



Budget & Education Working Group

Group D: Sustainability & Tax Burden June Meeting Summary

Below are notes from comments made by the Budget & Education Working Group members.

Narrative:

The group shared concerns about turnover, working conditions, and insufficient pay, with many teachers leaving earlier and mid-career. Proposals to increase teacher pay and funding for schools were discussed, along with the potential impact of budget cuts on larger and smaller schools. The group also explored ideas to generate additional revenue for schools and implementing a funding formula for schools of different sizes. The discussion touched upon property taxes, federal funding, and the potential impact of taxing out-of-state property owners to increase funding Montana's education system.

Discussion Points:

- Teacher Retention & Recruitment
 - Discussed a holistic approach to teacher retention: pay, mentorship, work environment...
 - Teacher pay is biggest issue, but other factors increase turnover.
 - Teacher Leaders: avenue other than administration to progress in their field. Opportunities for growth.
 - Teacher mentorship: expand intensive teacher mentorship.
 - Childcare programs for teachers.
 - More time for teachers: more preparation and development time.
- Cost of Living
 - Teachers cannot afford to live within the communities they work in.
 - Health insurance costs – interested to see where the insurance trust fund goes. Can this type of model be used for other issues.
 - Building Maintenance Trust Fund- Legislature provides funding for a pot that is set to grow for larger term building maintenance projects.
- Funding Formula
 - Discussed equating funding to needed teachers vs ANB count.
 - This shouldn't just shift money. Schools are still underfunded.
 - Funding formula should take the size of schools into account. Tying funding to teachers assist smaller schools more than larger schools.
 - Set aside funding for programs that the community prioritizes. Innovative classes and programs get cut during financial strain. Have set funding and requirements for these programs.
- Behavioral Issues
 - Increased behavioral issues with students following COVID.
 - Can create domino effect in classroom where other students are impacted.
- Increase Revenue Sources
 - Property Tax Burden vs School Funding

- Tax out-of-state resident homes or short-term rental homers at a higher rate to reduce burden on Montana residents.
- Grandfather in property taxes for residents so that increasing property value does not affect current residents as much. (Con – this can create property lock where people do not move)
- Federal funding for education is lacking
 - IDEA not fully funded
 - State Representatives should put more pressure on federal representatives for education funding.
- Increase the capture of tourism taxes. How can we capture more taxes from tourism for education purposes. Resort tax...
- Diverse revenue sources. Not one source will solve the funding problem.
 - Funding should be directly tied to school funding.