
Sen. Russel (Russ) Tempel (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Sen. Edith (Edie) McClafferty (D)
Rep. Tyson Running Wolf (D)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Pad McCracken, Research Analyst
Bethany McDowell, Secretary
Laura Sankey Keip, Attorney

AGENDA [\(Attachment 1\)](#)

VISITORS' LIST [\(Attachment 2\)](#)

COMMITTEE ACTION

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

10:36:33 Rep. Fred Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:36 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

10:38:10 Mr. McCracken went over the agenda.

HJ 47 STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THE INCARCERATED

10:44:41 Mr. McCracken gave a review of HJ 47. [\(Exhibit 1\)](#)

Committee Questions/Discussion

10:51:54 Rep. Reksten asked Mr. McCracken about looking into mental health fitness for incarcerated individuals. Rep. Reksten continued by asking what happens to inmates who are more restricted. She suggested working on learning more about that.

10:53:46 Rep. Funk commented on the greatest challenge being the motivation for getting the HiSET in the women's prison.

10:55:26 Rep. Anderson commented on the possibility of using off-site facilities for training in the women's prison. He continued by stating that some of the programs could be done during unconventional hours. Rep. Anderson continued by commenting on the partnerships in Deer Lodge Prison.

10:58:18 Rep. Salomon commented on all of the prisons in the state needing/having opportunity to train and get ready to come out of prison as a contributing member of society.

Promising Practices in Other States

11:01:30 Mr. McCracken introduced presenters from other states who have a perspective on promising practices for inmate education.

11:03:59 Heather Gay, Director of Education for Michigan Department of Corrections, gave a presentation on the initiatives taken in the state of Michigan to help prepare inmates enter back into society with certain vocational and educational training.

11:13:39 Sean Addie, Director of Correctional Educational for the U.S. Department of Education, gave a presentation on post-secondary educational program incentives for inmates in the United States.

11:20:37 Traci Hightower, Director of Education for Oregon Department of Corrections, gave a presentation on her agency's plan for funding post-secondary education in the Oregon prison system. Ms. Hightower also presented the different programs that are part of the education initiatives for Oregon inmates.

Committee Questions

- 11:25:03 Rep. Funk asked Ms. Gay how her agency maintains equal access for women and men at the vocational village.
- 11:25:50 Ms. Gay responded to Rep. Funk by stating that there are multiple villages to provide equal opportunity for men and women.
- 11:26:15 Sen. Salomon asked Mr. Addie about good-time credit for completion of educational program.
- 11:26:42 Mr. Addie responded to Sen. Salomon by stating that good-time credit is calculated on a case-by-case basis, considering multiple factors regarding the case.
- 11:27:29 Sen. Salomon asked Ms. Gay about the types of infractions for inmates and what goes into giving them.
- 11:28:03 Ms. Gay responded by stating that there is a committee who reviews the infractions on a case-by-case basis.
- 11:28:48 Sen. Salomon asked Ms. Gay about the total number of inmates who are enrolled in their vocational training programs. He continued by asking about which degrees are available for the inmates.
- 11:31:22 Ms. Gay explained the DOC's opportunities for education and vocational programs and what the agency is doing to grow those opportunities.
- 11:33:24 Sen. Tempel asked Ms. Gay and Ms. Hightower about the total number of inmates who are in the facilities compared to the number of facilities for men and women.
- 11:34:55 Rep. Reksten asked Ms. Gay and Ms. Hightower how they determine mental fitness into their programs.
- 11:36:17 Ms. Gay responded to Rep. Reksten by explaining the variables in determining opportunities for inmates with mental illness. Ms. Hightower responded by stating that her agency focuses on behavior rather than mental health.
- 11:36:36 Rep. Anderson asked whether either Ms. Gay or Ms. Hightower had looked into expanding into outside facilities for educational purposes for the inmates.
- 11:37:24 Ms. Gay responded by stating that inmates do not leave the prison, but there are opportunities for educators and vendors to go into the prison and provide different educational and vocational training for them.
- 11:38:23 Ms. Hightower responded by stating that her agency takes the same approach as the Michigan DOC.
- 11:38:44 Rep. Funk asked about statistics on incentives and recidivism.
- 11:39:41 Mr. Addie responded by describing the benefits for inmates who participate in prison education programs.
- 11:42:20 Rep. Hill asked Ms. Gay about how inmates become students at the vocational village.
- 11:42:40 Ms. Gay responded by describing the process for inmates who enter into the village program.
- 11:44:33 Rep. Hill asked Ms. Gay about the length of the program.
- 11:46:55 Rep. Funk commented on the idea of having the goal for everyone to have a job once they leave prison. She asked Mr. Addie how many states have gotten rid of the box that states whether they have been incarcerated.
- 11:48:31 Rep. Anderson commented on the box within applications.

Public Comment

- 11:49:23 Steve Cape, Coalition for Safety and Justice

Committee Questions

- 11:58:50 Rep. Funk asked whether the committee is recommending a bill today.
- 11:59:28 Mr. McCracken answered.
- 11:59:47 Rep. Hill asked about negligent hiring.
- 12:00:11 Mr. Addie answered Rep. Hill by describing the liability for businesses hiring felons.
- 12:01:19 Rep. Reksten asked Ms. Gay about inmates who have sexual assault charges being trained for release back into society.
- 12:02:21 Ms. Gay responded to Rep. Reksten by stating that her agency does not look at the inmate's crime when reviewing their ability to participate in the vocational village program.
- 12:03:24 Rep. Reksten commented on fitting certain types of inmates back into society without inciting insults for the program.

LUNCH Reconvene at 1:02pm.

EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION UPDATES

National Perspective/Promising Practices

- 13:01:33 Mr. McCracken introduced Tara Kini, the State Policy Director for Learning Policy Institute.
- 13:01:54 Ms. Kini gave a presentation on the National Perspective regarding recruiting and retaining educators. ([Exhibit 2](#))

Committee Questions

- 13:16:30 Sen. O'Brien asked Ms. Kini what she believes would work best for recruitment and retention in Montana.
- 13:18:12 Ms. Kini answered Sen. O'Brien by stating that the teacher service scholarship program is a high-leverage strategy, and the committee should consider expanding it.
- 13:19:25 Rep. Funk commented on the distribution ability at the state level for certain district funds.
- 13:20:38 Ms. Kini responded to Rep. Funk by describing the process of distributing funds across the state for certain districts.
- 13:21:39 Sen. Tempel asked Ms. Kini about the increase in wages and whether it is tied to union or labor raises.
- 13:22:39 Rep. Reksten asked Ms. Kini about the emphasis on mentoring at the K-12 level.

K-12 Employee Health Benefits

- 13:25:19 Misty Giles, Director for the Department of Administration, and Amy Jenks, Administrator for the Department of Administration, gave a presentation on state health plans. ([Exhibit 3](#))

Committee Questions

- 13:42:59 Sen. Salomon commented on Ms. Jenks' presentation. Sen. Salomon asked Ms. Jenks about determining risks in implementing health care benefits for school employees.

- 13:44:46 Ms. Jenks answered Sen. Salomon by stating that she did not have many details, but it was a buy-in program.
- 13:45:00 Sen. Salomon responded to Ms. Jenks by stating that educators would have to follow the state sanctions and standards for health care benefits.
- 13:45:46 Ms. Jenks responded in agreement with Sen. Salomon.
- 13:46:14 Sen. Tempel asked Ms. Jenks if she compared prices of different cities' payments to the state regarding healthcare.

Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program

- 13:47:13 Mr. McCracken gave a presentation on expanding eligibility for the program. [\(Exhibit 4\)](#)

Committee Questions

- 13:52:00 Sen. Salomon asked Mr. McCracken whether there has ever been a problem with the national board certification running out of money. He followed by asking what the issues are with implementing certain eligibility factors.
- 13:53:25 Rep. Reksten commented on her experience as an educator and stated her disagreement with certain eligibility requirement removal.
- 13:54:57 Mr. McCracken responded with a clarification of the removal of eligibility requirements and the effects it would have on teachers.
- 13:55:34 Rep. Novak asked Mr. McCracken how things get reported to data collection.
- 13:57:09 Jay Philips, Chief Financial Officer at the Office of Public Instruction, answered Rep. Novak by stating the process of reporting and collecting data for benefit programs.
- 13:58:12 Rep. Funk asked Mr. McCracken whether the program has been advertised.
- 13:58:38 Mr. Philips answered Rep. Funk.
- 13:59:00 Sen. O'Brien commented on the challenges that some teachers are facing and suggested increasing opportunities for teachers in certain areas.
- 14:00:04 Rep. Novak commented on the promotion efforts for the QELAP.

HB 143

- 14:01:03 Paul Taylor, from the Office of Public Instruction, gave a presentation on increased incentives for educators across Montana. [\(Exhibit 5\)](#)

Committee Questions

- 14:05:00 Sen. Salomon commented on the fractional FTE documented within the handout. (See Exhibit 5) Sen. Salomon followed by asking Mr. Taylor about FTEs and partials.
- 14:07:21 Sen. O'Brien stated that the committee needed to continue to think through how best to serve students in districts where teachers cannot take advantage of the incentives.
- 14:08:35 Mr. McCracken asked about Seeley High School and its eligibility.
- 14:09:16 Mr. Taylor answered Mr. McCracken.

Teacher Residency Demonstration Projects

- 14:10:02 Sharyl Allen, Deputy Superintendent from the Office of Public Instruction, gave a presentation on Teacher Residency and Educator Redesign. [\(Exhibit 6\)](#)

Committee Questions

- 14:20:57 Rep. Funk asked Ms. Allen about the length and process of the program. Rep. Funk followed by asking what the student would need to meet the criteria to participate in these programs.
- 14:23:17 Ms. Allen answered Rep. Funk.
- 14:23:35 Rep. Reksten asked Ms. Allen to clarify Educator Preparation Programs (EPP). Rep. Reksten followed by asking whether the Office of Public Instruction would provide mentoring for student residents in these programs.
- 14:24:30 Ms. Allen responded by stating that the OPI implements a teacher leader to help student residents.
- 14:25:56 Sen. Salomon asked Ms. Allen for clarification on the process of applying for and defining details within the teacher residency projects.
- 14:32:09 Rep. Hill asked Ms. Allen what the average number of hours is that a teacher works in a year.

OPI PERSPECTIVE ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS OPERATING SCHOOLS OUTSIDE DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

- 14:34:33 Supt. Elsie Arntzen and Mr. Taylor gave a presentation on school districts who have adopted schools outside of their district. ([Exhibit 7](#))

Committee Questions/Discussion

- 14:41:17 Sen. Tempel asked Mr. Taylor about school attendance outside a certain district boundary.
- 14:42:58 Mr. Taylor responded to Sen. Tempel by clarifying the rules regarding out-of-district school attendance and inclusion.
- 14:44:13 Rep. Novak commented on the difficulty of having grey area in rules and legislation. Rep. Novak suggested keeping an eye on certain grey areas.
- 14:47:40 Supt. Arntzen responded to Rep. Novak by describing the counties who are impacted.

OPI UPDATE

- 14:49:18 Supt. Arntzen gave an update on the work that the OPI has been doing to improve teacher residency and retention.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TREATMENT UPDATES

- 14:53:50 Mr. Phillips gave an update on CSCT claim activity. ([Exhibit 8](#))
- 14:56:55 Megan Peel, Bureau Chief of Children's Mental Health Bureau from the Department of Human Health and Mental Services, gave an update on OPI work and partnerships.

Committee Questions

- 14:58:52 Sen. O'Brien asked Ms. Peel to share the difference between the claims from last year or the year before, and this year.
- 14:59:48 Rep. Reksten asked Ms. Peel about the number of school districts that were participating in the program.
- 15:01:14 Ms. Peel responded to Rep. Reksten by stating that each school chooses whether they want to participate in the CSCT program.
- 15:01:54 Rep. Reksten asked Ms. Peel what was being done about mental health problems in Montana youth.

- 15:02:46 Ms. Peel responded to Rep. Reksten by describing some of the initiatives being taken to improve mental health in students.
- 15:04:12 Rep. Reksten asked for an overview of the youth behavior survey and the work that OPI is doing to work with that data.
- 15:04:37 Rep. Funk asked Ms. Peel and Mr. Philips about districts who are unable to file claims with the CSCT.
- 15:07:10 Mr. Philips answered by describing the process of reviewing claims for CSCT.

SCHOOL FOOD FOLLOW-UP

- 15:07:33 Gene Hermanson, Human and Communities Service Administrator with DPHHS, gave an update on the school food funding program.

Committee Questions

- 15:12:37 Rep. Funk asked Mr. Hermanson why DPHHS is not submitting for the funds to feed students in school.
- 15:13:50 Mr. Hermanson responded to Rep. Funk by describing the programs that are offered to students who are food-insecure, as well as programs that distribute funding to low-income households. Mr. Hermanson continued by describing the burden on the schools in getting the reports to DPHHS.
- 15:18:15 Rep. Funk voiced her concern for DPHHS's lack of a backup plan.
- 15:18:39 OPI and DPHHS gave an update on implementing Medicaid for students who need it and the process for acquiring the data to distribute the aid.

BREAK

- 15:21:22 BREAK
- 15:31:31 Reconvene at 15:31:31

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING PANEL ON PROGRESS MADE BY DISTRICT GRANTEES

- 15:33:02 Chrystal Smith, Transformational Learning Program Manager at OPI, gave introductions for the presenters and the implementation of the Transformational Learning Grant and the Work Experience Pathway at their schools. [\(Exhibit 9\)](#)
- 15:33:25 Heather Jarrett, Superintendent for Reed Point Schools, gave a presentation on the implementation of the Transformational Learning Grant at Reed Point Schools as well as goals for students at the schools.
- 15:43:36 Don Christman, Assistant Superintendent at Lockwood School District, gave a presentation on the implementation of the Transformational Learning Grant in Lockwood schools.
- 15:47:38 Heather Hoyer, Assistant Superintendent for Great Falls Public Schools, gave a presentation on the implementation of the Transformational Learning Grant at Great Falls Public Schools. [\(Exhibit 10\)](#)
- 15:53:53 Tami O'Neill, assistant principal at Great Falls High School, continued the presentation regarding Great Falls Public Schools and introducing students into the work force. (See Exhibit 10)
- 16:02:52 Laurie Barron, Superintendent for Evergreen School District, gave a presentation on how Evergreen Schools have implemented the Transformational Learning Grant. [\(Exhibit 11\)](#)

Committee Questions

- 16:15:29 Rep. Reksten asked the presenters how they plan to sustain growth in their programs when they do not have the funding.
- 16:16:04 Ms. Hoyer responded to Rep. Reksten by stating that her school district has focused on creating sustainable education that will carry the students when the funding has maxed out.
- 16:16:28 Ms. Barron responded to Rep. Reksten by stating that they have invested in their teachers first so they can use what the teachers learn to better help the students.
- 16:17:29 Ms. O'Neill responded to Rep. Reksten by stating that her idea of sustaining programs involves the communities that the schools are in.
- 16:18:06 Sen. Salomon asked Ms. O'Neill if Great Falls students move further in the program based on social promotion. He followed his question by commenting on the engagement of kids in the workforce.
- 16:21:47 Rep. Reksten asked the presenters how their districts plan to share their success in these programs with other districts.
- 16:22:30 Ms. Barron answered Rep. Reksten by stating that the Evergreen School District hosted a meeting that included other districts where they shared their success in these programs.

TRIBAL COMPUTER PROGRAMMING BOOST SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

- 16:24:52 Carrie Gopher, Director of American Indian Student Achievement at OPI, gave a presentation on the implementation and success of the Tribal Computer Programming Boost Scholarship Program (HB 644). ([Exhibit 12](#))

Committee Questions

- 16:32:37 Sen. O'Brien asked Ms. Gopher if she had a date to have students prepared by to participate in the program.
- 16:33:41 Erin Weisgerber, Department of Labor and Industry, responded to Sen. O'Brien by giving a presentation on a pilot program, a program for teachers, and their goals and start dates.
- 16:37:09 Sen. O'Brien asked for clarification regarding the different programs.
- 16:37:31 Rep. Hill asked Ms. Gopher how many applicants have applied to her program. He followed by asking how many applicants the OPI is hoping for.

CHAPTER 55 UPDATE

- 16:39:37 Julie Murgel, Chief Operating Officer at the OPI, gave an update on Ch. 55 and the Quality School Task Force and the Negotiated Rule Committee that have been organized to oversee the goals and implementation of Ch. 55. ([Exhibit 13](#))

Committee Questions

- 16:45:19 Rep. Funk asked Dr. Murgel when the first presentation of the Ch. 55 negotiations will be.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW/LITIGATION UPDATE

- 16:48:41 Laura Sankey Keip, Committee Attorney, reviewed the Administrative Rule for the committee. She continued by updating the committee on litigation issues.

Committee Questions/Discussion

- 16:52:46 Rep. Reksten asked Ms. Sankey Keip what the litigation issues were regarding education.
- 16:53:11 Ms. Sankey Keip responded to Rep. Reksten by giving information regarding specific House and Senate Bills.

Public Comment on any topic within the committee's jurisdiction

- 16:54:27 Dennis Parman, Montana Rural Education Association
- 16:58:56 Diane Fladmo, Montana Federation of Public Employees
- 17:02:21 Bob Story, Montana Taxpayers Association ([Exhibit 14](#))
- 17:10:11 Kirk Miller, School Administrators of Montana
- 17:15:19 Jane Hamman, Board of Public Education
- 17:16:37 Wren Greaney, Montana Food Bank Network, Zoom
- 17:20:32 Abigail St. Lawrence, Montana Association for Gifted and Talented Education and Montana Speech-Language and Hearing Association, Zoom
- 17:22:46 Kelsey Brown, Zoom ([Exhibit 15](#))

Review Tuesday Agenda and Next Meeting in May

- 17:27:52 Mr. McCracken went over the agenda for Tuesday as well as the upcoming meetings in Havre, MT.
- 17:28:30 Sen. Tempel commented on the upcoming meeting in Havre and requested total number of names of those attending.
- 17:31:28 Rep. Funk asked if Mr. McCracken can get some figures from OPI and DPHHS regarding the P-EBT and Medicaid Direct Certification for Free and Reduced Lunch.

RECESS

ADJOURNMENT

- 17:33:46 Rep. Anderson adjourned the meeting at 17:33:46.