



# Education Interim Committee

69th Montana Legislature

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## COMMITTEE STAFF

PAD MCCRACKEN, Lead Staff  
LAURA SANKEY KEIP, Staff Attorney  
BECCA BROWN, Staff  
ANIA ALDUENDA, Secretary

## AGENDA

### Education Interim Committee

March 16-17, 2026

Room 317, Montana State Capitol

**\*March 17 will be a joint meeting with the Education Interim Budget Committee**

Note: Agenda times are approximate. Some agenda items may require more or less time than indicated.

### Monday, March 16

- 10:00 a.m. Call to order – roll call – Chair Reksten
- 10:05 Administrative Rule Review process and committee role – Laura Sankey Keip, Committee Staff Attorney
- 10:15 Youth Risk Behavior Survey update – Sarah Music, Coordinated School Health Director, OPI
- 10:30 HJ 53 Study of School Safety – Nancy Berg, Director, and Christina (Tina) Eblen, Associate Director, Montana Safe Schools Center (MSSC)
- Examples of state school safety centers – UT and CO
    - Christine (Chris) Harms – Director, Colorado Office of School Safety
    - Rhett Larsen - School Safety Center Coordinator, Utah School Safety Center
  - Best practices in state-level support for 10 Essential Actions and potential committee recommendations – MSSC
  - Public Comment
  - Committee discussion/direction to staff
- 12:30 p.m. Recess for lunch
- 1:30 Requested OPI updates
- Teacher licensure report – Dr. Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer
  - Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program – Christy Mock Stutz, Assistant Chief Program Officer
  - School Nutrition report – Christine Emerson, School Nutrition Programs Director
  - Seal of Civics Literacy – Ty Capece, Assistant Deputy Superintendent
- 2:30 Possible clean-up bills for the committee to consider – Committee and OPI staff

- 2:45 Update on Teacher Registered Apprenticeship – Crystal Armstrong, Administrator, Workforce Services Division, Montana Department of Labor and Industry
- 3:15 Overview and discussion of the SFIC Phase I report (aka the Innovation and Excellence in Education Working Group Final Report): What We Heard and What It Means for Montana’s Education System – Janice Case, Regional Director – West, and Matt Bachand, Senior Policy Designer, National Center for Education and the Economy
- 3:45 Public comment on any other topic within the committee’s jurisdiction
- 4:00 Wrap up – review March 17 joint agenda and June 15 -16 topics – recess

**Tuesday, March 17** – Joint with the Education Interim Budget Committee (EIBC)

- 8:00 a.m. Call to order – roll call – EIBC Chair Bedey
- 8:05 Review agenda – LEG days reminder June 25-26 (Th-Fr) – Committee staff
- 8:10 Public School Innovation Landscape and specific program updates (committee questions and discussion to follow each item)
  - Recent Legislative Actions – Debra Silk, Associate Executive Director and General Counsel, MTSBA
  - Transformational Learning Phase II update – Krystal Smith, Opportunities and Innovative Learning Senior Manager, OPI
  - Public Charter School update – McCall Flynn, Executive Director, BPE
  - Community Choice Schools Commission update – Cathy Kincheloe, Director of Planning, Community Choice Schools Commission
  - Education Innovation Tax Credit update – Jennifer Hicks, Withholding Unit Manager, DOR
- 9:30 OPI Data Modernization updates – Lucas Rowsey, IT & Data Special Projects Coordinator, and Eli Dean, Data Manager, and Anna Hoerner, Business Analyst OPI
- 10:30 STARS (HB 252) implementation update; Future Ready data reporting – Shannon Boswell, Career, Technical, and Adult Education Director, and Nicole Thuotte, EDUCATE Unit Manager, OPI
- 10:45 MAST results to teachers to inform instruction – Cedar Rose, Assessment Director, OPI
- 11:15 OPI Ed-Flex Waiver application overview/update – Dr. Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer, and Zach Hawkins, Federal Programs Senior Manager, OPI
- 11:30 Federal policy/funding updates & impacts – Austin Reid, NCSL
- 11:45 Public Comment

Noon	Recess for lunch
1:00 p.m.	Strategic staffing initiatives – Molly Gold, Project Manager, Education Program, NCSL
1:30	MTDA Frontier Learning Lab Update – Jason Neiffer, Executive Director, MTDA
2:00	<p>Article X, Section 1(2) Preserving American Indian Cultural Integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking stock of current efforts – Pad McCracken, EDIC staff</li> <li>• Overview of IEFA resources – Mike Jetty, Indian Education Specialist, OPI</li> <li>• Panel discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jordann Lankford-Forster – 7-12 IEFA Instructional Coach, Great Falls Public Schools; Chairperson, MACIE</li> <li>○ Mandy Smoker Broaddus – Project Leader, Education Northwest; Member, National Advisory Council on Indian Education</li> <li>○ Yancey Beston – Board Chair, Frazer School District; MTSBA Board of Directors and Vice Chair, Indian School Board Caucus; Member, MACIE</li> <li>○ Iris Kill Eagle – Trustee, Dodson K-12 Schools; MTSBA Board of Directors and Chair, Indian School Board Caucus; Secretary, MACIE</li> <li>○ Dr. Brooke Gondara – Director of American Indian Education and Tribal Student Achievement, OPI</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3:30	HJ 53 School Safety Study update – EDIC members and staff
3:45	Out-of-district attendance report analysis – Committee staff
4:00	School funding dashboard updates – Julia Pattin and Kate Johnson, LFD
4:15	Public Comment
4:30	Committee discussion / directions to staff
4:45	Adjourn

#### Public Participation

The public may attend the meeting and offer public comment in the Capitol or provide public comment either using remote meeting technology or in writing.

**To offer public comment** via remote meeting technology, please submit the online form for remote participation at least 2 hours before the scheduled start of the meeting: <https://participate.legmt.gov/>.

**Written public comment** may be submitted either through the [online form](#) for written comment or by mailing the comments to Education Interim Committee, PO Box 201706, Helena, MT 59620.

*\*Public comment provided in person or remotely at a legislative meeting is a public record that is videotaped, archived, and available on the internet. Public comment submitted in writing at a meeting is a public record that will be posted to the legislative website as part of the minutes log for the meeting.*

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