



Budget & Education Working Group

Group G: School Budgeting June Meeting Summary

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

Narrative:

The group focused on teacher retention and recruitment, considering factors contributing to teachers leaving the profession and the need for leadership to emphasize the importance and respect for teachers' work. Community engagement and education were also seen as important factors in improving the situation. The impact of inflation on education funding and the issue of property taxes was also addressed.

They proposed the idea of per-student allotments for specific expenses such as safety and security, similar to what Michigan has done. The group discussed the importance of tying funding to required teacher expenses and suggested partnering with tech companies and leveraging donations and volunteers from the community.

They mentioned the need to simplify the funding formula for schools in Montana, while also considering the varying needs of different districts. They also discussed finding other revenue sources for education, including looking into where marijuana and lottery money goes, and the challenges of collective bargaining agreements between school districts. challenges in getting people to volunteer, legislative changes affecting funding, and the need for levies to be passed.

Discussion Points:

- Other State Inspiration
 - Montana should review the recent changes made in other states such as Tennessee. Weigh successes & failures.
- Teacher Recruitment & Retention
 - Cultural factors effecting retention
 - Teachers do not feel valued
 - How do we incentive a career in education? Can we provide incentive for teachers to stay past year 5 and make teaching a career.
 - Mentor teachers throughout career.
- State funding streams
 - Safety & security: difficult to levy for safety & security expenses. Those expenses have to be included, but cost has increased with this new technology and inflation.
 - Funding for expenses per student: safety and security allocation per student. Similar to IEFA.
 - Technology costs per student.
 - Michigan & Maine have made statewide contracts for certain technology needs. Partner with technology companies.
- Community Engagement
 - More partnerships with businesses for technology and safety. Tax incentives.
 - Misconception from public about what lottery and marijuana funds are used for. Public believes that property tax revenue only goes to public schools.

- Communities should work together to educate communities on education funding and encourage volunteers.
 - Tax rebate for school donations: cap needs to be increased. The cap is hit too quickly.
- Funding Formula
 - Discussed proposals that include a higher emphasis on quality educator payments.
 - Political ad tax should go to education.
 - Cautious to balance the needs of small and large districts. Work to not pit different schools district against each other for funding.
 - Take the needs of a district into account. Higher costs of living, needs of the students.
 - Move the focus away from ANB.
- Funding Formula
 - Caution on moving from student to teacher focus
 - Providing funding on quantity of teachers may cause repercussions during tighter fiscal times.
 - Local control is a core tenet of Montana, but it also adds costs for duplications.
 - Consolidation or annexing of bordering school districts: reduce administrative costs, lower property taxes, and increase money available for teacher salaries.