

Notes from the Education Interim Committee Meeting – 1/22/18

The Education Interim Committee held a meeting on January 22nd in Helena. Most of the day was spent addressing the specifics of House Joint Resolution Bill HJ 1 which was approved by the 65th Legislature in 2017.

Briefly, the bill requested that an interim study be conducted of the needs and costs of programs to provide for students with special needs and required that the final results of the study be reported to the 66th legislature. (as defined by the Montana Constitution, gifted and talented children are children with "special needs" and are within the scope of HJ 1).

Below are links of the entire recorded Jan 22nd meeting, the agenda and the meeting materials. A few noteworthy sessions are listed below, as well.

Some relevant notes from the meeting on gifted student/education:

- There is no formal certification of teachers in gifted education – with the exception of the certificate offered at UM.
<https://coehs.umt.edu/departments/currinst/Gifted%20Education/default.php>
- At MSU-Bozeman, there is a course on exceptional learners that pre-service teachers (K-8) are required to take. All students in the Teacher Education Program (K-8, 5-12, and K-12) are required to complete EDSP 306 Exceptional Learners. Course Description: Categories of exceptionality and implications for educators. Historical, societal, familial and educational attitudes; legal requirements of Preschool Amendments, IDEA and ADA including IEPs, IFSPs, 504s, FBAs, and BIPs. Identification, intervention, and best practices including multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and RTI.
- Montana Office of Public Instruction does not audit that school districts either identify and/or serve gifted students (even though identifying and serving gifted students is part of the Montana Constitution)
- Montana school districts report identifying 4,800 gifted students statewide which is 3.2% of Montana students while research suggests that roughly 6% of students are gifted
- 17 of the 56 counties in Montana report 0 gifted students

Meeting materials

<http://leg.mt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2017-2018/Education/Meetings/Jan-2018/jan-2018.asp>

Video of the January 22nd meeting

http://montanalegislature.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=8&clip_id=25113

Agenda

<http://leg.mt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2017-2018/Education/Meetings/Jan-2018/January%202018%20final%20agenda.pdf>

Selected Sessions

- HJ 1 study - Gifted and Talented Students
- Current landscape of G&T programs in MT; estimates of program costs - Julia Cruse, OPI
- Best practices in identifying and serving G&T students - Dr. Estee Aiken, UM Western; Dr. Tracy Missett, UM; Dr. Sarah Pennington, MSU (Drs. Missett and Pennington via WebEx)
- What advocates suggest - Julie Merritt, MT AGATE
- Public comment
- Committee questions and discussion

HJ 1 study - The role of educator preparation programs in serving students with special needs

- Dr. Tricia Seifert, Education Department Head, MSU - Bozeman
- Dr. Mary Susan Fishbaugh, Dean of College of Education, MSU – Billings
- Peter Donovan, Executive Director, Board of Public Ed
- Committee questions and discussion

Panel presentation and discussion on recruitment and retention efforts - What's happening now? How can the Legislature help?

- Rural Educator Recruitment and Retention Task Force - Angela McLean, OCHE; Drs. Seifert, Fishbaugh, and Tharp
- Rural Student Teacher Incentives through the MREA-MUS Educator Fellows Program - Dennis Parman, MREA
- RISE4MT - Dr. Kirk Miller, School Administrators of Montana; Marco Ferro, MEA-MFT
- Public comment
- Committee questions and discussion

In separate discussions with Estee Aiken (President of MT AGATE), she indicated that MT AGATE will contract with a lobbyist to advance their legislative goals which include obtaining more state funding for gifted education.