

School Funding Interim Commission Draft Final Report
Amendment #8 (Sen. Facey) various changes

1. Page 3, following line 29, new paragraph.

Insert: The Commission learned that establishing a funding formula for all public school districts in Montana is a difficult task; each district has unique needs and unique resources. The unique needs include differing levels of poverty, the rural or urban nature of the district, and many other factors. The unique resources vary from the property values in the district to the amount of federal payments and nonlevy revenue received by the district among others. Designing a funding formula to adjust for all of these unique characteristics is not possible. The variable property values in each school district are taken into consideration in Montana's current formula; however, the constantly changing circumstances of each district and constitutionally enshrined strong local control make guaranteeing equality of educational opportunity a challenge. Despite this challenge and the great variety in the circumstances of each of Montana's 400+ school districts, the Commission settled on a number of recommendations to improve the funding of Montana's "basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools."

2. Page 6, line 7, following "public education"

Insert: via the Guarantee Account. This revenue does not increase the funding available to schools; it is simply the "first source" of funding for the formula.

3. Page 6, at line 22, new paragraph

Insert: While the Legislature has the constitutional duty to provide and fund the basic system, local control of schools is enshrined in Article X, Section 8—School District Trustees:

The supervision and control of schools in each school district shall be vested in a board of trustees to be elected as provided by law.

4. Page 7, line 4, following "decision)."

Insert: Throughout the 2015 Session, it was acknowledged that the appropriation included in SB 128 was not sufficient to contract for a full-blown adequacy study.

5. Page 7, lines 4 and 5

Strike: "was" on line 4 through "instead" on line 5

6. Page 7, line 8, following "public."

Insert: Some commissioners pointed to these areas of concern as evidence that state support has eroded since Judge Sherlock's 2008 "good faith effort" conclusion and questioned whether overall funding is adequate for a system of *quality* public schools.

7. Page 11, lower/second line 10, following “further study.”

Insert: In addition, the commission feels that the entire topic of K-12 funding warrants legislative examination more frequently than every 10 years and suggests that the structure of interim committees be reviewed or that the Education and Local Government Interim Committee form a K-12 funding subcommittee each interim.

8. Page 19, following line 15

Insert: 4. Recruitment and retention of teachers would be enhanced if funding was increased for the existing Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program.

Renumber remaining findings

9. Page 19, following line 20

Insert: 7. While there is potential for programs to be established by OPI to support teachers and their continuing education, there is hesitancy on the Legislature’s part to dedicate resources to bureaucracies to address such programs.

10. Page 29, following line 17

Insert: 4. States are not certain of the level of federal funding for special education programs. The pressure put on district general fund budgets and associated programs would be reduced if the inflation factor that is applied to the other state payments was applied to the special education payment.

Renumber remaining findings

11. Page 32, line 27, following “maximum.”

Insert: OPI distributed an additional [handout](#) that shows how various legislative changes have impacted the number of districts adopting general fund budgets above the maximum.

12. Page 33, line 15, following “consolidation).”

Insert: While the Commission is not proposing measures that would mandate consolidation of school districts, it is understood that voluntary consolidation would simplify and bring efficiencies to the funding system. The consolidation of *districts* does not imply or require the closure of *schools*.