

**MINUTES**  
**MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**68th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**  
**COMMITTEE ON (H) EDUCATION**

**Call to Order:** Chair Rep. Fred Anderson-R, on January 30, 2023 at 2:49 PM, in 137

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** Rep. Fred Anderson, Chair (R)  
Rep. Linda Reksten, Vice Chair (R)  
Rep. James Bergstrom (R)  
Rep. Marta Bertoglio (R)  
Rep. Lee Deming (R)  
Rep. Sherry Essmann (R)  
Rep. Brandon Ler (R)  
Rep. Eric Matthews (D)  
Rep. Melissa Romano (D)  
Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe (R)  
Rep. Mark Thane (D)

**Members Excused:** Rep. Braxton Mitchell (R)  
Rep. Tyson Running Wolf (D)

**Staff Present:** Rose Harmon, Secretary  
Amanda Persons, Remote Meeting Coordinator  
Laura Sankey Keip, Research Analyst

**Audio Committees:** These minutes are in outline form only. They provide a list of participants and a record of official action taken by the committee. The link to the audio recording of the meeting is available on the Legislative Branch website.

**Committee Business Summary:**

Hearing & Date Posted:

HB 344 01/27/2023  
HB 334 01/27/2023  
HB 332 01/27/2023  
HB 352 01/27/2023

Executive Action:

**HEARING ON HB 344 - Require new school buses to be equipped with lap-shoulder belts**

**Opening Statement:**

14:50:54 Rep. Mark Thane (D), HD 99, opened the hearing on HB 344, Require new school buses to be equipped with lap-shoulder belts.

[EXHIBIT\(230130EDHa1\)](#)

**Proponent Testimony:**

14:58:12 Bob Gilbert, Montana School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA)

15:02:35 Ole Hedstrom, Montana State Firemen's Association, (MSFA)

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

15:03:32 McCall Flynn, Executive Director, Montana Board of Public Education (BPE)

**Questions from Committee:**

15:03:56 Rep. James Bergstrom

15:04:28 Bob Gilbert, MSBCA

**Closing Statement:**

15:05:40 Rep. Mark Thane (D), HD 99, closed the hearing on HB 344.

**HEARING ON HB 334 - Revise school attendance laws to address student mental health needs**

**Opening Statement:**

15:08:39 Rep. Laurie Bishop (D), HD 60, opened the hearing on HB 334, Revise school attendance laws to address student mental health needs.

**Proponent Testimony:**

15:12:54 Matt Kuntz, Executive Director, Montana National Alliance on Mental  
Illness (NAMI)

15:13:58 Maggie Bornstein, American Civil Liberties Union of Montana (ACLU-MT)

15:15:12 Bill Warden, Shodair Children's Hospital

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

None

**Questions from Committee:**

15:16:14 Rep. James Bergstrom

15:16:37 Rep. Laurie Bishop-D

15:17:22 Rep. Sherry Essmann

15:18:20 Rep. Laurie Bishop-D

15:19:46 Rep. Sherry Essmann

15:20:23 Rep. Laurie Bishop-D

15:20:50 Rep. Sherry Essmann

15:21:11 Rep. Laurie Bishop-D

**Closing Statement:**

15:22:12 Rep. Laurie Bishop (D), HD 60, closed the hearing on HB 334.

15:23:00 Recessed

15:29:35 Reconvened

**HEARING ON HB 332 - Generally revise laws related to school employee health benefits**

**Opening Statement:**

15:30:09 Rep. David Bedey (R), HD 86, opened the hearing on HB 332, Generally revise laws related to school employee health benefits.

**Proponent Testimony:**

15:32:50 Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Boards Association (MSBA), Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Schools (CAMPS)

15:40:52 Amanda Curtis, President Elect, Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE)

15:43:40 Doug Reisig, Executive Director, Montana Quality Education Coalition (MQEC)

15:45:02 Daniel Farr, North/South/East Rural Schools (NSERS)

15:46:07 Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana (SAM)

**Opponent Testimony:**

15:46:52 Richard Miltenberger, President, Mountain Health Cooperative Health Insurance Company (MHC)

15:49:52 Bruce Spencer, Joint Powers Trust (JPT)

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

15:53:54 Ken Bailey, Former Chief Financial Officer, Office of Public Instruction (OPI)

**Questions from Committee:**

15:54:46 Rep. Mark Thane

15:55:23 Lance Melton, CAMPS

15:56:38 Rep. Linda Reksten

15:57:23 Lance Melton, CAMPS

**Closing Statement:**

15:58:12 Rep. David Bedey (R), HD 86, closed the hearing on HB 332.

**HEARING ON HB 352 - Provide targeted interventions to support 3rd grade reading proficiency**

**Opening Statement:**

16:01:30 Rep. Brad Barker (R), HD 58, opened the hearing on HB 352, Provide targeted interventions to support 3rd grade reading proficiency.

**Proponent Testimony:**

16:08:47 Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana (SAM), Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Schools (CAMPS)

16:13:35 Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Boards Association (MSBA)

16:14:09 Amanda Curtis, President Elect, Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE)

16:15:35 Caitlin Jensen, Executive Director, Zero to Five Montana

[EXHIBIT\(230130EDHa2\)](#)

16:18:50 Jenny Murnane Butcher, Deputy Director, Montanans Organized For Education (MOFE)

16:19:35 Daniel Farr, North/South/East Rural Schools

16:21:30 Doug Reisig, Executive Director, Montana Quality Education Coalition (MQEC)

16:22:50 Dennis Parman, Executive Director, Montana Rural Education Association (MREA)

16:24:01 Grace Decker, Zero to Five, Missoula County

16:27:01 Melody Cunningham, Self, Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

16:29:09 Megan Roth, Early Literacy Program, Bozeman School District

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

16:29:49 Paul Taylor, Budget Analyst, Office of Public Instruction (OPI)

16:30:14 McCall Flynn, Executive Director, Board of Public Education (BPE)

**Questions from Committee:**

16:30:46 Rep. James Bergstrom

16:32:25 Rep. Brad Barker-R

16:33:58 Rep. James Bergstrom

16:34:36 Rep. Brad Barker-R

16:35:25 Rep. James Bergstrom

16:35:50 Rep. Brad Barker-R

16:37:20 Rep. Melissa Romano

16:37:41 Rep. Brad Barker-R

16:37:50 Rep. Melissa Romano

16:38:14 Paul Taylor, OPI

16:40:38 Rep. Sherry Essmann

16:41:20 Rep. Brad Barker-R

16:43:25 Rep. James Bergstrom

16:44:00 Rep. Brad Barker-R

16:45:14 Rep. Fred Anderson

**Closing Statement:**

16:46:28 Rep. Brad Barker (R), HD 58, closed the hearing on HB 352.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 16:47:28

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Rose Harmon, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230130EDHaad\)](#)