



Budget & Education Working Group

Group D: Sustainability & Tax Burden

May Meeting Summary

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

Identified Obstacles:

- Funding formula is broken, schools need more funding. The formula is not sustainable in the short or long term.
- Unable to pass levies. Taxpayers unwilling to take on a higher property tax burden or support levies.
 - Need to strengthen relationship between community and schools.
- Inflationary pressures
 - Cost of living
 - Building maintenance; utility price increases
- Relying on ANB isn't working, hard when kids leave or enter school. Still need to have grades even when schools lose some students.
- Teacher turnover:
 - Teacher workload; Low wages for starting teachers; Cost of Living.
- Behavioral and mental health issues for students: Also affects work environment for teachers.
- Still dealing with the effects of COVID: learning loss.
- Loss of revenue sources in communities- ie: Lumber yards close affects revenue base.

Discussed Solutions:

- Funding Formulas Changes
 - Different funding formulas for AA, A, B & C schools
 - 4 funding formulas based on diversity of districts.
 - 2 different formulas based on population and based on programs.
- Bring in more revenue by:
 - Tax out of state-owned homes, 2nd homes, short term rentals at a higher rate.
 - Lease state lands at market value.
 - Increase gas tax or flag certain percentage of gas tax for education. Capture taxes from tourists driving through MT.
- Increases in funding needs to be tied to actual inflation.
- Add language to law that requires funding for activities: art, gym, music...
- Reduce administrative burden. What do schools have to do that is redundant that can be eliminated?