

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

August 24, 2015

By: Telephone conference call

The August 24, 2015 meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Governor Steve Bullock. Roll call was taken. Present were members: Fran Albrecht, Bill Johnstone, Bob Nystuen, Martha Sheehy, Paul Tuss, Sharon Carroll, Darlene Schottle, Mary Jo Bremner, John Edwards, Jesse Barnhart, Paul Anderson and Ex-officio members: Commissioner Christian, Superintendent Juneau and Governor Bullock.

Governor Bullock thanked the Board members for being there and thanked them for their service to the people of Montana. He expressed appreciation to them for taking time away from business, activities, and family to give to education for Montana's students.

Governor Bullock stated that this was a big week in many Montana schools with the start of school where we are giving our most precious resource to someone else's care. Exciting things are happening in Montana where our 8th graders are leading the nation in science and coming in 6th in both reading and math. Our graduation rate is the highest since records have been kept and is on the rise. Montana is employing tools to ensure students don't waste time doing remedial courses when they enter college. Montana is working to match workforce needs to what higher education produces. Education is a big factor in economic success. The unemployment rate for Montana is below the national average and our state consistently ranks best in the nation for entrepreneurs.

Governor Bullock acknowledged that education had significant successes during the last legislative session. Inflationary increases to the education budget passed early and without controversy. At the K-12 level the Legislature invested \$2 million in additional funds to expand access to career and technical education training programs. They negotiated funding to be able to continue to freeze tuition at the college level. Substantial investment in research at the college level which will promote research in many areas. By working with the Legislature, scholarships were established using state lottery funds to provide incentives for students in STEM fields. The Montana Legislature made a significant effort to promote and preserve native languages in the state.

There were many reasons to celebrate the advancement of public education during the legislative session. The Governor stated his biggest disappointment was the Legislature's failure to fund early childhood education programs so they could be available across the state. Montana will be able to expand and develop programs in the highest need areas in the state through the Montana Preschool Development Grant, but Governor Bullock feels we can do better.

Another highlight since the Board's last meeting is the continued growth of dual enrollment opportunities based on the collaboration between Higher Education and K-12 Education. The number of high school students taking dual enrollment courses has nearly doubled since the Governor took office. At Great Falls high school graduation last spring, some graduates also received associates degrees from the Great Falls College as well as certificates in high demand fields. Over 1/3 of dual enrollment students are receiving credits at a 2- or 4-year college or university or on-line. The remainder are getting their credits in the high school building. There has been good progress in incentivizing teachers to teach dual enrollment courses. Teachers get a coupon for teaching a college level course which can be used by themselves or their family for college expenses.

Montana families saved \$3 million in tuition last year by earning credits in high school. Dual enrollment students have higher retention, better academic performance, are better prepared for college and have higher first year GPAs. These students are better prepared for the workforce, even without earning a 2 or 4 year degree. The dual enrollment program gives students an opportunity to explore options in other careers. Montana is seeing great partnerships between K-12 education, higher education and private employers. Dual enrollment is an opportunity for kids who never thought they were college material.

Board of Regent report:

Chair Tuss reported public colleges and universities are providing tremendous access and support to Montana students and families. They benefit from a strong partnership between the Governor, the K-12 education community, the Montana Legislature and the University system. The Montana University System strategic plan is to make college affordable, run an efficient system, and make sure the end result is effective.

The 2015 Legislative session was productive making college more affordable and investing in new state funding to continue to allow students to thrive without raising tuition. Montana's performance based funding at 2 and 4 year college levels will fund campuses on how well they retain and graduate students. Montana was formerly exporting students to the benefit of other states. Now, more than ¾ of Montana graduates are working and paying taxes in Montana one year after graduation. One example of educational effectiveness is the partnership between colleges and public school districts. Our colleges produce the best teachers and the school districts provide for and nourish those teachers.

Board of Public Education report:

BPE Vice Chair, Paul Anderson reported for the Board of Public Education. Mr. Anderson commented that now is an exciting time as kids go back to school. With his experience as a science teacher and taking a couple of years off to work with teachers around the country and world, he feels education is going in the right direction in Montana.

The BPE approved two new members for CSPAC, Debbie Hendricks and Sabrina Steketee and two new board members were appointed by the Governor as members of the BPE, Dr. Darlene Schottle and Jesse Barnhart.

At their May meeting the Board approved the BASE aid payment schedule and accreditation for Montana schools. They also approved the Superintendent's recommendation for Variances to Standards and approved Notices of Public Hearing to amend ARM Title 10, chapter 63 and chapter 57. The Board approved new curricular programs in Early Childhood Education at UM-Western, UM-Missoula and the Salish Kootenai College and Theater Education at UM-Missoula. The Board held a joint meeting in May with CSPAC and has updated the BPE website.

Commissioner Christian's report:

Commissioner Christian concurred with the Governor and Mr. Anderson that their offices are working well together at an unprecedented level. Commissioner Christian reported that the University system just received two US Department of Labor grants totaling \$40 million. One is RevUp Montana which works to develop stackable credentials across the state. They are working with 100 industry

partners to create recognized credentials and to match work force needs with curriculum. The second is the health care grant to improve access to health care nursing education. They are redesigning the two-year college nursing curriculum to flow seamlessly to a 4-year degree.

They are part of a national and state dialogue called Complete College Montana and have embarked upon an effort to create a math pathways initiative to provide a range of pathways for all students to pursue the course content they need for their degrees. They are working closely in an area called "co-requisite" which will allow students to be enrolled in courses that ultimately count toward graduation. The STEMS program has already awarded 400 students a scholarship at \$1000 each this fall.

Work is being done on placement as the current placement test is going away. They are pursuing a more effective and reliable alternative test and are coming up with more effective and understandable college course prerequisites. There is a placement group working on how to do statewide placement in math and English using in part, testing, high school GPA, and when you were last enrolled in courses.

Superintendent Juneau's report:

Superintendent Juneau reported that she had been doing a lot of traveling, including Browning for their back to school teacher event, Great Falls' back to school event where there were 1200 teachers in the gym, and is also going to Harlem for a GMM kick-off event. The OPI is talking with students and teachers about attendance and why attendance matters. This is being picked up by several schools where they are talking with students about showing up to be successful in school. PSA announcements on Attendance Matters will be starting in August and several schools are having Attendance Matters events this fall.

OPI has been working in partnership with the BPE in the standards review process. They are working with writing groups for arts and health/physical education standards and then will be using the negotiated rulemaking process required by the last legislative session. Committees will be formed to review the rules, make comments and recommendations. The Superintendent will review the rules and then they will go to the BPE and the Education and Local Government committee together with an Economic Impact Statement.

Together with the Governor, Superintendent Juneau will be hosting a tribal youth summit in October.

The Graduation Matters Montana initiative is going strong with 53 communities involved. Superintendent Juneau reported that Montana had the highest graduation rate this year since OPI started keeping the information. The dropout rate was cut by 1/3 across state last year. GMM is sponsored by private sector investments and partnerships which continue to grow. Over 90 % of the funds donated go directly to local school GMM teams.

Superintendent Juneau has a Student Advisory board meeting twice a year with students from across Montana. She will be meeting with 35 students this fall.

The OPI received a preschool development grant and Superintendent Juneau stated her appreciation for all of the partnerships working on this. There is a growing discussion in communities around early education and collaboration between Head Start, public preschools and kindergarten

teachers. There are grants available for preschool teachers to go to school and get a degree in Early Childhood Education. Graduation matters is a program that needs to start in preschool continuing to high school.

Over 2700 applications were received last year for GearUp during college application week. There has been a lot of feedback from students that they would not have applied for college without that help. The OPI is working with the School Assistance Foundation and Retired Senior Volunteer Programs on a pilot project to place volunteers in high schools to help with college and career readiness.

In September GMM and SAF are partnering with the College Readiness Grant to increase FAFSA applications. Over the past three years this collaboration has resulted in an additional \$4.3 million in financial assistance for Montana students.

Main Street Montana Update:

Governor Bullock introduced Jim Molloy to provide an update on the Main Street Montana project. Governor Bullock created this initiative shortly after taking office to engage in private sector driven philosophy and framework to maintain a climate for business and workers. Many have been instrumental in this effort. The Governor thanked Bill Johnstone for his commitment, leadership and patience and Commissioner Christian and his staff and Superintendent Juneau and her staff for their support of this effort.

Mr. Molloy stated that the Main Street Montana initiative was a plan with five principles that the goals and tasks are built around:

1. Train and educate tomorrow's workforce today
2. Create a climate that attracts, retains and grows businesses in Montana
3. Build upon Montana's foundation
4. Market Montana
5. Nurture emerging industries and encourage innovation.

The plan has goals, objectives, and tasks to focus on driving the plan forward. A key component is based on significant private sector engagement and involvement. This involvement is through key industry networks. There are 13 key industry networks and 9 are active now. Those networks are comprised of business leaders throughout the state. The Governor has asked participants in networks to review the plan and step outside plan to come up with recommendations. They will be submitting action items and recommendations to the Governor. In this process they have had significant engagement and support from the Commissioner's office and the Superintendent's office to help and facilitate this process. There should soon be some significant initiatives for the Governor's consideration.

Some things previously discussed are related to tasks in the plan, such as the Department of Labor grants with RevUp and health care, dual enrollment, GMM, and early childhood education. The Department of Labor is working with OCHE to further apprenticeship programs. The MSM plan is to align the good things going on in Montana to make them more effective. They are developing an asset map which will identify the various programs going on and where they are located. They are also working with OCHE on aligning data systems so they talk to each other so we have the ability to share data in a way to see what is happening and identify targets for improvement.

Governor Bullock will be hosting a workforce symposium at MSU regarding training

tomorrow's workforce today. Part of the MSM plan focuses on native communities. There is nearly full employment in Montana at 4% except at native communities which are in the double digits. Lieutenant Governor McLean is working with native communities to define immediate action items to improve working relationships with our tribal colleges and the 2- and 4-year university systems.

There were no public comments.

Governor Bullock thanked everyone for joining in the call to service in Montana. The boards are working strongly together and exciting things are being accomplished as individual units and collectively.

The next meeting will be November 12, 2015 at the Capitol Building at 9:00 a.m.

Denise Juneau, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Secretary to the Board of Education