

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION RECAP

June 9, 2025 School Board meeting

HB 252

Key provisions include:

1. Increase in teacher base salaries. Two times the QEP.

- **Elem = \$466,862 additional**
- **HS = \$196,670 additional**

BASE Teacher Pay must be at least: 62% of Average Teacher-FY26 – increases proportionally to 70% by FY2030. Pay Defines FTE for calculating average teacher pay. Definition of average teacher pay, excludes bonuses, stipends, extra duty contracts.

2. Resource sharing incentives. Ex. Three districts sharing a staff member get to retain a fulltime quality educator and qualified staff payment each

3. Expansion of advanced learning opportunities. Restores full funding to the program.

Advanced opportunity aid:

ELEM: 4.5% of QEP Entitlement = \$42,327

HS: 30% of QEP Entitlement = \$117,666

4. The bill addresses critical challenges - high cost of housing for school staff . **Housing Cost Budget Authority**. Provides increased budget authority for school districts impacted by high housing costs to address those costs. Example: Flathead County costs 100% higher than median value in the State divided by 60 = **1.60% expansion in max General Fund budget authority**. **Would require voter approved over base to attain this new max threshold**. The additional budget authority must be expended on specific items: Housing Stipends/Construction of Housing/Rental Assistance, etc. .

5. identifies duties of a clerk to qualify for a qualified staff payment. **\$3,783**

6. The legislation further establishes a "**Future Ready**" funding component, encouraging schools to equip students with essential skills and credentials for their post-graduation journeys. To enhance transparency and accountability, a school funding data dashboard will be created, allowing stakeholders to gain valuable insights into funding effectiveness and equity.

- **Future ready payment added as BASE aid component**

HB 15

AN ACT APPLYING INFLATIONARY ADJUSTMENTS TO SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA COMPONENTS

- **3% Increase**
 - **Elem = \$136,050 additional** (reduced for enrollment decline) **1.12 %**
 - **HS = \$144,933 additional** **2.24 %**

HB 260

AN ACT INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF PROFESSIONAL STIPENDS PAID TO TEACHERS HOLDING NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS CERTIFICATION AND PROVIDING A MECHANISM FOR ANNUAL INFLATIONARY ADJUSTMENT TO THE STIPENDS

An annual stipend of up to ~~\$2,500~~—an amount equivalent to 85% of the Quality Educator Payment amount provided in 20-9-306

Current: Stipend Amount: 10% of Base = **\$3,875**. State pays \$2,000.

Proposed: 85% of QEP = **\$3,215**. State pays \$2,732.

- 7.50 FTE with this stipend.

HB 340

AN ACT CREATING THE MONTANA B.E.S.T. TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

This bill aims to establish the Montana B.E.S.T. Teacher Training Program, which is designed to provide targeted training and support for early career teachers during their first three years in the profession. The program, administered by the Office of Public Instruction, seeks to enhance teacher retention and improve educational outcomes for students in Montana. Key features of the program include connecting early career teachers with experienced mentors, establishing clear criteria for mentor selection based on teacher effectiveness, and providing ongoing training and support. The bill also emphasizes collaboration among various educational stakeholders and mandates annual reporting on the program's status and impact. The bill appropriates \$1 million from the state general fund for each year of the biennium starting July 1, 2025, specifically for the program's implementation. This funding will cover stipends for mentor teachers and early career teachers, as well as administrative costs. Notably, the appropriation is designated as a one-time-only funding source and will not be considered part of the ongoing base for future legislative sessions. Additionally, the act includes a termination date of June 30, 2031, indicating that the program will be reviewed and potentially re-evaluated before its continuation.

- \$2,500 stipends for mentor teachers;
- \$600 stipends for early career teachers that include a minimum amount of \$300 from the school district employing the early career teachers; and administrative costs not to exceed 15% of the state funding provided.

HB 22

AN ACT ALIGNING THE HOME VALUE AMOUNTS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT PROPERTY TAX IMPACT STATEMENTS WITH OTHERS IN STATUTE

Resolution of intent to increase nonvoted levy -- notice.

The estimated impacts of the increase or decrease on a home valued at ~~\$100,000~~ and a home valued at ~~\$200,000~~ homes valued at \$100,000, \$300,000, and \$600,000;

HB 250

Generally revise education laws related to out-of-district attendance.

CLARIFYING AND CONSOLIDATING PROVISIONS RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION RESPONSIBILITIES;

When a child attends an out of District school, the parent is responsible for transportation and the child is NOT an eligible transportee. The District of attendance may discretionally provide transportation for a child who is not an eligible transportee.

CLARIFYING THE TUITION AND TRANSPORTATION RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE FOR A CHILD WITH DISABILITY;

If the attendance agreement is for a child with a disability who has transportation included in the child's individualized education program, transportation must be paid by the District of Residence.

CLARIFYING PRORATED TUITION FOR PARTIAL YEAR ATTENDANCE

Tuition amounts for partial year attendance must be prorated based on the percentage calculated by dividing the number of days the student is enrolled by the number of pupil instruction days scheduled by the District of Attendance ion the year of attendance.

HB 744

AN ACT PROVIDING THAT A SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AIDE OR AUDIOLOGY AIDE IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE LICENSED

A speech-language pathology aide or audiology aide employed by a school district is not required to be licensed by the board; shall work under the supervision of a speech-language pathologist or an audiologist a minimum of 20% of the time may not perform work that requires the independent judgment of a speech-language pathologist or audiologist.

HB 231

Revise property tax rates for certain property

PROVIDING FOR A PROPERTY TAX REBATE ON A PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE BASED ON A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PROPERTY TAXES PAID FOR TAX YEAR 2024; THERE IS A REBATE OF MONTANA PROPERTY TAXES IN THE AMOUNT OF **\$400** OR THE AMOUNT OF TOTAL PROPERTY TAXES PAID, WHICHEVER IS LESS, FOR TAX YEAR 2024.

TEMPORARILY REDUCING CLASS FOUR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TAX RATES

~~1.35% of the market value~~

- 0.76% for the first \$50,000 of market value;
- 0.95% for the market value that is greater than \$50,001 and up to \$500,000;
- 1.15% for the market value that is greater than \$500,001 and up to \$750,000.
- 1.20% for the market value that is greater than \$750,001 and up to \$1 million.
- 1.40% for the market value that is greater than \$1,000,001 and up to \$1.50 million.
- 1.89% for the market value that is greater than \$1,500,001 and up to \$2 million.
- 2.2% greater than \$2 million.

Legislative findings -- local government charters and fixed mill levy limits superseded

- The local government ~~shall~~ may levy an amount not to exceed the number of mills levied in fiscal year 2026

HB 156

REVISING GUARANTEED TAX BASE AID LAWS

ENHANCING SCHOOL FUNDING EQUALIZATION BY REPLACING THE GUARANTEED-TAX-BASE-AID-SUPPORTED SCHOOL DISTRICT BASE LEVY WITH A GUARANTEED-TAX-BASE-AID-SUPPORTED COUNTYWIDE LEVY TO SUPPORT THE BASE BUDGETS OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

REPLACING DISTRICT GUARANTEED TAX BASE AID WITH COUNTY GUARANTEED TAX BASE AID IN SUPPORT OF THE NEW COUNTYWIDE LEVY

HB 156 revises **school levy taxation to County level rather than the by School District**. All school budgets would be levied to all property within the county rather than School District Boundaries.

- Current Law – GTB = District Tax Value compared to the statewide Tax Value to equalize (subsidize) Districts with lower tax values (less wealthy)

GTB is Eliminated as a Base Budget Funding Component.

SD6 FY25 BASE Budget \$15,309,235

State Funding 85% \$13,087,033.

- Direct State Aid = 44.7% of Basic and per ANB Entitlement.
- Quality Educator Entitlement
- Indian Ed for All Entitlement
- American Indian Achievement Gap
- Data for Achievement
- ~~State Guaranteed Tax Base (GTB)~~

Local Funding 15% – local property tax levy = Base Mills \$2,222,202

Replaces GTB with a County Wide Levy for BASE funding support.

- **NEW Countywide levies to support BASE budgets.** If Cfalls value WAS lower than county value than the District will see less support for the base budget, which would increase the local levy for the base budget.

Transition. The legislature intends this act to be fully operational in fiscal year 2027 with the first countywide levies to support BASE budgets levied in fiscal year 2027.

Tuition Revenue was previously used to reduce Base Mills and now it will be used to reduce overbase mill.

HB 483

LOWERING PROPERTY TAXES BY INCREASING THE ON-SCHEDULE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION; REVISING THE STATE-COUNTY SHARE OF ON-SCHEDULE REIMBURSEMENTS FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Requires the state to pay $\frac{3}{4}$ and the county to pay $\frac{1}{4}$ as opposed to split 50-50.

Did not receive the additional \$per mile reimbursement. Original Bill Draft – doubled the amount from \$1.80 to \$3.60, which was a resolution requested by our School Board.

School equalization and property tax reduction account . Statewide elementary guaranteed tax base ~~254% for fiscal year 2024 and by 259% for fiscal year 2025-262%~~

HB 515

AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING LAWS RELATED TO FUNDING FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY

School Major Maintenance Account

The school major maintenance amount is increased from \$15,000 to **\$40,000** per district starting in fiscal year 2026.

Increase in Per-ANB Multiplier:

- The per-ANB multiplier used to calculate the school major maintenance amount is increased from **\$110** to **\$115** per ANB (Average Number Belonging) starting in fiscal year 2026.

Increase in GTB to Ensure Against Local Tax Increase:

- The GTB multiplier for this formula is increased from 187% to **315%**, the effect of which is to fund the 50% (\$12 million) increase in funding for major maintenance with no increase in local taxes on a statewide basis.

- ELEM District current: \$193,200. New would be \$226,300. **Additional \$40k.**
- HS Current: \$92,550. New would be \$121,075. **Additional \$30k**

HB 168

AN ACT REVISING SCHOOL FUNDING LAWS TO PROVIDE THAT 3-YEAR-OLD AND 4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR INCLUSION IN ANB CALCULATIONS

PREK SPED Student Funding

$\$6,496 * 7$ (14 PT students) = **$\$45,472$ additional revenue**

HB 125

AN ACT REVISING ELECTION JUDGE QUALIFICATIONS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT ELECTIONS;
ALLOWING QUALIFIED REGISTERED ELECTORS IN THE COUNTY WHERE THE ELECTION IS BEING HELD TO
SERVE AS ELECTION JUDGES

HB 266

AN ACT ANALYZING THE ANNUAL INFLATION-RELATED ADJUSTMENTS TO K-12 BASE AID TO IMPROVE ALIGNMENT WITH THE DEFINITION OF "BASIC SYSTEM OF FREE QUALITY PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

ENSURING THAT THE GENERAL FUND FUNDING FORMULA IS SELF-EXECUTING AND INCLUDES A PROCESS FOR ENSURING ACCESS TO INFORMATION REGARDING EDUCATIONALLY RELEVANT AND ACCURATE ANNUAL INFLATIONARY ADJUSTMENTS

This subsection (2) does not limit the superintendent or the governor from recommending, or limit the legislature from adopting, inflationary adjustments other than those calculated in this section.

Beginning in fiscal year 2026 and then every even-numbered fiscal year thereafter, the superintendent of public instruction shall provide a report no later than September 1 to the education interim budget committee and the education interim committee and no later than December 31 to the legislative finance committee, regarding the educational relevance in the implementation of this section.

The report must include:

- (a) the increase in funding over the prior year on a per-ANB basis for the BASE aid elements budgeted to be provided to school districts in the current fiscal year and provided to school districts in the preceding 5 fiscal years, which must be reported in both dollar and percentage amounts, with the six percentages rounded to the nearest one hundredth;
- (b) the percentage change from July of the preceding year to July of the applicable year in the consumer price index for the current year and the preceding 5 years, with the six percentages rounded to the nearest one hundredth; and
- (c) a cumulative numerical comparison of the difference between the percentages