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Governor Bullock and K-12 Public Education Advocacy Groups United on K-12 Related Proposals in Special Session

Bullock: "We came up with a solution that preserves the constitutionality of our funding formula, and protects students and taxpayers alike."

Governor Steve Bullock and key K-12 public education advocacy groups today announced their mutual support for K-12 related proposals advanced by Governor Bullock for next week's special session of the Montana Legislature.

"After taking into consideration the concerns voiced by Montanans across the state, including from education advocacy groups, I believe it is essential that we protect investments in K-12 education, including the statutory inflationary adjustments," said Governor Bullock. "Together we came up with a solution to preempt attacks on and preserve the constitutionality of our funding formula and protects students and taxpayers alike, and I deeply appreciate the support for this responsible solution."

The K-12 education proposal for the session includes a repeal of the remaining transportation, combined fund and other remaining block grants (starting in FY19, impact of \$11.6 million) that the 2017 Legislature had already reduced by 80% in House Bill 647, and a two-year temporary reduction of \$1.6 million in state transportation aid. The proposal also includes a delay and transfer of the school facility and technology account until next biennium (\$8.2 million). The proposal also includes protection of local taxpayers, by granting school districts temporary flexibility in accessing fund balances across most funds to eliminate property taxes that might otherwise be caused by this proposal.

A joint statement of support was released by Denise Williams, executive director of the Montana Association of School Business Officials, Eric Feaver, President of MEA-MFT, Dianne Burke, Executive Director of the Montana Quality Education Coalition, Dennis Parman, Executive Director of the Montana Rural Education Association, Lance Melton, Executive Director of the Montana School Boards Association and Kirk Miller, Executive Director of the School Administrators of Montana:

"We have long-appreciated Governor Bullock's support for Montana's public schools and recognize this is part of a responsible solution to Montana's budget challenges. His efforts to work with each of us on K-12 proposals for the special session will protect the interests of students in Montana's public schools, and vest elected school boards with the flexibility they need to watch out for the interests of local property taxpayers."

Denise Williams Eric Feaver Dianne Burke Dennis Parman Lance Melton Kirk Miller
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