

1 \*\*\*\* BILL NO. \*\*\*\*  
2 INTRODUCED BY \*\*\*\*  
3 BY REQUEST OF THE \*\*\*\*  
4

5 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING THE PROCESS FOR ADOPTION OF SCHOOL  
6 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS; INCLUDING A REQUIREMENT THAT ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENTS  
7 FOR CERTAIN ACCREDITATION STANDARDS INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE TIME REQUIRED FOR  
8 IMPLEMENTATION; REASSIGNING THE REVIEW OF ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENTS TO  
9 LEGISLATIVE BUDGET COMMITTEES; REQUIRING THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO REQUEST  
10 THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION TO SEEK FUNDING FOR STANDARDS DETERMINED  
11 DURING THE LEGISLATIVE INTERIM TO REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL EXPENDITURES; AMENDING  
12 SECTION 20-7-101, MCA; PROVIDING EFFECTIVE DATES; PROVIDING A TERMINATION DATE."

13  
14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:  
15

16 **Section 1.** Section 20-7-101, MCA, is amended to read:

17 **"20-7-101. ~~Standards of accreditation~~ Accreditation standards -- process for adoption.** (1)  
18 ~~Standards of accreditation~~ (a) Accreditation standards, as defined in 20-1-101, for all schools must be adopted  
19 by the board of public education upon the recommendations of the superintendent of public instruction. The  
20 superintendent shall develop recommendations in accordance with subsection (2). ~~The~~ For an accreditation  
21 standard that requires implementation by school districts, the recommendations presented to the board must  
22 include an economic impact statement, as described in 2-4-405, prepared in consultation with the negotiated  
23 rulemaking committee under subsection (2).

24 (b) For accreditation standards addressing academic requirements, program area standards, or  
25 content and performance standards, the economic impact statement under subsection (1)(a) must include an  
26 analysis of the ability of school districts to implement the standard within existing resources, including time. The  
27 intent of this subsection (1)(b) is to ensure that school districts have the capacity to adhere to required  
28 accreditation standards within a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools.

1 (2) The accreditation standards recommended by the superintendent of public instruction must be  
2 developed through the negotiated rulemaking process under Title 2, chapter 5, part 1. The superintendent may  
3 form a negotiated rulemaking committee for accreditation standards to consider multiple proposals. The  
4 negotiated rulemaking committee may not exist for longer than 2 years. The committee must represent the  
5 diverse circumstances of schools of all sizes across the state and must include representatives from the  
6 following groups:

- 7 (a) school district trustees;
- 8 (b) school administrators;
- 9 (c) teachers;
- 10 (d) school business officials;
- 11 (e) parents; and
- 12 (f) taxpayers.

13 (3) Prior to adoption or amendment of any accreditation standard, the board shall submit each  
14 proposal, including the economic impact statement required under subsection (1), to:

- 15 (a) during a regular legislative session, the joint appropriations subcommittee for education; or
- 16 (b) during the legislative interim, the education interim budget committee, established in 5-12-501, for  
17 review at least 1 month in advance of a scheduled committee meeting. Information provided during an interim  
18 must be provided to the legislature in accordance with 5-11-210.

19 (4) Unless the expenditures by school districts required under the proposal are determined by the  
20 education interim appropriate committee under subsection (3) to be insubstantial expenditures that can be  
21 readily absorbed into the budgets of existing district programs, the board may not implement the standard until  
22 July 1 following:

- 23 (a) under subsection (3)(a), the current legislative session; or
- 24 (b) under subsection (3)(b), the next regular legislative session and shall request the superintendent  
25 of public instruction include a request in the superintendent's budget that the same legislature fund  
26 implementation of the proposed standard.

27 (5) The provisions of this section may not be construed to reduce or limit the authority of the  
28 education interim committee to review administrative rules, including accreditation standards, within its

1 jurisdiction pursuant to 5-5-215.

2 ~~(5)(6)~~ Standards for the retention of school records must be as provided in 20-1-212."

3

4 **Section 2.** Section 20-7-101, MCA, is amended to read:

5 **"20-7-101. ~~Standards of accreditation.~~ Accreditation standards -- process for adoption.** (1)

6 ~~Standards of accreditation (a) Accreditation standards, as defined in 20-1-101,~~ for all schools must be adopted

7 by the board of public education upon the recommendations of the superintendent of public instruction. The

8 superintendent shall develop recommendations in accordance with subsection (2). ~~The~~ For an accreditation

9 standard that requires implementation by school districts, the recommendations presented to the board must

10 include an economic impact statement, as described in 2-4-405, prepared in consultation with the negotiated

11 rulemaking committee under subsection (2).

12 (b) For accreditation standards addressing academic requirements, program area standards, or

13 content and performance standards, the economic impact statement under subsection (1)(a) must include an

14 analysis of the ability of school districts to implement the standard within existing resources, including time. The

15 intent of this subsection (1)(b) is to ensure that school districts have the capacity to adhere to required

16 accreditation standards within a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools.

17 (2) The accreditation standards recommended by the superintendent of public instruction must be

18 developed through the negotiated rulemaking process under Title 2, chapter 5, part 1. The superintendent may

19 form a negotiated rulemaking committee for accreditation standards to consider multiple proposals. The

20 negotiated rulemaking committee may not exist for longer than 2 years. The committee must represent the

21 diverse circumstances of schools of all sizes across the state and must include representatives from the

22 following groups:

23 (a) school district trustees;

24 (b) school administrators;

25 (c) teachers;

26 (d) school business officials;

27 (e) parents; and

28 (f) taxpayers.

1 (3) Prior to adoption or amendment of any accreditation standard, the board shall submit each  
2 proposal, including the economic impact statement required under subsection (1), to:  
3 (a) during a regular legislative session, the joint appropriations subcommittee for education; or  
4 (b) during the legislative interim, the ~~education interim legislative finance~~ committee, established in 5-  
5 12-201, for review at least 1 month in advance of a scheduled committee meeting. Information provided during  
6 an interim must be provided to the legislature in accordance with 5-11-210.

7 (4) Unless the expenditures by school districts required under the proposal are determined by the  
8 education interim appropriate committee under subsection (3) to be insubstantial expenditures that can be  
9 readily absorbed into the budgets of existing district programs, the board may not implement the standard until  
10 July 1 following:

11 (a) under subsection (3)(a), the current legislative session; or  
12 (b) under subsection (3)(b), the next regular legislative session and shall request the superintendent  
13 of public instruction include a request in the superintendent's budget that the same legislature fund  
14 implementation of the proposed standard.

15 (5) The provisions of this section may not be construed to reduce or limit the authority of the  
16 education interim committee to review administrative rules, including accreditation standards, within its  
17 jurisdiction pursuant to 5-5-215.

18 ~~(5)(6)~~ Standards for the retention of school records must be as provided in 20-1-212."  
19

20 NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective dates. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), [this act] is  
21 effective on passage and approval.

22 (2) [Section 2] is effective January 1, 2026.  
23

24 NEW SECTION. Section 4. Termination. [Section 1] terminates December 31, 2025.  
25

- END -