

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 63

2 INTRODUCED BY L. REKSTEN, E. TILLEMANN
34 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON IMPROVING EARLY LITERACY AND NUMERACY; AND
6 REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.
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8 WHEREAS, early literacy and early numeracy skills are foundational to children's overall learning; and

9 WHEREAS, reading and mathematics proficiency rates among Montana schoolchildren are alarmingly
10 and persistently low and remain a cause for concern; and11 WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature created early literacy targeted intervention programs in 2023 and
12 may modify those programs in 2025; and13 WHEREAS, there is a growing convergence of evidence regarding the science of reading that is
14 grounded in rigorous research that encompasses cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and education; and15 WHEREAS, research indicates that children who engage in early numeracy activities demonstrate
16 improved problem-solving skills and mathematical fluency as they progress through their education; and17 WHEREAS, it is crucial that efforts to improve early literacy and numeracy are coordinated between
18 parents and all of the entities with a role in establishing policy and guiding early literacy and numeracy
19 development; and20 WHEREAS, despite these investments and advances, the critical importance of developing literacy and
21 numeracy in young children warrants legislative attention.
2223 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
24 THE STATE OF MONTANA:25 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
26 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to conduct a study on improving early literacy and numeracy.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee:

28 (1) collaborate in conducting the study with:

- 1 (a) the Board of Public Education;
- 2 (b) the Office of Public Instruction;
- 3 (c) school district trustees, administrators, curriculum specialists, early grade teachers,
- 4 instructional coaches, reading and math specialists, special education teachers, and teachers of English
- 5 learners;
- 6 (d) parents and parent and family advocacy organizations;
- 7 (e) early childhood education providers and organizations, including Head Start;
- 8 (f) the Montana State Library;
- 9 (g) national experts on early literacy and numeracy; and
- 10 (h) policymakers from states with exemplary and effective early literacy and numeracy programs;
- 11 (2) develop a basic understanding of:
- 12 (a) the importance of evidence-based and research-supported curriculum and instruction for
- 13 reading and math beginning at age 4 and continuing through 3rd grade;
- 14 (b) the return on investment for early literacy and numeracy programs; and
- 15 (c) the impact of early literacy and numeracy initiatives outside of school related to:
- 16 (i) the importance of parental involvement in early literacy and numeracy efforts; and
- 17 (ii) how those initiatives can be better leveraged to improve early learning outcomes; and
- 18 (3) examine and seek improvement of early literacy and numeracy assessment and data systems
- 19 to better inform:
- 20 (a) teachers of student progress and needs; and
- 21 (b) district leaders and state policymakers of the effectiveness of specific policies, curricula, and
- 22 instructional strategies in order to maximize the return on investment.

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review

24 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,

26 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

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