



SCHOOL FUNDING INTERIM COMMISSION

69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Becky Beard
Forrest Mandeville
Jacinda Morigeau
Sara Novak
Sue Vinton
Jonathan Windy Boy

HOUSE MEMBERS

Brad Barker
David Bedey
Lee Deming
Eric Matthews
Luke Muszkiewicz
Melissa Romano
Jolanda Songer

NON-LEGISLATOR MEMBERS

Tom Burnett
Clayton Christian
Rachel Green
Susie Hedalen
Martha Potter
Matt Schreiber
Tim Tharp
Mike Waterman

COMMITTEE STAFF

Pad McCracken – Lead Staff
Julia Pattin - Fiscal Staff
Laura Sankey Keip – Legal Staff
Katharine Johnson - Fiscal Staff
Rebecca Brown - Research Staff
Jolanda Songer - Secretary

MINUTES LOG

April 08, 2026
Room 317 & Zoom
Helena, Montana

Minutes logs provide an annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of a meeting and the time at which a topic is presented or discussed, a motion made, or a vote taken. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion in the video. The minutes log is only a guide to the video of the meeting. The official record of the meeting is the video. Minutes logs can be accessed at <https://committees.legmt.gov> and videos can be accessed at <https://media.legmt.gov>.

For more information, please contact:

The Legislative Services Division at 406-444-3064 for policy committees;
The Legislative Fiscal Division at 406-444-2986 for fiscal committees; or
The Legislative Audit Division at 406-444-3122 for the Legislative Audit Committee.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. David Bedey, Presiding Officer (R)
Rep. Eric Matthews, Vice Presiding Officer (D)
Rep. Brad Barker (R)
Sen. Becky Beard (R)
Rep. Lee Deming (R)
Sen. Forrest Mandeville (R)
Sen. Jacinda Morigeau (D)
Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz (D)
Sen. Sara Novak (D)
Martha Potter - Via Zoom
Rep. Melissa Romano (D)
Matt Schreiber
Tim Tharp
Sen. Sue Vinton (R) – Via Zoom
Mike Waterman

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Tom Burnett
Clayton Christian
Rachel Green
Susie Hedalen
Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy (D)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

MONTANA LEGISLATIVE BRANCH MANAGEMENT: JERRY HOWE, LEGISLATIVE SERVICES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR • ANGUS MACIVER, LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR • AMY CARLSON, LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ANALYST • TODD EVERTS, LEGAL SERVICES DIRECTOR • DALE GOW, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER • RACHEL WEISS, RESEARCH DIRECTOR • ANGIE CARTER, FINANCIAL OFFICE DIRECTOR • KELLY DASILVA HR DIRECTOR

STAFF PRESENT:

Pad McCracken, Lead Staff
Julia Pattin, Fiscal Staff
Katharine Johnson, Fiscal Staff
Rebecca Brown, Research Staff
Jolanda Songer, Secretary

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

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

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

08:01:03 Presiding Officer David Bedey called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

08:01:40 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL DISTRICTS STUDY UPDATE AND OPTIONS FOR THE SCHOOL FUNDING INTERIM COMMISSION

Agenda, Timeline, and Data Collection Update

08:02:27 Justin Silverstein, Co-CEO, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA)
Consulting

[EXHIBIT 11](#)

Descriptive Statistics

08:10:37 Dr. Amanda Brown, Vice President, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Primary Performance Data

08:14:22 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

08:17:49 Sen. Sara Novak
08:19:18 Commissioner Tom Burnett joined the meeting via Zoom.
08:19:19 Presiding Officer David Bedey
08:20:03 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
08:20:15 Supt. Susie Hedalen joined the meeting via Zoom.

Primary Performance Data - Continued

08:20:38 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

08:22:41 Commissioner Martha Potter
08:23:07 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
08:24:47 Commissioner Matt Schrieber
08:24:57 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
08:26:04 Presiding Officer David Bedey
08:28:00 Commissioner Mike Waterman
08:28:44 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Primary Performance Data - Continued

08:29:28 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

08:33:07 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
08:33:14 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

Secondary Performance Data

08:33:36 Dr. Amanda Brown, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

08:35:16 Presiding Officer David Bedey
08:35:29 Dr. Amanda Brown, APA Consulting
08:36:09 Rep. Lee Deming
08:36:20 Dr. Amanda Brown, APA Consulting
08:36:25 Sen. Sara Novak
08:37:17 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
08:38:18 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

Secondary Performance Data - Continued

08:40:29 Dr. Amanda Brown, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

08:42:10 Sen. Forrest Mandeville
08:43:00 Dr. Amanda Brown, APA Consulting
08:43:55 Justin Silverstien, APA Consulting
08:45:19 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Secondary Performance Data - Continued

- 08:46:46 Dr. Amanda Brown, APA consulting
(See Exhibit 11)
- 08:47:45 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

- 08:48:31 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
- 08:48:58 Commissioner Martha Potter
- 08:49:55 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

Overview of Performance Criteria Selection Analysis

- 08:51:20 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

- 09:01:25 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
- 09:02:03 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

Overview of Performance Criteria Selection Analysis

- 09:03:01 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

- 09:07:32 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
- 09:07:58 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

Overview of Performance Criteria Selection Analysis - Continued

- 09:09:31 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

- 09:13:25 Presiding Officer David Bedey
- 09:14:01 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
- 09:15:38 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
- 09:16:14 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
- 09:16:57 Presiding Officer David Bedey
- 09:17:15 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

Overview of Performance Criteria Selection Analysis - Continued

- 09:19:22 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Demographics of "Successful Districts"

09:20:23 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

APA Recommendations

09:25:28 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

09:26:34 Sen. Becky Beard
09:27:01 Sen. Forrest Mandeville
09:28:21 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
09:29:36 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
09:30:55 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
09:31:31 Presiding Officer David Bedey
09:32:49 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
09:34:01 Commissioner Martha Potter
09:36:04 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

Commission Discussion - Continued

09:36:49 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
(See Exhibit 11)

Commission Questions / Discussion

09:37:57 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
09:39:10 Sen. Becky Beard
09:39:43 Justin Silverstine, APA Consulting
09:41:17 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews
09:41:42 Presiding Officer David Bedey
09:42:04 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
09:43:56 Commissioner Mike Waterman
09:45:28 Sen. Becky Beard
09:46:31 Presiding Officer David Bedey
09:47:31 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
09:47:45 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
09:48:04 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz
09:49:19 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
09:51:00 Rep. Brad Barker
09:52:09 Supt. Susie Hedalen

09:52:58 Commissioner Tim Tharp
09:54:31 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

09:56:44 **Recessed**

10:06:54 **Reconvened**

K-12 FUNDING FOLLOW-UPS
Special Education

10:07:01 Julia Pattin, Fiscal Staff, Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD)
[\(See Exhibit 8\)](#)

10:09:30 Kate Johnson, Fiscal Staff, LFD
(See Exhibit 8)

10:15:30 Julia Pattin, LFD
(See Exhibit 8)

Commission Questions / Discussion

10:16:30 Commissioner Matt Schreiber

10:17:19 Presiding Officer David Bedey

10:17:38 Julia Pattin, LFD

10:18:15 Sen. Sara Novak

10:19:12 Commissioner Matt Schreiber

10:20:03 Presiding Officer David Bedey

10:20:38 Commissioner Martha Potter

10:20:58 Julia Pattin, LFD

10:21:34 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Special Education - Continued

10:22:56 Julia Pattin, LFD
(See Exhibit 8)

Commission Questions / Discussion

10:26:26 Commissioner Mike Waterman

10:27:37 Presiding Officer David Bedey

10:29:15 Commissioner Matt Schreiber

10:31:00 Presiding Officer David Bedey

COALITION OF ADVOCATES FOR MONTANA PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CAMPS) SCHOOL FUNDING PROPOSAL

10:33:21 Doug Reisig, Executive Director, Montana Quality Education Coalition (MQEC)

10:33:35 Shelley Turner, Executive Director, Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO)

10:33:47 Larry Crowder, Executive Director, Montana Rural Education Association (MREA)
10:34:01 Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA)
10:34:13 Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana (SAM)
10:34:57 Doug Reisig, MQEC
10:37:43 Lance Melton, MTSBA
[EXHIBIT 12](#)
[EXHIBIT 13](#)
[EXHIBIT 14](#)
10:49:51 Rob Watson, SAM
10:56:35 Shelley Turner, MASBO
11:01:36 Larry Crowder, MREA

Commission Questions / Discussion

11:05:56 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
11:08:01 Lance Melton, MTSBA
11:09:52 Sen. Sue Vinton
11:10:26 Shelley Turner, MASBO
11:12:24 Doug Reisig, MQEC
11:13:19 Lance Melton, MTSBA
11:16:13 Presiding Officer David Bedey
11:16:49 Lance Melton, MTSBA
11:19:07 Sen. Forrest Mandeville
11:20:15 Lance Melton, MTSBA
11:26:52 Doug Reisig, MQEC
11:28:32 Presiding Officer David Bedey
11:29:04 Lance Melton MTSBA
11:35:05 Sen. Becky Beard
11:38:44 Presiding Officer David Bedey
11:38:54 Lance Melton, MTSBA
11:41:16 Supt. Susie Hedalen
11:41:44 Shelley Turner, MASBO
11:46:10 Lance Melton, MTSBA
11:48:10 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
11:53:37 Lance Melton, MTSBA
12:00:17 Presiding Officer David Bedey
12:04:22 Commissioner Mike Waterman
12:04:36 Lance Melton, MTSBA
12:05:19 Sen. Luke Muszkiewicz
12:06:42 Lance Melton, MTSBA

12:08:53 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews
12:10:23 Lance Melton, MTSBA
12:11:47 Sen. Becky Beard
12:12:10 Shelley Turner, MASBO
12:14:33 Presiding Officer David Bedey
12:15:42 Lance Melton, MTSBA

Public Comment

12:16:33 Moffie Funk
12:18:21 Bob Story, Montana Taxpayers Association
12:26:59 Dava Murray
12:30:35 Gary Lusin, Bozeman Trustee

12:34:00 **Recessed**
13:31:47 **Reconvened**

COMMISSION WORK SESSION ON POTENTIAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Review of Staff Memo

13:31:53 Presiding Officer David Bedey directed the committee to review the memo on potential findings and recommendations.

[EXHIBIT 15](#)

Commission Questions / Discussion

13:40:31 Sen. Sue Vinton
13:41:19 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Review of Staff Memo - Continued

13:42:10 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
(See Exhibit 15)

Public Comment

14:03:36 Karen Moses
14:12:02 Jenny Murnane Butcher, Deputy Director, Montanans Organized for Education

Review of Staff Memo - Continued

Inflationary Adjustments

14:13:39 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz
14:14:19 Pad McCracken, LSD

School Facilities

14:16:31 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz

14:18:57 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
14:23:16 Sen. Becky Beard
14:24:14 Presiding Officer David Bedey
14:25:29 Supt. Susie Hedalen
14:26:21 Rep. Brad Barker
14:27:39 Presiding Officer David Bedey
14:28:44 Supt. Susie Hedalen
14:30:22 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
14:31:23 Rep. Brad Barker
14:32:02 Commissioner Mike Waterman
14:33:13 Sen. Becky Beard
14:34:26 Pad McCracken, LSD
14:35:07 Julia Pattin, Fiscal Staff, Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD)
14:37:50 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz
14:38:32 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
14:40:45 Sen. Becky Beard
14:42:23 Commissioner Mike Waterman
14:42:44 Commissioner Martha Potter
14:45:46 Commissioner Tim Tharp
14:48:26 Presiding Officer David Bedey
14:51:28 Sen. Becky Beard
14:52:07 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
14:53:15 Presiding Officer David Bedey
14:53:27 Supt. Susie Hedalen
14:56:53 Commissioner Martha Potter
15:00:38 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Inflation

15:01:44 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Commission Questions / Discussion

15:03:02 Commissioner Matt Schreiber

Constitutional Players

15:04:14 Sen. Becky Beard
15:04:30 Presiding Officer David Bedey
15:10:22 Sen. Sara Novak
15:11:39 Dr. Amanda Brown, Vice President, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA)
Consulting
15:12:05 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews

15:12:35 Presiding Officer David Bedey
15:12:57 Commissioner Tim Tharp
15:14:45 Commissioner Mike Waterman

School Funding Interim Commission Statute

15:15:29 Presiding Officer David Bedey
15:16:07 Pad McCracken, LSD

Professional Development

15:17:39 Commissioner Mike Waterman
15:21:10 Commissioner Tim Tharp
15:21:56 Presiding Officer David Bedey
15:23:28 Sen. Becky Beard
15:24:15 Sen. Sara Novak

Special Education

15:25:27 Presiding Officer David Bedey
15:27:26 Commissioner Mike Waterman
15:28:34 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
15:31:19 Pad McCracken, LSD
15:31:28 Justin Silverstein, Co-CEO, APA Consulting
15:32:30 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
15:33:32 Sen. Sara Novak
15:36:11 Supt. Susie Hedalen

Support for Small, Isolated Schools and Districts

15:37:59 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Administrative Burden

15:38:57 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Formula Alignment with the Definition of "Basic System of Free Quality Schools"

15:39:31 Presiding Officer David Bedey
15:41:12 Sen. Becky Beard
15:41:50 Presiding Officer David Bedey
15:42:49 Supt. Susie Hedalen

At-Risk Students & De-Coupling State Funding from Federal

15:44:23 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Student Mental Health

15:45:17 Presiding Officer David Bedey
15:46:46 Commissioner Tim Tharp
15:48:20 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews
15:49:41 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
15:50:51 Commissioner Mike Waterman
15:51:43 Presiding Officer David Bedey
15:51:57 Sen. Sara Novak

Regional Cost Differentials

15:54:39 Presiding Officer David Bedey
15:55:22 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting
15:57:45 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews
15:59:12 Commissioner Martha Potter
16:01:43 Dr. Amanda Brown, APA Consulting
16:02:47 Rep. Brad Barker
16:04:40 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
16:05:43 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews

Voted Levies

16:07:44 Presiding Officer David Bedey
16:08:23 Commissioner Matt Schreiber
16:09:35 Sen. Sue Vinton
16:10:27 Rep. Brad Barker
16:10:53 Pad McCracken, LSD
16:11:09 Julia Pattin, Fiscal Staff, Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD)
16:13:17 Presiding Officer David Bedey
16:13:36 Rep. Brad Barker
16:15:27 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz
16:16:28 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Basic and Per-Average Number Belonging (ANB) Entitlements

16:16:43 Presiding Officer David Bedey

ANB as a Proxy for Costs in Montana Formulas

16:16:58 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Accentuate the Positive; Eliminate the Negative

16:18:05 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Findings and Recs Driven by the Successful School District Study

16:18:21 Presiding Officer David Bedey

Standardized Testing for Targeted Intervention Programs

16:18:29 Presiding Officer David Bedey

16:18:53 Pad McCracken, LSD

Funding for Support for Class 7 Licensees for Curriculum Development

16:20:07 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews (Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy)

Indian Ed for All Funding

16:20:36 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews (Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy)

16:21:16 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau

16:22:14 Presiding Officer David Bedey

16:24:16 Sen. Becky Beard

16:24:36 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews

Recruitment and Retention

16:25:08 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews

16:27:11 Commissioner Matt Schreiber

FINAL PUBLIC COMMENT

16:31:42 Kim Popham, Public Policy & Research Director, Montana Federation of Public Employees

[EXHIBIT 16](#)

Wrap-Up

16:40:07 Presiding Officer David Bedey

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 16:40:37