



School Funding Interim Commission

69th Montana Legislature

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PANEL DISCUSSION

School Facilities

Thursday February 12, 2026
Room 317, State Capitol

Review of current facilities funding and recent changes – Pad McCracken, SFIC Lead Staff

State of our Schools 2025 and Montana Profile – Mary Filardo, Executive Director, 21st Century School Fund

Panelists:

- Andy Fors, Superintendent, Polson School District
- Stacy Auck, Business Manager, Hobson Public School
- Todd Verrill, Facilities Director, Helena School District
- Bob Moore, Senior Account Executive, McKinstry
- Bridget Ekstrom, Managing Director, D.A. Davidson & Co.

Discussion Prompts:

- Help the SFIC understand the current state of School Facilities across Montana.
 - Talk about needs, trends, and funding challenges.
- What are the tools in your toolbox? Talk about what your school/district is doing, what works, what are the challenges?

Terminology:

- Major Maintenance Aid – state program/funding that provides a state “match” for every dollar of local effort (mostly through a capped, permissive levy for the Building Reserve Fund)
- Debt Service Assistance – state program/funding that provides state funding to eligible districts to support repayment of school construction bonds
- O&M – Operations and Maintenance