

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 25

2 INTRODUCED BY B. BARKER, T. BROCKMAN

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4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT STRUCTURE AND TAXATION IN
6 ADVANCE OF THE FORMATION OF THE SCHOOL FUNDING INTERIM COMMISSION DURING THE 2025-
7 2026 INTERIM; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE
8 69TH LEGISLATURE.

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10 WHEREAS, section 20-9-309, MCA, requires the Legislature to form the School Funding Interim
11 Commission, pursuant to section 5-20-301, MCA, at least every 10 years, and the commission was last formed
12 during the 2015-2016 interim; and

13 WHEREAS, the 2015-2016 School Funding Interim Commission prioritized "District Size, Structure, and
14 Equity" among four topics it chose to focus on, but the commission ultimately concluded that "further study is
15 needed" and urged that its work in this area be "used as a starting point and guide for future efforts"; and

16 WHEREAS, school funding is complicated and having a group of legislators cultivate greater
17 understanding of school funding in advance of the "decennial study" will allow the School Funding Interim
18 Commission to hit the ground running; and

19 WHEREAS, the Education Interim Committee and the Education Interim Budget Committee
20 collaborated effectively during the 2021-2022 interim.

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22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
23 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

24 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
25 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to examine:

- 26 (1) the work of the 2015-2016 School Funding Interim Commission:
27 (a) generally, to gauge how the recommendations of the commission have or have not been
28 utilized in the last decade; and

1 (b) specifically, how the commission's work on the topic of "District Size, Structure, and Equity"
2 might be continued;

3 (2) taxpayer equity in education, including the ways in which the existing school funding formula
4 succeeds and fails in ensuring the equality of educational opportunity for all school children, regardless of the
5 property tax wealth of the school district in which a child's family resides;

6 (3) how the reorganization of school district boundaries might enhance educational opportunities
7 and student outcomes as well as result in increased operational efficiencies and lower property taxes; and

8 (4) the formation of the School Funding Interim Commission under sections 5-20-301 and 20-9-
9 309, MCA, including any statutory changes that might support a successful "decennial study" of school funding
10 during the 2025-2026 interim.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Education Interim Committee and the Education Interim Budget
12 Committee are encouraged to collaborate if one of them is assigned the study.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
14 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2024.

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
16 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 69th Legislature.

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