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Education Interim Committee

67th Montana Legislature

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TO: Education Interim Committee
FROM: Pad McCracken, Committee Staff
RE: EDIC May Work Session Topics
DATE: May 10, 2022

It's that time of the interim when the committee needs to start determining what questions remain to ask about the topics you've explored, and what, if anything, the committee wants to recommend/report to the 68th Legislature. This memo is intended to help facilitate your consideration of those two questions during a work session at your May 18 meeting. This will allow staff to prepare the June 14 agenda, research and/or arrange speakers to address your questions, and prepare any preliminary bill drafts for your consideration and public comment. The below is not a complete list of all possible topics/questions—it is just intended to stimulate discussion.

1. **HJ 47 – study of education programs for the incarcerated** ([study webpage](#))

- a) Does the committee want to explore prisoner participation incentives, like "good time" more? And/or learn about parole process and how educational achievement is factored in?
- b) What else does the committee need to learn about?
- c) What ideas does the committee have for any "findings and recommendations"?

2. **Recruitment & Retention** (materials under "Studies/Topics" tab of [EDIC webpage](#))

- a) K-12 Employee Health Benefits
 - i. Pursue bringing K-12 employees into state employee plan?
 - ii. Pursue creating some sort of incentive (other than a permissive property tax levy) for districts to join/remain in a larger trust, similar to [LC 2080](#)?
 - iii. What other aspects of this topic does the committee want to consider? (Idaho just passed legislation encouraging school districts to join state plan; WA created a statewide K-12 plan a few years ago; CA has a very successful district-created pool—SISC)
 - iv. Recommend an interim study resolution or special task force to explore options in advance of 2025-2026 School Funding Interim Commission? (See [SB 69](#) from 2017)

- b) QELAP – is the committee interested in revising the eligibility requirements and/or eliminating the prorate?

School districts operating inside other school districts ([staff memo](#) from March)

Does the committee want to address this issue legislatively through a committee bill?

Truancy/compulsory age

In March, [Kelsey Brown brought to your attention](#) that Montana's truancy laws being tied to the compulsory attendance age of 7, means that there is little ability to address poor attendance of enrolled kindergarteners and first graders. She pointed out two potential fixes: (1) lowering the compulsory age to 6 or (2) basing our truancy laws on enrollment in addition to compulsory age. Is the committee interested in looking at draft legislation addressing this?

Preschool/Kindergarten Readiness (materials under "Studies/Topics" tab of [EDIC webpage](#))

If the committee wants to continue this conversation in June, what aspect of the conversation are you interested in pursuing? As a reminder, the Education Interim Budget committee asked OPI for information about districts enrolling 4-year-olds in "early kindergarten" programs under the exceptional circumstances provision of [20-5-101\(3\)](#) and is also exploring ways of providing state funding for special education preschoolers. One possibility if you are interested is to invite the researchers of the Vanderbilt study on the effects of statewide pre-k in Tennessee; NCSL recently hosted a webinar with the researchers, and it was thought provoking.

Transformational Learning (materials under "Studies/Topics" tab of [EDIC webpage](#))

1. Is the committee interested in looking at draft legislation revising the program from a lottery to a competitive grant process?
2. Is the committee interested in looking at draft legislation providing a more complete definition of "proficiency-based learning"?