



## 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

#### PUBLIC 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

February 12, 2026  
Day 2 - Capitol Room 317 & Zoom  
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. David Bedey, Presiding Officer (R)  
Rep. Eric Matthews, Vice Presiding Officer (D)  
Sen. Becky Beard (R)  
Tom Burnett  
Rep. Lee Deming (R)  
Sen. Forrest Mandeville (R)  
Sen. Jacinda Morigeau (D)  
Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz (D)  
Sen. Sara Novak (D)  
Martha Potter  
Rep. Melissa Romano (D)  
Matt Schreiber  
Tim Tharp  
Sen. Sue Vinton (R)  
Mike Waterman

#### MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Rep. Brad Barker (R)  
Clayton Christian

Rachel Green  
Susie Hedalen  
Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy (D)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:**

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

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

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

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

08:07:07 Presiding Officer David Bedey called the meeting to order at 8:07 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY**

08:07:52 Justin Silverstein, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA Consulting)  
[EXHIBIT 15](#)

08:17:36 Amanda Brown, Vice President, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

08:30:28 Sen. Becky Beard  
08:30:48 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
08:31:48 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
08:31:51 Rep. Brad Barker joined the meeting.  
08:33:22 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
08:34:56 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
08:35:56 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
08:35:57 Supt. Susie Hedalen joined the meeting.

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

08:36:59 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

08:42:08 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
08:43:13 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
08:45:45 Commissioner Mike Waterman

08:47:07 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
08:48:37 Amanda Brown, APA Consulting  
08:49:10 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
08:59:44 Supt. Susie Hedalen  
08:50:15 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
08:51:29 Commissioner Martha Potter  
08:52:54 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

08:53:47 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

08:55:39 Commissioner Mike Waterman  
08:56:16 Presiding Officer David Bedey

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

08:58:10 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

09:03:14 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
09:04:06 Commissioner Tim Tharp  
09:04:34 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
09:06:37 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
09:07:41 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

09:09:30 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

09:10:14 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
(Direction from the committee to the consultants)

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

09:11:05 Amanda Brown, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

09:17:17 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
09:17:39 Amanda Brown, APA Consulting  
09:18:08 Sen. Sara Novak  
09:20:16 Amanda Brown, APA Consulting  
09:21:05 Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy joined the meeting.

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

09:21:58 Amanda Brown, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

09:23:55 Presiding Officer David Bedey

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

09:24:45 Amanda Brown, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

09:26:21 Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy  
09:27:28 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
09:29:30 Sen. Becky Beard  
09:29:55 Amanda Brown, APA Consulting  
09:30:25 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
09:31:08 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
09:32:44 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
09:33:31 Commissioner Mike Waterman  
09:35:20 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

09:37:20 **Recessed**

09:50:20 **Reconvened**

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

09:50:24 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

09:54:45 Commissioner Mike Waterman  
09:55:17 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
09:56:35 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
09:56:45 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
09:57:35 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

09:59:27 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

10:05:22 Commissioner Tim Tharp  
10:05:33 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

10:05:42 Sen. Becky Beard  
10:06:21 Laura Sankey Keip, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
10:06:32 Presiding Officer David Bedey

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

10:07:01 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

10:08:14 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
10:08:27 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
10:08:38 Robert Reichardt, Senior Associate, APA Consulting  
10:10:22 Presiding Officer David Bedey

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

10:11:25 Amanda Brown, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)  
10:13:34 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

10:14:36 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
10:14:47 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
(Recommendation from the consultants has been accepted by the committee)

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

10:15:24 Amanda Brown, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)  
10:15:52 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

10:17:00 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews  
(Recommendation to use both measures has been accepted by the committee)  
10:17:19 Commissioner Martha Potter  
10:18:23 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
10:20:13 Sen. Becky Beard  
10:20:36 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau  
10:21:03 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
10:21:37 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

10:23:36 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

10:24:27 Commissioner Martha Potter  
10:25:37 Commissioner Matt Schreiber

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

10:26:06 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

10:26:48 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
10:27:17 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
10:28:09 Sen. Sara Novak  
10:29:03 Amanda Brown, APA Consulting  
10:29:12 Commissioner Mike Waterman  
10:29:44 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
10:29:58 Supt. Susie Hedalen  
10:31:01 Commissioner Mike Waterman

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

10:32:21 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

10:32:47 Commissioner Martha Potter  
10:33:23 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
10:34:13 Presiding Officer David Bedey

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

10:34:36 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

10:36:03 Vice Presiding Officer Eric Matthews  
10:36:47 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
10:37:37 Sen. Sara Novak  
10:38:28 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
10:39:09 Rep. Lee Deming  
(See Exhibit 15)  
10:40:09 Commissioner Mike Waterman  
10:41:25 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
10:42:52 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
10:44:37 Commissioner Martha Potter  
10:46:38 Presiding Officer David Bedey

10:47:10 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz  
10:49:08 Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
10:50:07 Commissioner Tim Tharp  
10:50:16 Sen. Becky Beard  
10:51:28 Commissioner Tim Tharp  
10:52:46 Commissioner Mike Waterman  
10:53:05 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
10:53:07 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS COST STUDY – Continued**

10:53:36 Justin Silverstein, APA Consulting  
(See Exhibit 15)

**Public Comment**

10:56:07 Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Board Association  
11:00:17 Bob Story, Self

11:05:42 **Recessed**

11:17:25 **Reconvened**

**SCHOOL FUNDING - OTHER FUND OVERVIEWS**

11:17:42 Julia Pattin, Fiscal Staff, Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD)  
[EXHIBIT 16](#)

11:18:53 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

11:21:45 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz  
11:22:05 Presiding Officer David Bedey

**SCHOOL FUNDING - OTHER FUND OVERVIEWS - Continued**

11:22:12 Julia Pattin, LFD  
(See Exhibit 16)

11:24:05 Pad McCracken, LSD  
(See Exhibit 16)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

11:24:36 Commissioner Mike Waterman  
11:25:44 Presiding Officer David Bedey

**SCHOOL FUNDING - OTHER FUND OVERVIEWS - Continued**

11:27:03 Pad McCracken, LSD  
(See Exhibit 16)

11:29:44 Julia Pattin, LFD  
(See Exhibit 16)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

11:30:09 Commissioner Mike Waterman  
11:30:50 Pad McCracken, LSD

**SCHOOL FUNDING - OTHER FUND OVERVIEWS - Continued**

11:31:51 Julia Pattin, LFD  
(See Exhibit 16)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

11:35:57 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
11:37:15 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz  
11:37:35 Julia Pattin, LFD  
11:38:28 Commissioner Mike Waterman  
11:38:39 Presiding Officer David Bedey

**SCHOOL FUNDING - OTHER FUND OVERVIEWS - Continued**

**The Bus Depreciation Reserve Fund**

11:39:24 Julia Pattin, LFD  
(See Exhibit 16)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

11:40:55 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
11:41:17 Commissioner Mike Waterman  
11:42:19 Supt. Susie Hedalen  
11:42:52 Presiding Officer David Bedey

**SCHOOL FUNDING - OTHER FUND OVERVIEWS - Continued**

**The Technology Fund**

11:43:14 Julia Pattin, LFD  
(See Exhibit 16)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

11:44:57 Sen. Becky Beard  
11:45:13 Julia Pattin, LFD  
11:45:30 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
11:47:26 Commissioner Matt Schreiber  
11:48:27 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
11:49:27 Commissioner Tim Tharp  
11:50:41 Presiding Officer David Bedey  
11:52:24 Supt. Susie Hedalen

11:54:11 Commissioner Martha Potter

### **SCHOOL FUNDING - OTHER FUND OVERVIEWS - Continued**

#### **The Flexibility Fund - Revenues**

11:56:17 Julia Pattin, LFD

(See Exhibit 16)

11:57:18 Pad McCracken, LSD

(See Exhibit 16)

#### **Commission Questions / Discussion**

11:57:51 Sen. Sue Vinton

11:58:09 Pad McCracken, LSD

11:58:33 Commissioner Mike Waterman

11:58:43 Julia Pattin, LFD

11:58:58 Presiding Officer David Bedey

### **SCHOOL FUNDING - OTHER FUND OVERVIEWS - Continued**

#### **The Flexibility Fund - Revenues - Continued**

11:59:32 Julia Pattin, LFD

(See Exhibit 16)

#### **Public Comment**

12:00:53 Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Board Association

12:03:42 Bob Story, Self

12:06:19 **Recessed**

13:02:22 **Reconvened**

### **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

13:03:18 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 17](#)

#### **Commission Questions / Discussion**

13:12:20 Commissioner Matt Schreiber

13:13:37 Pad McCracken, LSD

### **SCHOOL FACILITIES - Continued**

#### **State of our Schools 2025**

13:14:11 Mary Filardo, Executive Director and Founder, 21st Century School Fund

(21CSF)

[EXHIBIT 18](#)

[EXHIBIT 19](#)

[EXHIBIT 20](#)

[EXHIBIT 21](#)

**Panel Discussion on School Facility Needs, Trends, and Funding Challenges**

13:45:51 Andy Fors, Superintendent, Polson School District

13:47:59 Stacy Auck, Business Manager, Hobson Public School

13:52:48 Todd Verrill, Facilities Director, Helena School District

[EXHIBIT 22](#)

14:05:38 Bob Moore, Senior Account Executive, McKinstry

14:15:01 Bridget Ekstrom, Managing Director, D.A. Davidson & Co.

[EXHIBIT 23](#)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

14:22:10 Commissioner Matt Schreiber

14:23:01 Bridget Ekstrom, D.A. Davidson & Co.

14:27:21 Mary Filardo, 21CSF

14:30:26 Commissioner Martha Potter

14:35:02 Sen. Becky Beard

14:36:35 Commissioner Mike Waterman

[EXHIBIT 24](#)

14:49:31 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz

14:50:56 Todd Verrill, Helena School District

14:53:38 Commissioner Tim Tharp

14:55:16 Presiding Officer David Bedey

14:55:48 Sen. Forrest Mandeville

14:56:48 Pad McCracken, LSD

14:58:55 Presiding Officer David Bedey

**SCHOOL LEVY PASSAGE RATES**

14:59:50 Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Board Association (MTSBA)

[EXHIBIT 25](#)

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

15:17:26 Commissioner Mike Waterman

15:18:24 Lance Melton, MTSBA

15:19:13 Commissioner Matt Schreiber

15:21:56 Lance Melton, MTSBA

15:32:18 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz

15:32:46 Lance Melton, MTSBA

15:33:28 Commissioner Tom Burnett

15:34:04 Lance Melton, MTSBA

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY OTHER TOPIC WITHIN THE COMMITTEE’S JURISDICTION**

- 15:37:15 Bob Story, Executive Director, Montana Taxpayers Association
- 15:42:52 Jenny Murnane Butcher, Trustee, Helena School Board
- 15:44:25 Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Board Association
- 15:45:37 Karen Lazetich Moses, Retired Schoolboard Member, School District 2
- 15:55:10 Felicia King, High School Teacher, Bozeman  
[EXHIBIT 26](#)
- 16:03:55 Heather Mumby, Board Member, Montana Association of School business Officials

**Commission Questions / Discussion**

- 16:08:02 Sen. Becky Beard

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 16:11:27