

**SCHOOL RENEWAL COMMISSION  
CORE GROUP MEETING  
JULY 11, 2003-9:00 a.m.  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
MINUTES**

A meeting of the school renewal commission was convened on Friday, July 11, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. in the Governor's Office, Lieutenant Governor Karl Ohs, presiding. Those in attendance included Senator Bob Keenan, President of the Senate; Linda McCulloch, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Karl Ohs, Lieutenant Governor; Kirk Miller, Chairman of the Board of Public Education; Representative Holly Raser, Missoula; Pat Wagman (representing Speaker of the House, Doug Mood); and Senator Don Ryan. Introductions were made by all of the participants at the table. Mr. Ohs stated that public comment would be made at the end of the meeting, to include questions from the audience members.

Governor Martz presented opening comments, thanking members for all of the work they are undertaking. She urged the committee to re-examine the school funding formula, as a priority, and to identify a consistent source of adequate funding for education. The governor feels there is a strong need for this commission to address the concerns of the ability of Montana's education infrastructure to meet its constitutional obligation to provide for an effective and efficient system for free quality public education, elementary and secondary. Governor Martz suggested that members, who have ideas for funding sources, send them to her office. She thanked all for their interest in education and for their forthcoming hard work.

Lt. Governor Ohs noted that the Governor has been a strong proponent of the commission since its inception and he also stressed a bipartisan effort is critical to the success of the work of the commission.

He turned the meeting over to Chairman Miller to give an overview, a history of how the commission was developed, and the intended results. Chairman Miller related that the Board of Public Education began discussion of concerns and responsibilities of the Constitutional charge to provide leadership and direction for the education system in Montana. The next step involved the crafting of a Position Paper on Public School Funding and Structure. The issues covered by this paper include:

- Adequacy of funding.
- Simplification of the funding system so it is understandable.
- Stability, equity and sustainability of the revenue stream dedicated to support the system.
- Development of an effective delivery system of services (structure).

The end result of this paper is, "An understandable, adequately funded, sustainable, efficient system of public schools!"

Lt. Governor Ohs asked those assembled to give their thoughts on how the commission should function free of politics in order to put the students first. Those comments are as follows:

Superintendent McCulloch stated that her perspective comes from 20 years in the classroom. Issues she felt should be addressed include funding, health insurance, and how to attract, recruit, and retain experienced teachers in the schools in Montana.

Senator Keenan, who serves as President of the Senate was invited to serve on the commission due to the language in HB 736. He is pleased to be serving as he is the parent of a public school student, two home schooled students and a higher education student, he also feels he has a passion for education.

Representative Wagman, who has served nine years as a school trustee in Livingston, feels we need to look at the individual pieces of education, such as the constitutional structure, or the educational makeup. He feels we also need to research how other states' structures are set up. He urged us to become more productive with the states' tax dollars and employees. Representative Wagman expressed that one of his biggest fears is that the education establishment will dominate this commission.

Representative Raser, Representative from Missoula, educator for 22 years, expressed a need for schools to be structured in a way that is best for kids, not what is best for our structural or financial needs.

Senator Ryan, Great Falls, father of five children, including a special needs child, feels we need to develop our resources (students), and to prepare our kids to meet the "new" world and its challenges. He feels our current education system is too heavily reliant on property taxes, and we need to change this. Our funding formula needs to address the varying needs of the different school districts.

Chairman Miller expressed that differing viewpoints will be conducive to a good working commission. Revenue stream, structure, and adequate funding were a concern of his, as was the general consensus.

Lt. Governor Ohs, stated that the next item on the agenda was to decide who will be on the commission, and to get this commission going, in order to take a look at the "big picture" of education. Membership must be at least 10 and no more than 25 entities. Due to the language of the bill, one of the entities included will be the Youth Correctional Facility.

Senator Ryan asked how this commission would be funded, and Lt. Governor Ohs stated that private funds, hopefully, would be provided by the invited entities in order to send their representatives to the table. Much discussion was given to the process of how to select potential entities. It was decided to draft a list of stakeholders and then choose organizations that would represent the interests of the stakeholders. A list of sixteen stakeholders was decided upon. They included:

- Local Government
- School Boards of Trustees
- American Indians
- Teachers
- Parents
- Agriculture
- Special Needs
- School Administrators
- School Business Officials
- Rural Schools
- Large Schools

- Businesses
- Students
- Taxpayers
- Montana Quality Education Association
- Labor

The next topic of discussion was how to handle the leadership of the commission. Lt. Governor Ohs urged the group to maintain nonpartisanship by allowing each member of the core group to chair commission meetings. He also believed that a rotating chair for each meeting would limit party control. The issue of each member sending a representative in their absence was to be discussed at the next meeting of the renewal commission.

The issue of process, which was the next item on the agenda, sets the organization of the commission's work. Some ground rules will be put in place at the next meeting. A discussion on the identification of committees and who will be chairing each of these committees followed. It was decided to postpone the formation of committees until the next meeting of the commission. The need for a facilitator to ensure productivity was mentioned. National Governor's Association and the National Association of State Legislators were brought up as organizations to check with for information.

A timeline for the commission's work was the next item of discussion. The statutory deadline is 9/15/04. Lt. Governor Ohs, Steve Meloy and Kris Goss will work together on presenting a proposed budget for the first full meeting of the Commission. August 4, 2003 is the date of the next scheduled core meeting. The full commission is scheduled to meet in September (date to be determined). The deadline for submission of names of members to represent the above-mentioned stakeholders will be before 9:00 a.m. on August 4, 2003.

Topics to be included on the agenda for next full commission meeting will include budget, solidifying the commission, revisiting the timeline, and the need for a facilitator from the consensus council.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:42 p.m.