



EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE

69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Daniel Emrich
Sara Novak
Matt Regier
Sue Vinton

HOUSE MEMBERS

Lee Deming
Shelly Fyant
Randyn Gregg
Linda Reksten
Melissa Romano

COMMITTEE STAFF

Pad McCracken - Lead Staff
Becca Brown - Research Analyst
Laura Sankey Keip - Legal Staff
Ania Alduenda - Secretary

MINUTES LOG

July 22, 2025
Capitol Room 422 & 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.

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Linda Reksten, Presiding Officer (R)
Sen. Sara Novak, Vice Presiding Officer (D)
Rep. Lee Deming (R)
Sen. Daniel Emrich (R)
Rep. Shelly Fyant (D)
Rep. Randyn Gregg (R)
Sen. Matt Regier (R)
Rep. Melissa Romano (D)
Sen. Sue Vinton (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Pad McCracken, Lead Staff
Becca Brown, Research Analyst
Laura Sankey Keip, Legal Staff
Ania Alduenda, Secretary

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

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

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

13:03:33 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.
The committee secretary took roll.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

13:04:14 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
13:04:45 Rep. Melissa Romano
13:05:38 Rep. Shelly Fyant
13:07:11 Rep. Lee Deming
13:07:47 Sen. Sara Novak
13:09:15 Rep. Linda Reksten
13:11:14 Rep. Randyn Gregg
13:11:54 Sen. Sue Vinton
13:12:55 Sen. Matt Regier
13:13:22 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
13:14:31 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
13:15:43 Becca Brown, Research Analyst, LSD
13:16:23 Ania Alduenda, Secretary, LSD
13:16:45 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION

13:17:09 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Committee Background

13:17:17 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 1](#)

2025 Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines for Interim Committees

13:21:29 Becca Brown, Research Analyst, LSD
[EXHIBIT 2](#)
13:27:16 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Committee Discussion / Questions

13:34:53 Sen. Sue Vinton
13:35:01 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
13:35:53 Rep. Linda Reksten
13:36:39 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Motion

13:37:01 Sen. Sue Vinton moved to allow written proxies in the Education Interim Committee.

Vote

13:37:23 Carried unanimously by roll call vote.

2025 Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines for Interim Committees - Continued

13:38:03 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Motion

13:38:29 Sen. Sue Vinton moved to adopt the 2025 Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines for Interim Committees.

Vote

13:38:40 Carried unanimously by roll call vote.

WORK PLAN OVERVIEW

13:39:10 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

13:39:24 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 3](#)

[EXHIBIT 4](#)

[EXHIBIT 5](#)

[EXHIBIT 6](#)

[EXHIBIT 7](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

13:58:06 Rep. Melissa Romano

13:58:32 Pad McCracken, LSD

AGENCY AND ENTITY INTRODUCTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR WORK PLAN

13:59:11 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Board of Public Education (BPE)

13:59:37 McCall Flynn, Executive Director, BPE

14:03:13 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Office of Public Instruction (OPI)

14:03:49 Katie Bloodgood, Deputy Chief of Staff and Policy Director, OPI

14:07:14 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Montana Arts Council (MAC)

14:07:45 Krys Holmes, Executive Director, MAC

14:14:32 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Montana Historical Society (MHS)

14:14:48 Molly Kruckenberg, Director, MHS

[EXHIBIT 8](#)

14:20:28 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Board of Regents of Higher Education and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE)

14:20:51 Clayton Christian, Commissioner of Higher Education, OCHE
14:24:15 Tyler Trevor, Deputy Commissioner for Budget and Planning and Chief of Staff, OCHE
14:25:42 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Input From Other Agencies and Entities

14:26:03 Dr. Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana
14:26:51 Kim Popham, Director of Public Policy and Research, Montana Federation of Public Employees
14:27:25 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
14:27:49 Shelley Turner, Executive Director, Montana Association of School Business Officials

Committee Discussion / Questions

14:28:36 Rep. Melissa Romano
14:29:13 Katie Bloodgood, OPI
14:30:16 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
14:30:44 Sen. Sara Novak
14:31:08 Katie Bloodgood

MONTANA SAFE SCHOOLS CENTER (MSSC) INPUT ON HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 53: STUDY OF SCHOOL SAFETY

14:31:21 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
14:32:05 Nancy Berg, Director, MSSC
14:33:11 Tammy Tolleson Knee, School Support Liaison, MSSC
14:35:48 Tina Hayes, Training and Technical Assistance Specialist, MSSC
14:38:00 Director Nancy Berg, MSSC
14:39:36 Tina Hayes, MSSC
14:40:17 Tammy Tolleson Knee, MSSC

Committee Discussion / Questions

14:41:31 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
14:41:55 Rep. Linda Reksten
14:42:39 Tina Hayes
14:45:36 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

14:46:15 **Recessed**

15:01:21 **Reconvened**

STAFF INTRODUCTION

15:01:23 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:01:48 Laura Sankey Keip, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC COMMENT ON COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

15:02:27 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:03:19 Alex Sergent, Policy Analyst, Council of State Governments
15:04:40 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

WORK PLAN DISCUSSION

15:05:06 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:05:38 Sen. Sara Novak
15:07:52 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:08:07 Rep. Shelly Fyant

STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC COMMENT ON COMMITTEE WORK PLAN - Continued

15:10:30 Sarah Swanson, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Industry (DLI)
[EXHIBIT 9](#)
15:18:06 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Committee Discussion / Questions

15:18:25 Sen. Sue Vinton
15:19:01 Commissioner Sarah Swanson, DLI

WORK PLAN DISCUSSION - Continued

15:20:03 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:20:25 Rep. Linda Reksten
15:21:40 Rep. Randyn Gregg
15:22:29 Rep. Lee Deming
15:23:08 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

Proposed Meeting Dates

15:24:00 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
(See Exhibit 3)

Committee Discussion / Questions

15:29:47 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:31:11 Pad McCracken, LSD
(See Exhibit 3)
15:33:08 Rep. Melissa Romano
(See Exhibit 6)
15:34:00 Rep. Shelly Fyant
15:34:42 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:35:24 Rep. Melissa Romano
15:35:29 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:36:40 Pad McCracken
15:37:15 Rep. Melissa Romano
15:37:49 Sen. Sara Novak

15:38:23 Sen. Matt Regier
15:38:42 Rep. Linda Reksten
15:39:03 Pad McCracken
15:40:39 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:41:31 Pad McCracken

Motion

15:43:29 Sen. Sara Novak moved to adopt all proposed meeting dates except the proposed September 17, 2025 date as presented in the draft work plan.

Vote

15:43:50 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

WORK PLAN DISCUSSION - Continued

15:44:18 Pad McCracken
(See Exhibit 3)
15:45:19 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:46:27 Rep. Melissa Romano
15:47:14 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:47:31 Sen. Sara Novak
15:47:55 Pad McCracken
15:48:16 Rep. Shelly Fyant
15:49:02 Rep. Melissa Romano
15:49:22 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:49:49 Pad McCracken
15:50:50 Rep. Linda Reksten
15:52:23 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:53:00 Pad McCracken

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY TOPIC WITHIN EDIC JURISDICTION

15:54:46 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
15:55:23 Kevin Nelson, Self
(See Exhibit 7)

Committee Discussion / Questions

16:00:41 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
16:01:13 Kevin Nelson, Self
16:02:41 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich
16:03:08 Dr. Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY TOPIC WITHIN EDIC JURISDICTION - Continued

16:04:51 Sarah Froehlke, Policy Analyst, Zero to Five Montana
16:06:15 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE PRESIDING OFFICERS

16:06:38 Acting Presiding Officer Daniel Emrich

16:07:04 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

First Motion

16:08:03 Sen. Matt Regier nominated Sen. Daniel Emrich to be the Presiding Officer of the Education Interim Committee.

Second Motion

16:08:42 Rep. Randyn Gregg nominated Rep. Linda Reksten to be the Presiding Officer of the Education Interim Committee.

16:09:31 Pad McCracken, LSD

Vote

16:10:08 Carried 5-4 by roll call vote on the motion to nominate Rep. Linda Reksten as Presiding Officer with Sen. Daniel Emrich, Sen. Matt Regier, Sen. Sue Vinton, and Rep. Lee Deming voting for 'Sen. Daniel Emrich'.

16:10:30 Sen. Sue Vinton

16:10:39 Rep. Linda Reksten

16:10:42 Sen. Daniel Emrich

Motion

16:11:36 Rep. Shelly Fyant nominated Sen. Sara Novak to be the Vice Presiding Officer of the Education Interim Committee.

Vote

16:12:10 Carried 8-1 by roll call vote with Sen. Sue Vinton voting 'no'.

COMPENSATION AND SENATE BILL 64 CHANGES

16:13:09 Sen. Daniel Emrich

16:13:42 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 10](#)

16:14:43 Sen. Sue Vinton

16:14:46 Maia Zelenak, Senior Accountant, LSD
(See Exhibit 10)

16:17:14 Sen. Daniel Emrich

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 16:17:52