



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

September 9, 2025
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.

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Linda Reksten, Presiding Officer (R)
Rep. Lee Deming (R)
Rep. Shelly Fyant (D)
Rep. Randyn Gregg (R)
Sen. Matt Regier (R) - via Zoom
Rep. Melissa Romano (D)
Sen. Sue Vinton (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Sen. Sara Novak, Vice Presiding Officer (D)
Sen. Daniel Emrich (R)

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

08:31:37 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten called the meeting to order at 8:31 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

Meeting Overview from Lead Staff

08:33:03 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW PROCESS AND COMMITTEE ROLE

08:35:58 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

08:36:11 Laura Sankey Keip, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 1](#)

08:40:34 Vice Presiding Officer Sara Novak joined the meeting.

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY VIDEO INTRODUCTION AND UPDATE

08:45:44 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

08:45:53 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 2](#)

08:52:32 Tracy Cook, Lead Statewide Consulting Librarian, Montana State Library (MSL)

Committee Discussion / Questions

08:52:51 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

08:53:07 Tracy Cook, MSL

MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM UPDATE

08:54:34 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

08:55:00 Galen Hollenbaugh, Deputy Commissioner for Government Relations and Communications, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE)
08:57:32 Scott Lemmon, Director of Admissions and Enrollment Strategy, OCHE
[EXHIBIT 3](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

09:05:46 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

09:06:07 Scott Lemmon, OCHE

UPDATE ON SCHOOL FUNDING INTERIM COMMISSION (SFIC)

09:07:23 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

09:07:32 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 4](#)

09:08:06 Becca Brown, Research Analyst, LSD
(See Exhibit 4)

Committee Discussion / Questions

09:10:23 Rep. Lee Deming

09:11:07 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
09:11:32 Pad McCracken, LSD
09:13:34 Rep. Melissa Romano
09:14:08 Pad McCracken
09:14:16 Becca Brown, LSD
09:15:01 Sen. Sue Vinton
09:15:29 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

09:16:02 **Recessed**
09:31:21 **Reconvened**

SPECIAL EDUCATION 101+ PANEL DISCUSSION

09:31:25 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
09:31:41 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
09:35:16 Heidi Gibson, Executive Director, Montana Empowerment Center (MEC)
09:36:23 Patrick Cates, Senior Manager, Student Support Services, Office of Public Instruction (OPI)
09:37:44 Frank Podobnik, Associate Director, Center for Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE), Utah State University
[EXHIBIT 5](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

09:45:49 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
09:45:54 Pad McCracken, LSD
09:46:24 Frank Podobnik, TAESE
09:48:36 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
09:48:42 Frank Podobnik
09:52:43 Patrick Cates, OPI
09:56:50 Vice Presiding Officer Sara Novak
09:58:19 Patrick Cates
09:59:18 Frank Podobnik
10:00:36 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
10:00:50 Frank Podobnik
10:01:36 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
10:01:54 Patrick Cates
10:02:07 Rep. Randyn Gregg
10:02:21 Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer, OPI
10:02:48 Rep. Lee Deming
10:03:03 Patrick Cates
10:03:52 Sen. Sue Vinton
10:04:44 Patrick Cates
10:05:41 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

Committee Discussion / Questions - Continued

10:05:47 Katie Bloodgood, Deputy Chief of Staff & Policy Director, OPI
10:06:21 Sen. Sue Vinton
10:08:16 Heidi Gibson, MEC
10:08:27 Vice Presiding Officer Sara Novak
10:08:41 Katie Bloodgood, OPI
10:09:00 Pad McCracken
[EXHIBIT 6](#)
10:09:36 Patrick Cates
10:10:56 Frank Podobnik
10:15:21 Vice Presiding Officer Sara Novak
10:16:08 Frank Podobnik
10:16:56 Heidi Gibson
[EXHIBIT 7](#)
10:19:11 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
10:19:58 Patrick Cates
10:20:24 Pad McCracken
10:20:58 Frank Podobnik
10:29:43 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
10:29:56 Frank Podobnik
10:32:44 Heidi Gibson
10:34:04 Patrick Cates
(See Exhibit 6)
10:36:27 Rep. Melissa Romano
10:36:51 Patrick Cates
(See Exhibit 6)
10:38:08 Frank Podobnik
10:40:23 Sen. Sue Vinton
10:41:00 Vice Presiding Officer Sara Novak
10:43:40 Patrick Cates
10:46:32 Rep. Shelly Fyant
10:46:51 Patrick Cates
10:48:58 Vice Presiding Officer Sara Novak
10:49:49 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
10:50:20 Frank Podobnik
10:53:43 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
10:54:01 Katie Bloodgood
10:55:13 Patrick Cates
10:55:44 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
10:55:48 Heidi Gibson
(See Exhibit 7)
10:58:06 Rep. Shelly Fyant

Committee Discussion / Questions - Continued

10:58:37 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
10:58:44 Heidi Gibson
10:59:34 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
11:00:12 Patrick Cates
11:02:20 Pad McCracken
11:03:57 Heidi Gibson
11:04:08 Frank Podobnik
11:06:49 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
11:07:01 Frank Podobnik
(See Exhibit 5)
11:07:55 Vice Presiding Officer Sara Novak
11:08:35 Frank Podobnik
11:10:49 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

Public Comment

11:11:15 Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana
11:14:32 Tal Goldin, Attorney and Director of Advocacy, Disability Rights Montana
(DRMT)

Committee Discussion / Questions

11:26:54 Rep. Shelly Fyant
11:26:59 Tal Goldin, DRMT
11:27:34 Sen. Sue Vinton
11:28:12 Tal Goldin

Public Comment - Continued

11:28:33 Christina Hayes, Director of Training and Technical Assistance, Montana Safe
Schools Center, University of Montana

**UTILIZATION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES BY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS PANEL
DISCUSSION**

11:29:35 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
11:31:09 Larry Crowder, Executive Director, Montana Rural Education Association
(MREA)
11:31:54 Andrew Vigeland, Human Resources Services Director, Montana School Boards
Association (MTSBA)
[EXHIBIT 8](#)
11:32:44 Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana (SAM)
[EXHIBIT 9](#)
11:33:07 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
11:33:59 Rep. Randyn Gregg
11:34:41 Rob Watson, SAM
(See Exhibit 9)
11:40:13 Larry Crowder, MREA

11:41:56 Sen. Matt Regier left the meeting via zoom.
11:43:16 Sen. Sue Vinton
11:43:33 Larry Crowder
11:46:24 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
11:46:29 Andrew Vigeland, MTSBA
(See Exhibit 8)
11:49:26 Sen. Sue Vinton
11:50:19 Andrew Vigeland
11:51:04 Rep. Randyn Gregg
11:51:37 Andrew Vigeland

Public Comment

11:53:49 None

Instructions to Committee

11:54:00 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

11:54:36 **Recessed**

13:06:17 **Reconvened**

REQUIRED REPORTS

13:06:18 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
13:06:35 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 10](#)
13:07:45 Susie Hedalen, Superintendent, Office of Public Instruction (OPI)

Indian Education for All Report

13:16:58 Paul Taylor, School Finance Manager, OPI
[EXHIBIT 11](#)
13:17:34 Pad McCracken, LSD

Committee Discussion / Questions

13:24:40 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
(See Exhibit 11)
13:25:06 Paul Taylor, OPI
13:27:13 Rep. Shelly Fyant
13:27:35 Paul Taylor
13:31:36 Sen. Sue Vinton
13:32:16 Superintendent Susie Hedalen, OPI
13:35:49 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
13:35:58 Superintendent Susie Hedalen
13:37:13 Brooke Beaverheart Gondara, Director of Indian Education, OPI
13:38:35 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

Out-of-District Attendance Report

13:39:32 Paul Taylor
[EXHIBIT 12](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

13:42:01 Sen. Sue Vinton
13:42:53 Paul Taylor
13:46:01 Rep. Shelly Fyant
13:47:07 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
13:48:19 Paul Taylor

School Funding Inflation Report

13:53:38 Paul Taylor
[EXHIBIT 13](#)
13:54:02 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

Committee Discussion / Questions

14:00:27 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
14:00:56 Rep. Luke Muszkiewicz, Commissioner, School Funding Interim Commission
14:05:35 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
14:05:42 Paul Taylor

Early Targeted Interventions Report

14:08:08 Christy Mock-Stutz, Assistant Chief Program Officer, OPI
14:08:25 Marie Judisch, Senior Manager of Academic Outcomes & Instruction, OPI
[EXHIBIT 14](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

14:13:58 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
14:14:07 Marie Judisch, OPI

Early Targeted Interventions Report - Continued

14:14:53 Marie Judisch
(See Exhibit 14)

Committee Discussion / Questions

14:20:19 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
14:20:40 Marie Judisch
14:21:16 Rep. Melissa Romano
14:21:36 Marie Judisch
14:22:14 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

CONTENT STANDARDS REVISION PROCESS AND RULEMAKING UPDATE

Content Standards Revision Process Update

14:23:21 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
14:23:26 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
14:24:23 Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer, Office of Public Instruction (OPI)
[EXHIBIT 15](#)
14:24:45 Marie Judisch, Senior Manager of Academic Outcomes & Instruction, OPI
[EXHIBIT 16](#)
14:25:00 McCall Flynn, Executive Director, Board of Public Education (BPE)

Committee Discussion / Questions

14:40:57 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
14:41:02 Marie Judisch, OPI
14:41:23 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
14:41:38 Julie Murgel, OPI
14:42:26 Rep. Lee Deming
14:42:47 Marie Judisch
(See Exhibit 16)
14:43:57 Julie Murgel
14:46:22 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
14:46:33 Marie Judisch
14:47:44 Julie Murgel
14:52:21 Rep. Melissa Romano
14:54:29 Julie Murgel
15:01:01 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
15:02:04 Marie Judisch

Rulemaking Update

15:03:13 McCall Flynn, BPE
[EXHIBIT 17](#)
15:05:45 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
15:05:51 Laura Sankey Keip, Legal Staff, LSD
[EXHIBIT 18](#)

HOUSE BILL 549 (2023) PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS 101

15:08:23 McCall Flynn, Executive Director, Board of Public Education (BPE)
[EXHIBIT 19](#)
15:09:14 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

15:09:40 **Recessed**
15:18:29 **Reconvened**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 53: STUDY OF SCHOOL SAFETY
School Safety Stakeholders Panel Introduction and Background

15:18:30 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
15:18:40 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
15:19:39 Nancy Berg, Director, Montana Safe School Center (MSSC)
[EXHIBIT 20](#)
15:20:18 Tina Hayes, Director of Training and Technical Assistance, MSSC

Committee Discussion / Questions

15:50:25 Rep. Shelly Fyant
15:51:10 Nancy Berg, MSSC
15:52:29 Rep. Randyn Gregg
15:52:53 Nancy Berg
15:52:58 Tina Hayes, MSSC
15:53:28 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

School Safety Stakeholders Panel Discussion

15:53:43 Tina Hayes, School Board Trustee, Missoula County Public Schools
15:54:06 Nick Holloway, Deputy Coordinator, Disaster and Emergency Services (DES),
Missoula County Office of Emergency Management
15:54:34 Christina Hartmann, Superintendent and Principal, Seeley Lake School District
15:54:49 Dr. Molly Blakley, Superintendent, Hellgate Elementary
15:55:07 Dan Kimzey, Teacher/School Safety Coordinator, Hamilton High School
16:08:46 Tina Hayes, Missoula County Public Schools
16:10:48 Dr. Molly Blakley, Hellgate Elementary
16:12:48 Sen. Sue Vinton
16:13:11 Dr. Molly Blakley
16:14:26 Tina Hayes
16:14:42 Nick Holloway, Missoula County Office of Emergency Management
16:17:41 Dan Kimzey, Hamilton High School
16:19:09 Dr. Molly Blakley
16:20:24 Nick Holloway
16:20:46 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
16:20:54 Nick Holloway
16:21:02 Tina Hayes
16:21:15 Superintendent Christina Hartmann, Seeley Lake School District
16:21:58 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
16:22:05 Superintendent Christina Hartmann
16:22:27 Dan Kimzey
16:24:16 Dr. Molly Blakley
16:26:09 Tina Hayes
16:26:41 Sen. Sue Vinton

16:29:01 Rep. Randyn Gregg
 16:29:29 Tina Hayes
 16:32:27 Nick Holloway
 16:35:28 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
 16:35:46 Dan Kimzey
 16:37:31 Rep. Shelly Fyant
 16:39:01 Superintendent Christina Hartmann
 16:39:36 Dr. Molly Blakley
 16:40:55 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
 16:41:26 Superintendent Christina Hartmann
 16:42:34 Dr. Molly Blakley
 16:43:38 Rep. Lee Deming
 16:43:54 Dr. Molly Blakley
 16:46:06 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
 16:46:12 Nancy Berg

Public Comment

16:47:44 Kim Popham, Director of Policy and Research, Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE)
 16:51:04 Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana (SAM)
[EXHIBIT 21](#)
 16:53:27 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten
 16:53:47 Nancy Berg

REVISED WORK PLAN REVIEW / ADOPTION

16:55:03 Pad McCracken, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 22](#)
[EXHIBIT 23](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

16:57:49 Sen. Sue Vinton
 16:58:13 Pad McCracken, LSD
 (See Exhibit 19)
 16:59:34 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

Motion

16:59:44 Sen. Sue Vinton moved to adopt the work plan.
 16:59:47 Vice Presiding Officer Sara Novak seconded the motion.

Vote

17:00:09 Carried unanimously by voice vote. Sen. Matt Regier and Sen. Daniel Emrich were not present for the vote.

Meeting Wrap Up

17:00:17 Presiding Officer Linda Reksten

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 17:01:37