



The Treasure State
MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 4, 2024

The Honorable Elsie Arntzen
Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction
Office of Public Instruction
1227 11th Avenue, Helena, MT 59601

via electronic delivery

Dear Superintendent Arntzen,

We are disappointed to learn from your chief legal counsel that you have declined an invitation to appear before the Education Interim Budget Committee on March 13, 2024, to help resolve a dispute regarding the OPI Database Modernization Project. This issue arose during the committee's meeting on December 13, 2023, and concerns whether the limitations on data collection and sharing upon which you apparently insist will diminish the effectiveness of this multimillion-dollar project, thus negatively impacting schools and students across the state as well as limiting the ability of those state agencies responsible for education and workforce programs to assess the quality and effectiveness of programs under their purview.

Although we were encouraged to find that OPI has since provided the project's contractor an updated and more detailed data dictionary/data element set, public statements you have made subsequent to the December meeting cause us to question your commitment to delivery of a project that meets requirements set forth in law last legislative session. The invitation for you to appear before the committee stands so that this matter might be productively resolved.

Turning now to next week's joint meeting of the Education Interim Committee and the Education Interim Budget Committee, we ask that you appear in person at 8:15 a.m. on March 12, 2024, to participate in a discussion of several recently enacted bills, including HB 203, HB 338, HB 352, and HB 549. Concerns have been raised as to whether legislative intent is being met in each case, and in some cases there are widespread concerns regarding OPI's implementation of these programs. This meeting will provide you an opportunity to clarify the situation. Please respond to this invitation no later than March 6, 2024.

Sincerely,

/s/ Dan Salomon

Senator Dan Salomon
Chairman, Education Interim Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David F. Bedey".

Representative David Bedey
Chairman, Education Interim Budget Committee