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2026 ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, June 10, 2026

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

MTSBA Headquarters



To: MTSBA Members
From: Rick Cummings, MTSBA President
Re: 2026 MTSBA Annual Meeting

Dear Trustees,

Thank you for your continued service and commitment to Montana's public schools. I appreciate all trustees who will be participating in this year's Annual Meeting, and I look forward to welcoming you to MTSBA Headquarters in Helena.

In accordance with Article III, Section 1 of the MTSBA Bylaws, the Board of Directors has called the 2026 Annual Meeting of the Montana School Boards Association. The meeting will convene on Wednesday, June 10, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the MTSBA Headquarters in Helena.

Your participation and engagement are important to the continued strength and success of our association, and I encourage all members to attend. Recognizing the importance of ensuring that all members have an opportunity to participate in decisions affecting the Association, input on all other matters of business will subsequently be gathered through electronic polling of the full membership. This approach is intended to broaden participation, reflect the perspectives of the entire membership, and support well-informed and representative outcomes.

I look forward to seeing you at the 2026 MTSBA Annual Meeting.

Rick Cummings
MTSBA President
Region 5 Director and Trustee

AGENDA

2026 Annual Meeting of MTSBA Membership

In accordance with Article III, Section 1 of the MTSBA Bylaws, the Board of Directors has called the Annual Meeting of the Montana School Boards Association to convene at MTSBA Headquarters, 863 Great Northern Blvd., Helena, MT, on Wednesday, June 10, 2026. The meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The purpose of the Annual Membership Meeting is to provide members with an opportunity for discussion and development of a shared understanding regarding informational materials, existing member-adopted positions, and proposals that may later be presented for an electronic vote of the membership. Consistent with MTSBA's commitment to knowledge-based decision-making and meaningful member engagement, the meeting will focus on dialogue, clarification, and the exchange of perspectives among members in attendance.

Consistent with that approach, substantive matters involving contested questions, competing proposals, or issues on which broader member participation is desirable are anticipated to be conducted through an electronic ballot of the full membership following the Annual Meeting rather than through votes taken from the floor at the meeting itself. While MTSBA's bylaws require representation from 15% of member districts (currently 47 districts) to establish a quorum for business at the Annual Meeting, current registration levels remain below that threshold. Regardless of whether a quorum is ultimately achieved, MTSBA believes that substantive matters are best addressed through a process that encourages broader statewide participation, greater transparency, and fuller member engagement. Accordingly, the only matters currently anticipated for action at the Annual Meeting itself are uncontested nominations and other procedural items for which no competing position exists.

The Order of Business at the Annual Meeting shall be:

1. Call to Order, Introductions, and Determination of Quorum
2. Discussion Items
 - a. MTSBA Principles and Guidelines
 - b. The Foundational Elements of MTSBA's DNA
 - c. MTSBA 2026 Membership Financial Report
 - d. FY28 Dues Revenue Estimate
 - e. Overview and Member Discussion Regarding Proposed Bylaws Amendments Recommended by the MTSBA Board
 - f. Overview and Member Discussion Regarding the MTSBA Legislative Platform Approved by the Delegate Assembly at MCEL 2025 for the 2027 Montana Legislative Session
 - g. Overview and Member Discussion Regarding the Election of the Montana School Boards Association Representative on the Montana High School Association Board of Directors
3. Quorum-Dependent Action Items The election of officers will be acted upon if a quorum is present. These items are being presented for action at the meeting because no opposition or contested election exists regarding the matters presented. Jennifer Hoffman and Stephanie Esch were unanimously recommended by the MTSBA Board for their respective positions and are running unopposed.
 - a. Confirmation of Jennifer Hoffman, Billings Public Schools, as President-Elect
 - b. Confirmation of Stephanie Esch, Stevensville Public Schools, as Vice President
4. Adjournment

MTSBA Board of Directors



Rick Cummings
President
Region 5
Cascade Public
Schools Trustee



Jennifer Hoffman
President Elect*
Billings Public
Schools Trustee



Stephanie Esch
Vice President Elect*
Region 6
Stevensville Public



Barb Riley
Region 1
Columbia Falls Public
Schools Trustee



Iris Kill Eagle
Region 2
Dodson Public
Schools Trustee
ISBC Chair



Sharon Anderson
Region 7
Dillon Elementary
Trustee



Kim Knobloch
Region 10
Lame Deer Public
Schools Trustee



Scott Walter
Region 11
East Helena Public
Schools Trustee



Lei-Anna Bertelsen
Bozeman Public
Schools Trustee



Tom Billteen
Butte Public Schools
Trustee



Bill Bronson
Great Falls
Public Schools Trustee



Siobhan Hathhorn
Helena
Public Schools Trustee



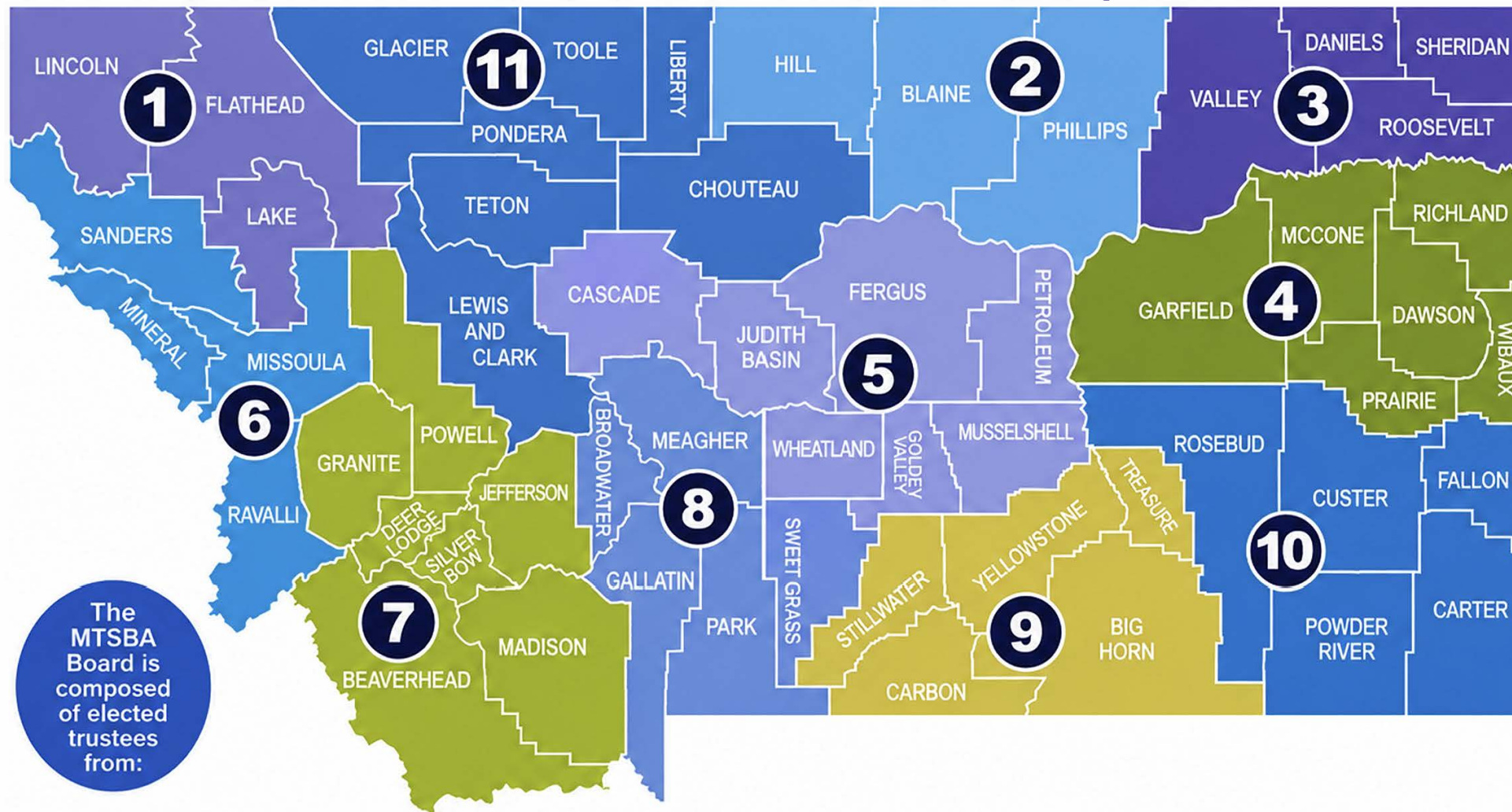
Brian Putnam
Kalispell
Public Schools Trustee



Arlene Walker-Andrews
Missoula
Public Schools Trustee

*Director positions currently open in Regions 3, 4, 8 and 9.
Subject to approval by the membership

Montana School Boards Association Board of Directors composition:



11 - Members from these Regions:

1. Flathead, Lake, and Lincoln
2. Blaine, Hill, and Phillips
3. Daniels, Roosevelt, Sheridan, and Valley
4. Dawson, Garfield, McCone, Prairie, Richland, and Wibaux
5. Cascade, Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland, Musselshell, Golden Valley, and Petroleum
6. Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli, and Sanders
7. Granite, Powell, Jefferson, Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Madison, and Silver Bow
8. Broadwater, Gallatin, Meagher, Park, and Sweet Grass
9. Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, and Yellowstone
10. Carter, Custer, Fallon, Powder River, and Rosebud
11. Glacier, Liberty, Pondera, Teton, Toole, Choteau, and Lewis & Clark

7 - MTSBA's Largest 7 Members:

1. Billings
2. Bozeman
3. Butte
4. Great Falls
5. Helena
6. Kalispell
7. Missoula

2 - Members from ISBC:

Chair and Vice Chair of ISBC have designated seats on the MTSBA Board.

These two directors are elected by and from the ISBC membership.

MTSBA PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

Presented for member information and discussion only unless otherwise noted.

Principles and Guidelines

Approved by the MTSBA Membership: August 2025

The purpose of this document is two-fold. First, it is intended to provide a framework of governance for school districts throughout Montana. You, as school board trustees, can review these Principles and Guidelines and use them as a guide to fulfill the Peoples' goal of developing the full educational potential of each child in your district. Secondly, this document identifies key advocacy issues that MTSBA will pursue on behalf of trustees, school districts, and each student in Montana in the pursuit of educational excellence.

Principle I

Alignment of efforts and activities with the Peoples' goal of developing the full educational potential of all the state's citizens while guaranteeing equality of educational opportunity to each person of the state.

Relevant Guidelines for School Boards:

School boards should:

1. Embrace excellence in the governance of their local public schools. This can be accomplished through coherent and aligned governance devoted to visionary and strategic based leadership, setting high expectations for all, embracing a culture of collaboration and team-building, and other practices and strategies that are focused on developing the full potential of each child.
2. School boards should remain focused on the success of each child in carrying out their statutory obligation to collectively bargain in good faith with their public employees in compliance with 39-31-305, MCA. Maintaining a focus on the individualized success of each child will help ensure that limited resources are used in the most effective and efficient manner possible in pursuing the people's goal of developing the full potential of each child.
3. Employ staff who are highly qualified and engaging.
4. Embrace the concept of personalized learning for all students embracing individualized, applied, work-based and distance learning opportunities to meet each child on their own terms to ensure student success. Create a safe environment for all that is conducive to learning, free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation.
5. Encourage and welcome parental and family involvement to help understand each child's needs.
6. Advocate in every possible manner for adequate school funding to pursue and accomplish the Peoples' goal of developing the full educational potential of each student.

Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:

MTSBA must:

1. Advocate for adequate, rational and flexible funding for schools, sufficient to allow school districts to meaningfully comply with and provide an education worthy of the definition of the basic system of free quality schools in 20-9-309, MCA.

Principle II

Recognition of the shared authority for education between the community, locally elected school boards, and the bodies with constitutional authority and responsibility for education, including the Governor, the Montana Board of Public Education, and the Legislature.

Relevant Guidelines for School Boards:

School boards should:

1. Strongly embrace and advocate for the preservation of locally-made decisions within our communities.
2. Conscientiously use local, state, and federal resources to successfully educate students.
3. Engage, educate, and enlist the support of community members regarding the public schools' charge of developing the full educational potential of each child.

Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:

MTSBA must:

1. Advocate for supervision and control of the schools in each district by the community-elected board of trustees working in collaboration with the community in which they serve as the best way to ensure that all students are college, career and life ready, equipped to choose and thrive in a career of their choice.
2. Support and advocate for proper exercise of the Board of Public Education's and the Legislature's respective authority. The Board of Public Education is to exercise "general supervision" over the basic system of free quality schools, which should be exercised in a manner that does not intrude on the more specific and expansive authority of elected school boards to "supervise and control" education in each community. The Legislature is to define the basic system of free quality schools and fund it rationally, recognizing the Board of Public Education's accreditation standards which represent the minimum standards upon which the basic system of free quality schools is built.
3. Advocate for and enforce the constitutional guarantee and requirement that all publicly funded K-12 education in Montana be supervised and controlled by school boards publicly elected by the qualified electors in each district as required by Article X, Section 8 and Article IV, Section 2 of the Montana Constitution.

Principle III

Equality of educational opportunity for each person of the state.

Relevant Guidelines for School Boards:

School boards should:

1. Ensure that all resident children have full access to the programs and resources of their local public schools.
2. Ensure the opportunity to succeed for each child.

Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:

MTSBA must:

1. Work to provide adequate and equitable funding so that local boards can provide each child's access to programs and services.
2. Protect the equal right to respect, dignity, and opportunity for each child.

Principle IV

Recognition of and commitment to the preservation of the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians.

Relevant Guidelines for School Boards:

School boards should:

1. Implement and maintain programs to preserve and educate its students regarding the cultural heritage and language of American Indian peoples and tribes.
2. Collaborate with American Indian peoples and tribes to ensure that educational programming is culturally relevant and in harmony with the corresponding efforts of tribal governments, education departments and tribal colleges.

Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:

MTSBA must:

1. Work to provide adequate funding for and state-wide commitment to Indian Education for All.
2. Recognize the negative impact that concentrated poverty can have on cultural preservation and pride and advocate for legislation to address and mitigate these negative impacts, including but not limited to advocacy for resources to address poverty, such as impact aid legislation.

Principle V

Balance between Church and State.

Relevant Guidelines for Trustees:

School boards should:

1. In accordance with our obligation of guarding the constitutional rights of families and children and in accordance with applicable court rulings, ensure an appropriate balance between freedom of religion and avoidance of endorsement of a particular religion.

Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:

MTSBA must:

1. Advocate for balance between the core religion issues expressed in the United States Constitution through the Establishment Clause, which bans the government from "establishing" a religion; and the Free Exercise Clause, which protects citizens' right to practice their religion. MTSBA shall use relevant holdings of the United States Supreme Court to guide its efforts and positions on these issues.
2. Advocate for continued support of student and family religious freedom.

Principle VI

Collaboration among and with our locally-elected school boards.

Relevant Guidelines for Trustees:

School boards should:

1. Recognize the shared bond among and autonomous authority of locally-elected school boards in exercising supervision and control of their respective public schools pursuant to Article X, Section 8 of the Montana Constitution;
2. Recognize the value of outreach to and collaboration among our locally-elected school boards and school districts;
3. Recognize and respect the potential for divergence in the interests of different area school boards when each are exercising supervision and control of their respective local public schools;
4. Recognize the dilution of effectiveness in MTSBA's advocacy when based on simple majorities rather than broad consensus among our member school boards.
5. Ensure open lines of communication among the constitutionally empowered trustees in areas throughout the state.
6. Work to resolve differences among area school boards and school districts through local solutions whenever possible.
7. Work to isolate the impact of division among school districts in a given area on overall unity and resulting effectiveness within and among state education organizations representing local school boards and their staff.

Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:

MTSBA must:

1. Understand, respect and equitably balance the interests of our member school boards while ensuring that the voices of all our members are heard and acknowledged in MTSBA's advocacy.
2. Maintain a focus on and reserve its resources to address issues of statewide impact and concern in its advocacy and maintain neutrality on issues of limited statewide impact that divide our members. When issues of limited statewide impact involve division among our members, MTSBA advocacy must be limited to providing information to all of our affected members on an equitable and neutral basis.
3. Identify and attempt to resolve division within our membership whenever possible through neutral facilitation of dialogue and transparent provision of information to its members.

Appendix “A” To MTSBA’s Principles and Guidelines References for MTSBA Principles & Guidelines

Principle I --

- Montana Constitution, Article X, section 1
- Core Purpose of MTSBA, Strategic Plan
- Core Purpose of the basic system of free quality schools, K-12 Vision Project

Principle II –

- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 8, Locally-Elected Trustees
- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 9, Board of Public Education
- Core Values, MTSBA
- Core Values, K-12 Vision Project

Principle III –

- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 7
- MTSBA Core Values (balance in treating and addressing needs of members)

Principle IV –

- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 1(2)
- MTSBA Core Values
- K-12 Vision Project Core Values

Principle V –

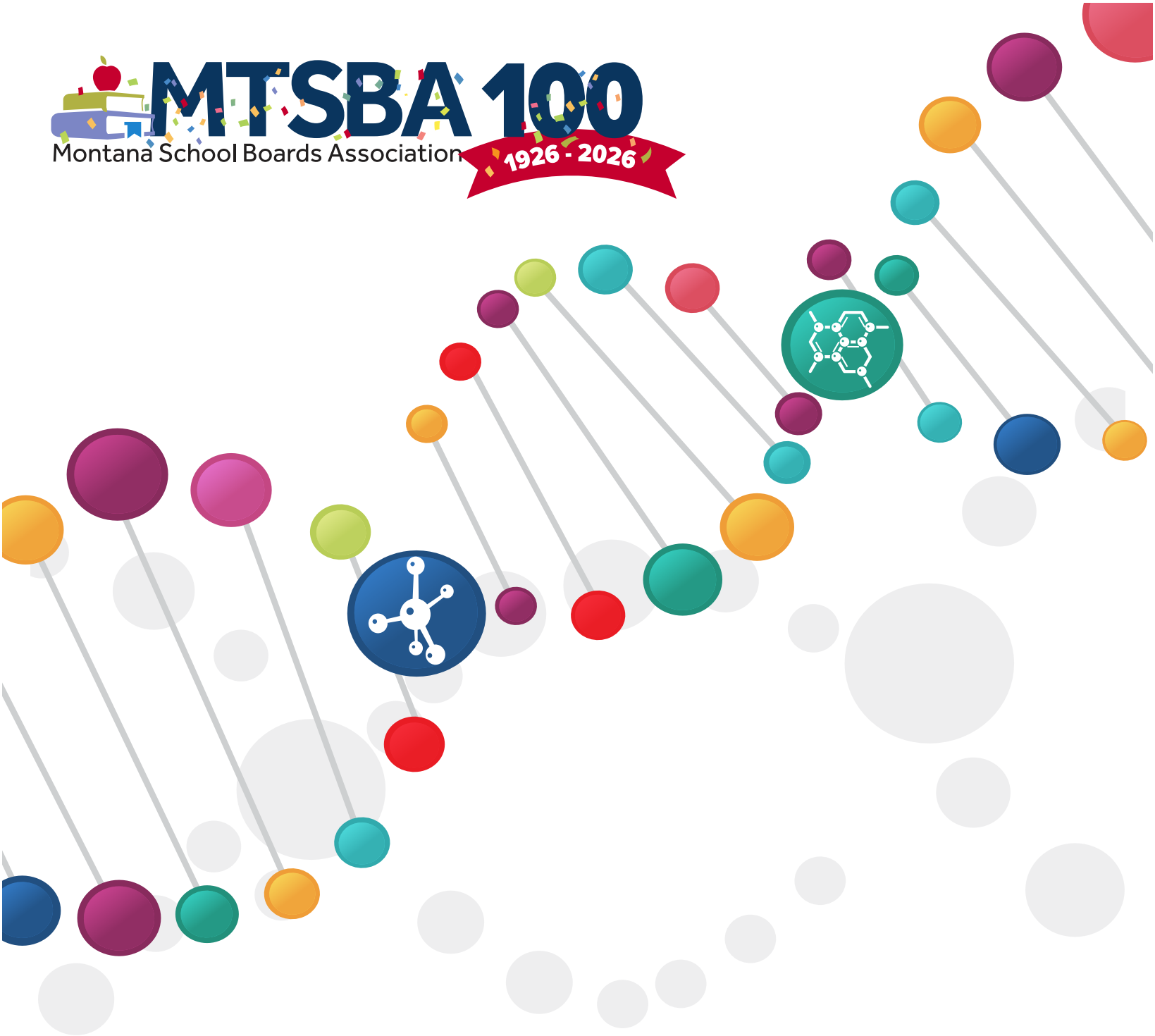
- MCA, 20-5-109
- *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* (2022) and other U.S. Supreme Court cases
- *Kaptein v. Conrad*

Principle VI –

- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 8, elected trustees
- MTSBA Core Value: “We understand and respect the variety of circumstances in which our members govern, and the variety of perspectives held by our members. We strive to meet the needs of and balance the interests of each of our members.”
- MTSBA Board of Directors Goal Area 1 - Engaged and United Advocacy For *Each Child* in Every Public School

THE FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS OF MTSBA'S DNA

Presented for member information and discussion only unless otherwise noted.



The Foundational Elements of MTSBA's Organizational DNA

Synthesized from common themes/fused elements reflected in the MTSBA Member Adopted Principles and Guidelines, the MTSBA Board's Strategic Plan, and the MTSBA Board's Specific, Methodical and Consistent Practices Recipe.

Key Sources of Authority for MTSBA

MTSBA Core Purpose:

To develop the full potential of each child through school board leadership.

MTSBA Core Values:

Visionary Leadership - We embrace vision and innovation in all that we do, continually adapting to the changing needs, wants and preferences of our members.

Advocacy - We advocate for EACH child in EVERY public school in Montana.

Empowered School Boards - We empower community engaged, elected school boards in their Constitutional mission to fulfill the potential of each child.

Member-Centric - We understand, respect, and balance the interests of each of our members.

Constitutional Guardian - We guard and defend all Article X constitutional guarantees for each child.

American Indian Peoples and Tribes - We help our members preserve the history and cultural integrity of American Indian Peoples and Tribes.

MTSBA Specific, Methodical and Consistent (SMaC) Practices:

1. We support our members in developing the full potential of EACH child.
2. We align all Board and staff work to the Strategic Plan, including priorities, decisions, and resource allocation.
3. We make decisions using knowledge-based practices and ensure meaningful member engagement.
4. We advance solutions that serve the collective membership and maintain fairness across diverse member needs.
5. Each Director fully engages in governance, communicates with members, and represents MTSBA with professionalism.
6. We expect and support leadership that elevates the work of the Board and organization.
7. The Board and staff operate in active partnership to serve the long-term interests of our membership.
8. We commit the time and resources necessary to achieve outcomes aligned to our Core Purpose.
9. We intentionally build relationships that strengthen the organization and its effectiveness.
10. We continuously adapt to meet member needs and improve student outcomes.
11. We operate with trust and openness in all internal and member relationships.
12. We maintain ongoing professional development for Board and staff.
13. We lead advocacy efforts for public education and EACH child served by our membership.
14. We support members in advancing practices that develop the full potential of EACH child.
15. We ensure all programs and services align with our Core Purpose and Core Values
16. We govern as “representative of,” acting in the best interests of the organization as a whole.

“Representative of”: Board members who view their role as ensuring that the views, beliefs, values, and self-interests of the constituencies they know the best are on the table as part of the conversation. They voice interests and opinions of those they know best and vote on behalf of the best overall interests of the organization. We avoid a “representative for” model, by which board members see themselves as the elected representatives of a particular constituency. They voice only the self-interests and opinions of that constituency and vote only on behalf of that constituency’s interests.

In Carrying Out our Work on Behalf of Our Members, the Montana School Boards Association:



Sees the world through the eyes of the elected trustee and supports school boards in developing the full potential of EACH child in every public school in Montana.



Operates from a nonpartisan, member-driven approach, determining positions based on alignment with member-adopted strategic priorities.



Is driven by and aligned to its strategic plan, integrating strategy into all work. Relies on engaged, knowledgeable, and selfless directors who serve the interests of all member districts.



Works for the collective benefit of its members while navigating diverse perspectives and needs.



Works for the collective benefit of its members, striving to create clarity and consensus regarding its key initiatives and exercising fairness and balance in addressing the diverse needs of our members.



Executes its strategy through advocacy, services, and innovation, demonstrating visionary leadership and striving for excellence.



Guards the constitutional guarantees afforded children in Article X of the Montana Constitution, including:

- The opportunity for each child to fulfill their educational potential;
- Access to a basic system of free, quality public schools that are adequately and equitably funded;
- A balanced governance structure among school boards, the Board of Public Education, and the Legislature;
- A commitment to preserving and understanding American Indian culture.



Operates with transparency and trust, ensuring access, accountability, and alignment with adopted principles.

MTSBA Member-Adopted Principles and Guidelines:

Principle I

Alignment of efforts and activities with the goal of developing the full educational potential of all the state's citizens while guaranteeing equality of educational opportunity to each person of the state

Principle II

Recognition of the shared authority for education between the community, locally elected school boards, and the bodies with constitutional authority and responsibility for education, including the Governor, the Montana Board of Public Education, and the Legislature

Principle III

Equality of Educational Opportunity for each person of the state

Principle IV

Recognition and commitment to the preservation of the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians

Principle V

Balance between Church and State

Principle VI

Collaboration among and with our locally elected school boards



About the Impressive Contributions of our Members

The founding of Montana's public schools pre-dates Montana's statehood by 25 years.

Creation of a system of public schools was one of the first actions of the First Montana Territorial Legislative Assembly in 1864.

Since the first public school opened in Virginia City in 1865, **Montana's public schools have been preparing Montana children for a future of success over the last 150 years**, governed by community-elected trustees all along the way.

Over 1,450 elected trustees in Montana

volunteer nearly 750,000 hours each year in pursuit of increased student achievement, taking on complex and sometimes controversial challenges **with no compensation whatsoever.**

The **combined annual volunteer service of our members would take an individual 86 continuous years, working 24 hours per day**, to match.

When we say that our members provide a lifetime of service each year, we mean that literally.

Our members' annual contributions are **equivalent to 360 FTE positions provided free of charge each year**, providing taxpayers **over \$14 million in savings each year** compared to what those positions would cost if filled by employees.

Our **members oversee the employment of over 25,000 public employees** who educate, support, transport supervise, feed and protect the safety of over **155,000+ children**, in virtually every community in the state, every day of the week throughout the school year.

Our boards govern for **excellence and efficiency in equal measures** and the results of their efforts speak for themselves.

Montana's public schools provide performance that compares favorably by any measure, nationally or even internationally and our **members deliver these results for below average costs** when compared to other states in our Nation.

Our members **ensure preservation and fulfillment of important constitutional guarantees afforded Montana's citizens.**

MTSBA 2026 MEMBERSHIP FINANCIAL REPORT

Presented for member information and discussion only unless otherwise noted.

2026 Membership Financial Report

A centennial-year retrospective on financial stewardship, member value, and service to Montana public schools.

Entering FY27 from a position of strength — grounded in the most recent audited financial statements and MTSBA's 990 Tax Return.

Financial Strength in Service of Each Child

Annual Financial Accountability

MTSBA's annual financial report is not simply a compliance exercise. It is a membership stewardship obligation: a clear account of how financial strength supports mission, services, advocacy, and long-term sustainability for MTSBA and its members. This report is based on three primary sources:

Independent audit

MTSBA obtains an annual audit by a certified public accountant and reports financial status to the membership at the annual meeting.

Public Form 990

The IRS Form 990 provides an additional public view of revenue, expenses, governance, program service accomplishments, and net assets.

Strategic stewardship

The Board's reserve policy and strategic planning discipline support stability, service continuity, and long-term member value.

MTSBA has the financial strength, governance discipline, and strategic focus necessary to serve Montana's school boards well.

Source: MTSBA Bylaws annual audit provision; most recent Independent Auditor's Report; most recent IRS Form 990.

A Century of Service to Montana Public Schools

**Founded
October 10, 1926**

A voluntary, nonprofit membership association created through the efforts of elected trustees from across Montana over the course of a century.

MTSBA's core purpose remains unchanged:
To develop the full potential of each child through school board leadership.

- We represent more than 1,450 locally elected trustees.
- We support boards governing public schools serving more than 155,000 Montana children.
- We connect financial stewardship to advocacy, governance support, and member service.

Financial stability is the foundation for continuity, trust, and service entering MTSBA's second century.

Source: MTSBA About Us page; Organizational DNA; Strategic Plan.

Most Recent Audited Financial Snapshot

\$11.43M

Total assets

Strong balance sheet

\$7.10M

Unrestricted net assets

Available for mission

\$252K

Increase in net assets

Positive audited result

\$6.78M

Financial assets available

Within one year

What this means for members

- MTSBA remains financially strong and liquid.
- Reserves provide service continuity and flexibility.
- Net assets increased while services continued expanding.

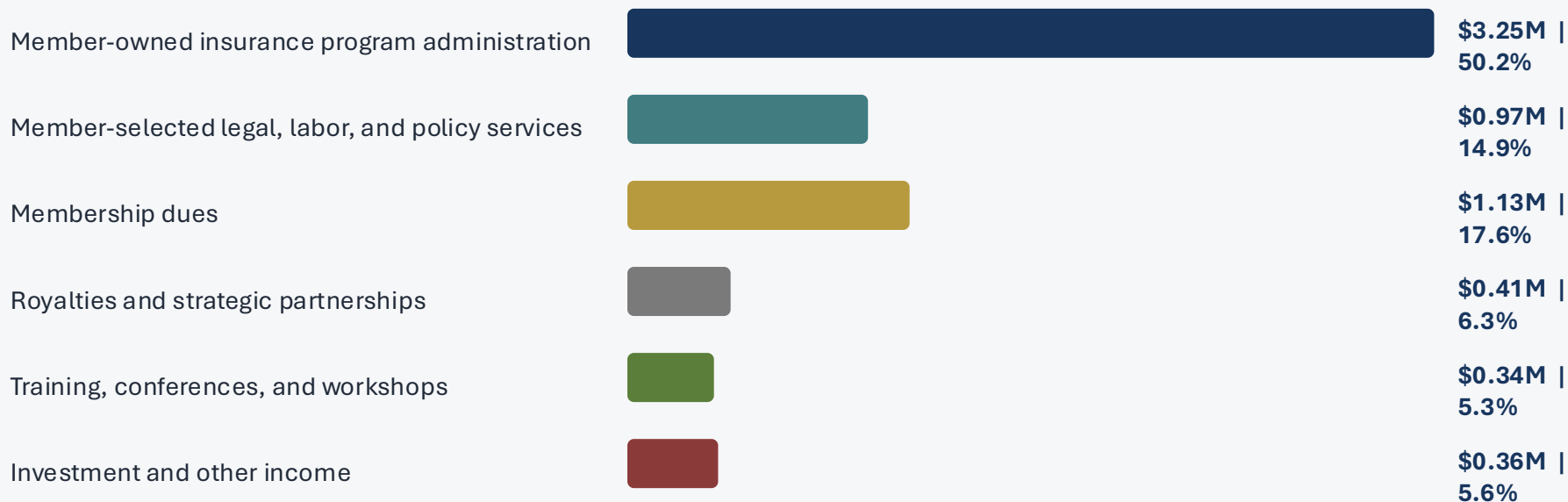
Validation from Our Audit

- Independent auditors issued a clean opinion.
- Statements were prepared under GAAP.
- The audit confirms fair presentation of financial position and activities.

Source: Most recent audited financial statements, Statements of Financial Position, Activities, and Liquidity Note.

Financial Strength Is Built on Diversification

Revenue by primary category — Form 990 view



Diversification matters: dues remain foundational, while voluntary services, member-owned program administration, royalties, and investment income broaden MTSBA's capacity to serve without relying on a single source of support.

Source: Most recent IRS Form 990, Part VIII; audited statements. Category groupings are presentation summaries.

How Revenue Connects to Member Value

Membership dues

The foundation for broad access to advocacy, publications, consultation, training, and member support.

Voluntary services

Members choose legal, labor, policy, HR, search, training, and strategic planning services that fit local needs.

Insurance programs

Administration of member-owned programs supports risk management, stability, and taxpayer savings.

Royalties and investment

Partnership and reserve income reduce pressure on dues and support sustainability.

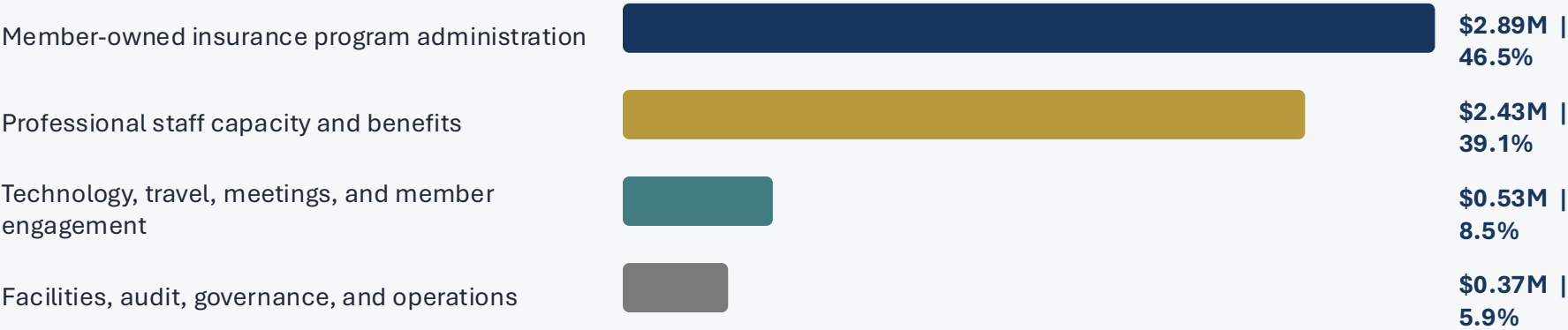
Our Practices on Framing our Annual Report

- Explain revenue in plain language rather than reproducing accounting schedules.
- Connect each revenue stream to what members receive and why it matters.
- Use audited and public tax-return to transparency and ensure accuracy.

Source: most recent audited statements; most recent Form 990; public member services materials.

Where MTSBA Invests Member Resources

Expenses by primary category — Form 990 view



MTSBA’s spending pattern reflects a member-focused organization: resources are concentrated in member-owned insurance administration, professional staff capacity, training and engagement, technology, governance, audit, and operations necessary to serve members statewide.

Source: Most recent IRS Form 990, Part IX. Category groupings are presentation summaries; no individual salaries are shown.

Programs and Services Supported by Financial Strength

Advocacy

Legislative, administrative, judicial, and public-facing advocacy for Montana public schools and elected boards.

Legal, labor, HR, policy

School-law expertise, collective bargaining support, HR risk management, model policies, and customized policy services.

Leadership development

Trustee orientation, board leadership training, MCEL, symposiums, webinars, and on-demand learning resources.

Strategic services

Strategic planning, superintendent searches, community engagement, and support for local governance excellence.

Member-owned insurance administration

MTSBA administers self-funded, member-owned insurance and unemployment programs that provide risk management, prevention services, training, and taxpayer savings.

Digital modernization

Technology investments support virtual service delivery, policy hosting, online learning, member communities, communications, and efficient statewide support.

Source: MTSBA Programs and Services Guide; Membership Savings Infographic; About Us page.

Strategic Alignment: Money Follows Mission

MTSBA's financial decisions should be understood through the Association's strategic plan: resources are aligned to advocacy, services, and innovation — all in service of each child through school board leadership.

Goal Area 1 Engaged and United Advocacy

Financial strength supports statewide advocacy, member engagement, collaboration, and protection of Article X guarantees.

Goal Area 2 Services to Support Members

Resources support dues-based and fee-based programs that help boards govern, lead, and serve communities effectively.

Goal Area 3 Innovation in Public Education

Investment in modernization helps members embrace flexibilities, efficiencies, and personalized opportunities for each child.

**Financial stability is not the goal by itself —
It is the platform that allows MTSBA to execute the strategic plan.**

Source: MTSBA Strategic Plan, updated June 2025.

Member Value Beyond Dues

7,000+

**Legal, HR, labor, and policy
consultations**

Fielded during the year

\$1.4M

**Services provided
beyond dues**

Estimated member value

\$10K+

Average district savings

Estimated annually

50+ hrs

No-fee training

Opportunities

Membership value is not limited to audited revenue and expenses.

- Members receive access to loyal experts devoted to school board success and public school governance.
- No-fee and sponsored training opportunities help boards and leadership teams improve performance without additional cost barriers.
- Member-owned insurance and unemployment programs add risk management, training, and taxpayer-savings value beyond traditional association services.

Source: MTSBA Membership Savings Infographic, May 2025.

Advocacy Impact and Public Value

Legislative and policy impact

MTSBA advocacy materials identify more than \$150 million in local property tax relief through advocacy efforts since 2017, along with ongoing work on funding, facilities, flexibility, and innovation.

Trustee public service

Montana trustees contribute hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours each year, producing substantial taxpayer value while governing public schools in nearly every community.

Member representation

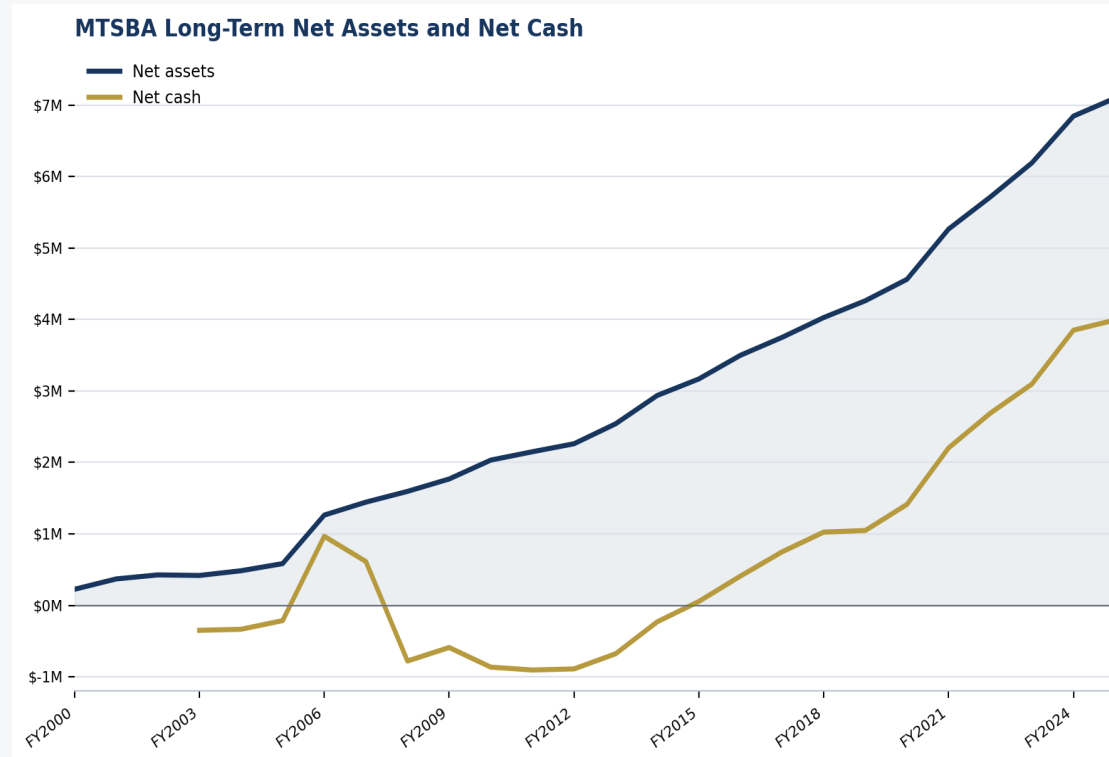
MTSBA represents more than 1,450 elected trustees and supports boards overseeing more than 25,000 public employees and more than 155,000 children.

Constitutional stewardship

MTSBA's advocacy remains tied to Article X guarantees, including quality public schools, local governance, equitable opportunity, and preservation of American Indian cultural integrity.

Source: MTSBA About Us page; Membership Savings Infographic; Strategic Plan.

Long-Term Financial Stability: A Strategic Achievement



Source: 21-year history of net assets and net cash; FY23 Annual Meeting Financial Report; audited statements.

Financial stability did not happen by accident.

- MTSBA has moved from debt pressure and depleted cash after major capital investments to a strong reserve position.
- Long-term net asset growth reflects board discipline, strategic planning, and execution of reserve objectives.
- Net cash has grown from less than 10% of budgeted expenditures to more than two-thirds of the long-term 75% target.
- This trend strengthens resilience and helps protect service continuity.

Stable institutions are built through repeated disciplined choices over time.

Reserve Policy and Stewardship Philosophy

MTSBA's reserve philosophy is designed to protect the Association's long-term capacity to serve members.

Avoid unnecessary debt

Reserves help MTSBA avoid debt on real property improvements and major capital needs.

Replace long-term assets

Reserve capacity supports periodic replacement of building, technology, and other long-term assets.

Sustain service continuity

A strong net cash position protects member services through revenue shifts, emergencies, and market changes.

MTSBA maintains resources so it can remain responsive, stable, and mission-capable over time.

Source: MTSBA Board Policy 395 summarized from prior annual financial report and net cash history materials.

Innovation and Modernization

MTSBA's strategic plan defines innovation as improvement in programs, products, processes, or services to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness, or member value.

Digital access

Online learning, virtual meetings, digital communications, and member communities expand statewide access.

Policy modernization

Enhanced policy hosting and maintenance help districts improve transparency, compliance, and governance efficiency.

Service delivery

Technology and staff expertise support faster, more consistent, and more responsive member support.

- Modernization strengthens the connection between financial stability and member service impact.
- Innovation supports the strategic goal of helping members embrace flexibilities and efficiencies for each child.

Source: MTSBA Strategic Plan; Programs and Services Guide; Organizational DNA.

Entering FY27: Strength, Discipline, and Adaptation

This report is retrospective: it is grounded in the most recent audited statements and public Form 990.

Strength

MTSBA enters FY27 with strong net assets, liquidity, reserves, and a diversified revenue base.

Discipline

Board governance, annual audits, strategic planning, and reserve policy remain central to financial stewardship.

Adaptation

Changing member needs, technology, service expectations, and advocacy demands require ongoing innovation.

MTSBA is financially positioned to serve members, protect public education, and enter its second century with confidence.

Source: Synthesis of audited results, Form 990, Strategic Plan, Organizational DNA, and program/service materials.

Thank You, MTSBA Members

Your leadership strengthens Montana's public schools and the communities they serve.

Financial strength in service of each child.

Montana School Boards Association

Source Notes

- Most recent MTSBA audited financial statements: financial position, activities, cash flows, liquidity, and notes.
- IRS Form 990: public summary of revenue, expenses, governance, program service accomplishments, and net assets.
- MTSBA Strategic Plan and Organizational DNA: mission, values, goal areas, innovation framework, and strategic alignment.
- MTSBA Programs and Services Guide and Membership Savings Infographic: member services, consultation, training, insurance, and savings narratives.
- MTSBA About Us page: founding date, membership structure, trustee service, public-school scale, and association purpose.
- Long-term net assets and net cash history: multi-year reserve and stability trends.

FY28 DUES REVENUE ESTIMATE

Presented for member information and discussion only unless otherwise noted.



TO: MTSBA Members
FROM: Lance Melton, Executive Director
RE: Dues Revenue Estimate for FY2028
DATE: May 23, 2026

Pursuant to the MTSBA Bylaws, below is a dues revenue estimate for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2028

Refresher Regarding How MTSBA Dues are Calculated:

The MTSBA Bylaws include a dues formula based upon a comparison of the most recent four-year rolling average of current expenditures to the prior year's four-year rolling average. For FY28 dues purposes, MTSBA is comparing the four-year rolling average expenditures from FY21-24 to the four-year rolling average expenditures from FY22-25.

The lag between the most recent year of spending (FY25) and the dues year to which such spending applies (FY28) is intended to ensure that MTSBA relies upon audited expenditure data submitted by OPI to the National Center for Education Statistics. Please note that, pursuant to Article II, Section 2 of the MTSBA Bylaws, the expenditure data utilized for dues calculations is limited to "total current expenditures on K-12 programs" and does not include capital funds. Additionally, pursuant to MTSBA Board Policy implementing the dues formula, federal ESSER/COVID relief funds have been excluded from all expenditure years incorporated into the four-year average in order to preserve consistency and avoid distortion associated with one-time federal pandemic funding.

The dues formula is sensitive to each member's level of expenditures, resulting in decreases in dues when a member's expenditures decline from year to year and increases in dues when a member's expenditures rise. For members, whose dues are determined by one of the formula's floors, caps, or flat rates, dues instead change according to the overall percentage change in expenditures among the membership as a whole for the applicable year.

The percentage increase in total current expenditures of all members, comparing the four-year rolling average expenditures from FY21-24 to the four-year rolling average expenditures from FY22-25, was 4.06% (\$75,063,155 increase in total current expenditures statewide). Pursuant to Article II, Section 2 of the MTSBA Bylaws, that percentage adjustment has been applied to all floors, caps, and flat rates, as well as proportionally incorporated into the expenditure thresholds utilized within the dues formula.

The following is a chart that identifies the various assessment rates, floors, caps, and flat rates as they would be set in the bylaws after member approval. The chart below is in an adjusted form as specified in the Bylaws and is presented for your consideration and approval.

Four Most Recent Expenditure Years Average Spending Low	Four Most Recent Expenditure Years Average Spending High	Assessment	Floor	Cap
\$0	\$537,156	Flat Rate	\$451	\$451
\$537,157	\$2,148,625	0.140%	\$451	\$2,954
\$2,148,626	\$5,371,563	0.110%	\$2,954	\$5,372
\$5,371,564	\$8,057,345	0.090%	\$5,372	\$6,177
\$8,057,346	\$10,743,127	0.080%	\$6,177	\$8,057
\$10,743,128	Above Floor, not 1 of 7 Largest Members	0.060%	\$8,057	\$15,578
Seven Largest Members	Flat Rate	Flat Rate	\$22,023	\$22,023
Coop Members	Flat Rate	Flat Rate	\$913	\$913

Impact of Estimate on MTSBA's FY28 Budget

1. Dues revenue for MTSBA is projected to increase by approximately \$45,771, from \$1,163,722 in FY27 to \$1,209,493 in FY28. This represents a 3.93% increase in dues revenue, slightly below the 4.06% increase in total current expenditures among MTSBA members during the applicable comparison period.
2. With current inflation running at approximately 3.8%, the adjustment to the dues formula remains consistent with broader economic conditions. In April, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers increased 0.6% on a seasonally adjusted basis and 3.8% over the preceding twelve months.
3. Because dues represent approximately 19% of MTSBA's budgeted revenues, the projected inflationary growth in FY28 dues provides an important component of the revenue necessary for MTSBA to meet anticipated FY28 expenditures.
4. MTSBA incurs approximately \$1.7 million annually in mission-critical expenses that do not directly generate revenues but that provide substantial value to the membership. These include governance and support for the MTSBA Board of Directors, participation in COSSBA, member outreach, ownership and operation of MTSBA facilities, advocacy before the Legislature and Congress, and staffing dedicated to member service, governance, advocacy, and organizational leadership.
5. MTSBA bridges the gap between dues revenue and these broader organizational expenses through revenues generated by voluntary member participation in MTSBA services, royalties, and contractual relationships associated with MTSBA's insurance programs. These programs also provide members with access to extensive fee-free services, all of which have been documented and transparently outlined to members through MTSBA's membership value materials.

Thank you in advance for reviewing this memorandum. Please let me know if you have any questions.

PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENTS RECOMMENDED BY THE MTSBA BOARD

Presented for member information and discussion only unless otherwise noted.

Executive Summary of the Proposed Changes to the MTSBA Bylaws

The proposed changes to the MTSBA Bylaws were considered and approved by the MTSBA Board of Directors at its January 2026 meeting:

- Proposed Additions are reflected as red underline
- Proposed Deletions are reflected as ~~yellow strikeout~~

These proposed changes come as a seconded motion from the MTSBA Board of Directors and are aimed to streamline and modernize the organization's governance procedures while aligning them with current practices. Here's a breakdown of the significant changes:

1. Article I – Membership

- The definition of membership is clarified, particularly identifying members as school systems, etc.
- The Credentials Committee will be removed since it does not align with current practices.
- The category of Associate Membership will be eliminated as it has not been utilized.

2. Article II – Fiscal Year and Dues

- References to dues for Associate Membership will be removed to reflect the dissolution of that category.
- The process regarding membership's role in approving dues revenue estimates is refined: the Board will manage the estimates, with member approval needed only if an increase is proposed.

3. Article III – Meetings of Members

- A special meeting will now require a majority vote from the Board instead of needing a minimum of 7 directors.
- There will be an inclusion of references to parliamentary procedures for small assemblies, necessitating accompanying policy adjustments (specifically noted as proposed changes to Board Policy 255).
- Proxy voting for Class 3 districts without a high school will be eliminated as we do not allow proxy voting.

4. Article IV – Board of Directors

- The requirement for a meeting to follow the Annual Meeting of members will be removed, as it is not a current practice.

5. Article V – Officers

- The bond requirement for officers will be eliminated, as it has never been enforced.
- References to subordinate officers will be removed since this position has never been utilized.

6. Article VII – Caucuses

- This article will mostly be eliminated, especially as most caucuses are non-operational, retaining only the Indian School Board Caucus as viable.

These proposed amendments focus on removing outdated or unused procedures, thus clarifying the MTSBA Bylaws and ensuring they more accurately reflect the current functioning of the organization and streamlining governance of the Association.

**BYLAWS
OF
MONTANA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.
(Last Approved by the Membership in August 2025)**

Updates Approved by the MTSBA Board in January 2026

NOTE: These proposed changes will be voted on by the membership following the June 2026 Annual Meeting via electronic ballot

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. GENERAL. The membership of this Corporation shall be as provided in the Articles of Incorporation and as supplemented herein. Membership shall be provided on a school system basis. This can include a stand alone independent elementary district, a stand alone high school district, a K-12 school district, or a unified school system under which an elementary and a high school district coordinate their programs and services.

SECTION 2. DELEGATES. Each member shall be entitled to a delegate for each vote granted as provided in Article III, Section 4, and each delegate must be a regular member of a school board of a public school ~~district~~system which has paid its current dues in the manner hereinafter provided.

~~SECTION 3. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE. There shall be a Credentials Committee of three (3) members appointed by the President. One member shall be from the Board of Directors and shall serve as chair.~~

~~SECTION 4. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP. In addition to the regular voting membership defined in Sections 1, 2, and 3 of this Article, there shall be an associate membership classification which shall provide membership for all school trustees, administrative organizations, other individuals or organizations which are otherwise ineligible for regular membership. Such membership shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Directors and does not include voting rights.~~

ARTICLE II - FISCAL YEAR AND DUES

SECTION 1. FISCAL YEAR. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of July and end on the thirtieth day of June of the year following.

SECTION 2. DUES. ~~The annual associate membership dues shall be set at a flat rate as determined by the Board of Directors pursuant to the budgetary needs of the Corporation.~~ The annual membership dues of regular voting members of this Corporation shall be set as a percentage of each member's total current expenditures on K-12 programs for the four most recent expenditure years average preceding the Corporation's fiscal year for which the dues are to be assessed. The Board of Directors shall adopt policies to provide supporting information for implementation of the formula on an annual basis to ensure consistency in application to member school ~~districts~~systems. The schedule shall be set as follows:

Dues effective July 1, 2026

FY27 Adopted Dues Formula				
Four Most Recent Expenditure Years Average Spending Low	Four Most Recent Expenditure Years Average Spending High	Assessment	Floor	Cap
\$0	\$516,200	Flat Rate	\$434	\$434
\$516,201	\$2,064,800	0.14%	\$434	\$2,839
\$2,064,801	\$5,162,000	0.11%	\$2,839	\$5,162
\$5,162,001	\$7,743,000	0.09%	\$5,162	\$5,936
\$7,743,001	\$10,324,000	0.08%	\$5,936	\$7,743
\$10,324,001	Above Floor, not 1 of 7 largest members	0.06%	\$7,743	\$14,970
Seven Largest Members	Flat Rate	Flat Rate	\$21,164	\$21,164
Coop Members	Flat Rate	Flat Rate	\$878	\$878

Average Spending FY20-23	\$1,792,230,040
Average Spending FY21-24	\$1,850,301,527
Difference in 4-year average \$\$	\$58,071,487
Difference in 4-year average %	3.24%

Prior to the annual meeting each year, the Executive Director shall estimate the financial impact of the formula above upon projected revenue from regular voting member dues for the Corporation in the subsequent year. In making such estimate, the Executive Director shall adjust the floors, caps and flat rates by the same percentage that spending of the membership overall has changed. The Executive Director shall present such revenue estimate to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may approve the revenue estimate as presented or may reduce the revenue estimate if it wishes to reduce dues below what the current formula yields. Any increase beyond the revenue estimate derived from the current formula and approved by the Board of Directors shall require approval of the membership.

Each year at the Annual Meeting, the Executive Director shall, as part of the financial report of the Corporation, prepare and distribute a report explaining the dues formula.

Following approval of the dues revenue estimate by the Board of Directors or the membership as applicable based on the amount of the dues estimated, The Executive Director shall thereafter prepare a report regarding such estimate, including an explanation of budgetary needs of the Corporation, and shall distribute the report to at the annual meeting the dues formula shall be used for purposes of invoicing membership dues for the applicable fiscal year. This portion of the Bylaws shall also be amended to reflect the dues formula for the applicable fiscal year.

A. Projected decrease in revenue from formula: Any projected decrease in revenue from regular voting member dues for the Corporation generated by the formula in this Section shall be eliminated, subject to approval by the Board of Directors, by an automatic proportional increase in the formula in this Section. Such increase shall be reflected as an amendment to this Section of the Bylaws.

B. Projected increase in revenue from formula: Any projected increase in revenue from regular voting member dues for the Corporation generated by this formula shall be submitted to a vote of the regular voting members of the Corporation present at the annual meeting, and may be approved, disapproved or adjusted according to the question or questions presented to the membership by the Board of Directors.

C. Changes to formula necessitated by vote of membership regarding revenue from dues: If the vote of the regular voting members of the Corporation results in a change in revenue from the revenue that would otherwise be generated by the formula in this Section, the formula shall thereafter be adjusted on a proportional basis to generate the revenue approved by the voting members of the Corporation, and such adjustment in the formula shall be approved by the Board of Directors and reflected as an amendment to this Section of the Bylaws.

SECTION 3. PAYMENT OF DUES. Annual membership dues shall be due and payable on July 1 of each fiscal year and until August 1 of the succeeding fiscal year, unless such dates are changed by the Board of Directors. Any school board ~~or associate member~~ which fails to pay its annual dues by August 1 of any year shall forthwith cease to be a member and shall lose all of its rights and powers as a member, but its membership may be reinstated upon payment of its dues.

ARTICLE III - MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

SECTION 1. ANNUAL MEETINGS. The annual meetings of the members of this Corporation shall be held at a time and place designated by the Board of Directors. Notice of the time and place of such annual meeting shall be provided via mail and/or electronic means by the Executive Director to each member school board at least thirty (30) days in advance thereof.

SECTION 2. SPECIAL MEETINGS. Special meetings of the members of the Corporation shall be called by the President upon the written request of not less than a majority seven (7) members of the Board of Directors, ~~or may be called by the Board of Directors by resolution adopted at any meeting of the Directors held in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws.~~ Notice of the time and place of such special meeting shall be provided via mail and/or electronic means by the Executive Director to each member school board at least thirty (30) days in advance thereof.

SECTION 3. PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURES. The rules contained in ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER REVISED for small assemblies shall ~~govern~~ be used as a guide for this organization in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws. The Board of Directors shall adopt a policy addressing guiding principles and other specifics of parliamentary procedure for meetings of the Corporation consistent with these Bylaws.

SECTION 4. VOTING. Each member board shall be entitled to a number of votes equal to one vote per \$100.00 or major fraction thereof, of annual dues paid by the member school board to the Corporation. No member board shall have less than one (1) vote. At any and all meetings of the members of the Corporation, the votes of the member school board may be vested in one or more of the delegates to the meeting as the member school board shall designate in writing, which said writing shall be delivered to the Credentials Committee Executive Director no later than 30 days in advance of the meeting. No delegate shall, however, be entitled to vote in excess of the greater of the following:

- (1) fifteen (15) votes; or
- (2) The total votes accorded a member district school system by virtue of its membership dues, divided by the total number of trustee positions, including filled and vacant positions, on such board.

A roll call vote shall be required if demanded. In the event that a delegate does not present a proper writing certifying that he or she is a delegate of that district and bears a certain number of vested votes, the official Corporation list of trustees shall suffice for identification and delegation accreditation. The number of votes to which the member district school system is entitled shall be prorated among the delegates present from that district school system unless specifically vested in particular trustees as referenced in this section.

SECTION 5. PROXY VOTING. Voting by proxy at meetings will not be permitted, except that the Clerk or other designed representative of a member board of a Class 3 district without a high school who holds the certified proxy of the member board may cast the votes of that member.

SECTION 6. QUORUM. At least one voting trustee from Fifteen percent (15%) of the member school boards members represented at any regularly called annual or special meeting shall must be present and voting to constitute a quorum.

SECTION 7. SECTION 7. VOTING BETWEEN MEETINGS OF MEMBERS. Voting at times other than at annual or special meetings shall be on ballots distributed by the Executive Director as authorized by the Board of Directors. Such ballots shall contain a full explanation of the question presented, shall indicate the number of votes to be cast by the member school district system, shall instruct the manner in which the ballot is to be marked and shall be mailed distributed to the chairperson of each member school board by the Executive Director at least thirty (30) days in advance of the deadline for returning the marked ballots. All ballots cast must be signed by the chairperson of the member school board and shall be tallied by the Executive Director. The results of the balloting shall be provided to the membership via mail and/or electronic means.

SECTION 8. RESOLUTIONS. No resolution shall be presented to the membership at the annual meeting without first having been approved by the Delegate Assembly, or with 200 copies made available at registration for the annual meeting and the delegates membership permits the consideration thereof by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at the annual meeting to suspend the rules to consider said resolution.

ARTICLE IV - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1. GENERAL. The Board of Directors of this Corporation shall consist of twenty (20) Directors, eleven (11) of which are elected by each of the respective MTSBA regions, seven (7) of which are appointed by each of the seven largest MTSBA member ~~districts~~ school systems as set forth hereinbelow and (2) of which are elected as chair and vice-chair of the MTSBA Indian School Board Caucus by the school ~~districts~~ systems that are members of the MTSBA Indian School Board Caucus.

SECTION 2. BOARD COMPOSITION. The twenty (20) directors of the Corporation shall be elected or appointed as follows:

- A. REGIONAL DIRECTORS. Eleven (11) directors ~~shall be~~ elected from among elected trustees of the member school boards located within the applicable MTSBA region. MTSBA regions shall be established on the basis of county boundaries, and shall be designed to achieve approximate statewide equity among the eleven (11) MTSBA regions in terms of the number of trustees on school boards located within the applicable MTSBA regions. Such equity shall be determined by the MTSBA board of directors by dividing the number of trustees serving on school boards located within the applicable MTSBA region, including trustees on school boards referenced under subsection (B) immediately below, by the number of directors serving on the MTSBA board of directors from that MTSBA region, including directors referenced under subsection (B) immediately below but excluding any Indian school board caucus director or any director serving pursuant to the terms of Article VI. The MTSBA board of directors shall review such equity at least once every 5 years and shall make any adjustments to the MTSBA regions necessary to preserve equity as defined in this Section. The MTSBA board shall adopt a policy that identifies the eleven (11) MTSBA regions by inclusion of applicable county boundaries and shall include a map identifying the applicable MTSBA regions in the annual meeting packet distributed to the members.
- B. MUNICIPAL DIRECTORS REPRESENTING THE LARGEST MTSBA MEMBER SCHOOL SYSTEMS ("7L DIRECTORS"). ~~There shall be s~~Seven (7) directors appointed respectively and individually by each of the seven (7) largest MTSBA member school ~~districts~~ systems in the state, based on pupil enrollment, computed on the basis of combined enrollment from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. The MTSBA board shall adopt a policy that identifies the seven (7) largest member school ~~districts~~ systems with a director under this subsection and shall identify the applicable seven (7) largest member school ~~districts~~ systems in the annual meeting packet distributed to the members.
- C. INDIAN SCHOOL BOARD CAUCUS DIRECTORS. ~~There shall be t~~Two (2) directors elected as the chair and vice chair of the MTSBA Indian School Boards Caucus collectively representing and elected by school ~~districts~~ systems that are

also members of the Montana School Boards Association Indian School Board Caucus.

SECTION 3. DIRECTOR REGIONAL MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS. The members of each MTSBA region shall meet as necessary prior to the annual meeting of the members of the Corporation, and elect a Corporation Director and a Secretary, each to serve for a term of two (2) years or until their successors are elected and qualified. Corporation Directors must meet the qualifications for service as specified in the applicable subsection of Section 2 of this Article at all times to remain in such position. The Corporation Director, in addition to serving on the corporate board of directors, will also serve as chair of the Director's region for the purpose of calling and conducting meetings as provided in these ~~By-Laws~~ Bylaws. In the case of MTSBA regions with a director serving from one of the seven (7) largest members school systems that are located within the boundaries of the applicable MTSBA region, such director shall serve as a non-voting vice chair of the applicable MTSBA region. In MTSBA regions with both a regional director and a director appointed from one of the seven (7) largest members school systems as provided in Section (2)(B), or a director elected pursuant to Section (2)(C) or a director serving pursuant to Article VI, all directors residing within the boundaries of the applicable MTSBA region shall collaborate and cooperate to effectively serve and represent the member trustees of all school ~~districts~~ systems within the MTSBA regions where they are located.

Other meetings of the members of MTSBA regions shall be held at the times and places designated by the Director/Chair of the applicable MTSBA region. Notice of the time, place and purpose of all meetings of the members of each MTSBA region shall be provided to each member board at least thirty (30) days in advance thereof. Conduct of MTSBA regional meetings, and voting requirements shall be in accordance with Sections 3, 4, and 5 of Article III of these ~~By-Laws~~ Bylaws. Five percent (5%) of the member school boards of an MTSBA region shall constitute a quorum. Notwithstanding the voting and quorum requirements set forth herein for MTSBA regional meetings requiring and/or anticipating a vote of said trustees, informal gatherings of the trustees in any MTSBA region where no action is required and/or anticipated may occur at any time deemed appropriate. With the exception of concurrent membership in the Indian School Board Caucus specified under Section (2)(C), no corporation member shall be a member of more than one MTSBA region and membership as one of the seven (7) largest members school systems as specified in Section (2)(B) shall take precedence over a membership in a MTSBA region. Any trustee from one of the seven (7) largest member school ~~districts~~ systems as provided in Section (2)(B) shall be ineligible to run for or serve as a director for any of the 11 MTSBA regions as provided in Section (2)(A).

SECTION 4. GENERAL POWERS. The property, affairs and business of the Corporation shall be managed by the Board of Directors. In the event that an act of Congress, Presidential decree, state law, or an act of God adversely affects or interferes with the operation of these Bylaws, the Board of Directors shall take such necessary interim action as appropriate to follow the scope and intent of the current Bylaws and to insure the functioning of the Association until an annual or special meeting of the Corporation can consider the problem.

~~SECTION 5. ANNUAL MEETINGS. Following the adjournment of the annual meeting of the members of the Corporation, the newly elected Board of Directors shall meet at the same place as the members have met, at which meeting the new Board shall organize and transact any~~

other business. Written notice of such meeting need not be given. A simple majority shall constitute a quorum for the annual meeting. The terms of the newly elected Directors begin at this meeting.

SECTION ~~65~~. REGULAR MEETINGS. The Board of Directors shall hold, ~~in addition to its annual meeting,~~ at least three (3) regular meetings during the fiscal year, the time and place of said regular meetings to be ~~fixed at the annual meeting of the Directors~~ determined by the Officers of the Corporation. Each member of the Board shall receive written notice of all regular meetings at least five (5) days prior to the date set for such meeting. A simple majority of the presently seated directors shall constitute a quorum for such meetings.

SECTION ~~76~~. SPECIAL MEETINGS. The President of this Corporation may call a special meeting of the Board of Directors whenever s/he deems it necessary. The Directors may call a meeting in case the President fails to do so upon the written request of a majority of the Board of Directors ~~five (5) Directors~~ and said meeting shall be held within two (2) weeks after such request is made. Each member of the Board shall receive written notice of all meetings at least five (5) days prior to the date set for such meeting. A simple majority of the presently seated directors shall constitute a quorum for such meeting.

SECTION ~~87~~. ORGANIZATION. At all meetings of the Board of Directors, the President, or in his/her absence, the President Elect, shall act as chair, ~~and any person appointed by the chair shall act as secretary.~~

SECTION ~~98~~. RESIGNATIONS. Any Directors of the Corporation may resign at any time by giving written notice of the effective date of the resignation to the Board of Directors through the President of the Corporation. ~~Such resignation shall take effect when acted upon by the Board of Directors.~~

SECTION ~~109~~. VACANCIES. Should a vacancy on the Board of Directors occur, the Board of Directors ~~of the corporation~~ may, in its discretion, appoint a trustee qualified for service in the applicable Director position under Article IV, Section 2, to fill such office for the remaining duration of the unexpired term of such Director or the Board may choose to leave the position vacant until the next regional trustee election.

Any Director who fails to attend three (3) successive regular meetings of the Board of Directors, with insufficient reasons for absence as determined by the Board of Directors in their sole discretion, will be disqualified and the Board of Directors shall fill the vacancy in the prescribed manner accordance with Article IV, Section 9. ~~Acceptable excuses for such absences shall be at the discretion of the MTSBA President, with the right of appeal to the Board of Directors.~~

~~Any duly elected Director who no longer resides in the district which he or she represents shall so notify the Corporation by a written notice sent to the Executive Director, and his/her position shall be deemed vacant. Such vacancy shall be filled in the prescribed manner.~~

SECTION ~~11~~~~10~~. ANNUAL AUDIT. The Board of Directors of this Corporation shall provide for an annual audit by a certified public accountant of all its resources and expenditures.

A full report of such audit and financial status shall be given to the Board of Directors at each annual meeting.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

SECTION 1. OFFICERS. The officers of this Corporation shall be a President, President-Elect, Vice President, Immediate Past President, Executive Director and Treasurer. A Nominating Committee selected by the Board of Directors shall nominate one candidate for the office of President-Elect and one candidate for the office of Vice President from the incumbent Board of Directors. At the annual meeting of the membership, the delegates may nominate other candidates from the incumbent Board of Directors and shall elect a President-Elect and Vice President each for a term of one year. Each candidate or a representative shall speak before the membership prior to the election to insure that all members know who such candidate is. The Board of Directors shall appoint a Treasurer as provided in Section 6 of this Article and an Executive Director as provided in Section 7 of this Article, for the terms specified in those Sections, and the Board of Directors may, at their option, appoint one person to fill the combined office of Executive Director and Treasurer. The duties of such officers shall be as hereinafter provided.

SECTION 2. PRESIDENT. The President shall preside at all meetings of this Corporation, the Board of Directors and the Delegate Assembly, and shall be a member ex-officio of all regular and special committees. The President shall appoint annually, subject to approval of the Board of Directors, such standing, general or special committees in addition to those hereinafter provided for as s/he shall deem necessary and shall perform such other duties as usually pertain to such an office. The President shall assume the office of Immediate Past President the year following his or her term of office.

SECTION 3. PRESIDENT-ELECT. The President-Elect shall attend meetings of the Board of Directors, and shall perform the duties of the President in the event of his or her disability or absence at meetings and such other duties as shall be specifically assigned to him or her by the President. The President-Elect shall assume the office of President the year following his or her term of office.

SECTION 4. VICE PRESIDENT. The Vice President shall attend meetings of the Board of Directors and shall perform the duties of the President in the event of the disability or absence of the President and President-Elect and such other duties as shall be specifically assigned to him or her by the President.

SECTION 5. IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT. The Immediate Past President shall attend meetings of the Board of Directors and shall perform such duties as shall be specifically assigned to him or her by the President.

SECTION 6. TREASURER. The Treasurer of the Corporation shall hold office for the term designated by the Board of Directors upon the appointment of such Treasurer. The Treasurer shall receive all money paid to this Corporation. S/he shall carefully account for all transactions and make full report of the same to the annual meeting or at any time upon the

request of the Board of Directors or President. She/he shall keep accurate records and accounts of all transactions of the Corporation, and his/her accounts shall be audited at the end of each fiscal year by a certified public accountant. ~~The Treasurer, or in case the office of Executive Director and Treasurer are combined in one person, the Director-Treasurer shall furnish such bond as the Board of Directors may direct, the cost of which shall be paid by the Corporation, and such bond shall be deposited with the President of the Corporation.~~ The delegates to the annual meeting shall be provided with copies of the annual financial report.

SECTION 7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. The Executive Director shall hold office for such term as is designated by the Board of Directors upon the appointment of the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall be paid a salary as determined by the Board of Directors, and all of the other terms of employment of the Executive Director shall be determined by the Board of Directors. The Executive Director shall manage the affairs of the Corporation under the general direction and supervision of the Board of Directors. S/he shall appoint the various employees of the Corporation, subject to approval of staffing levels by the Board of Directors through the annual budgeting process, and shall be responsible for the proper and efficient conduct of the work of the Corporation. The Executive Director shall prepare an annual budget of estimated receipts and expenditures of the Corporation, which proposed budget shall be submitted to the Board of Directors for its approval. S/he shall cause accurate minutes to be kept of all meetings of the Corporation, of the Board of Directors, and of other committees of the Corporation. S/he shall ~~attend to the correspondence of the Corporation, shall~~ cause notices of meetings to be provided as required by the Board of Directors and the Bylaws. S/he shall cause to be published ~~the official publication of the Corporation, together with such other releases and reports~~ communications as s/he and the Board of Directors may consider desirable from time to time for the good of the Corporation. ~~The Executive Director shall furnish a surety bond at the expense of the Corporation, with such company and in such amount as approved by the Board of Directors.~~ The conduct of the office of Executive Director shall be further governed by the terms of any employment contract and such policies as are adopted from time to time by the Board of Directors.

~~SECTION 8. SUBORDINATE OFFICERS, ETC. The Board of Directors may appoint such other officers, agents, representatives or committees as it may deem necessary, each of whom shall hold office for such period, have such authority and perform such duties as are provided in these Bylaws, or as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine. The Board of Directors may delegate to any officer or committee the power to appoint any such subordinate officers or committees or agents.~~

SECTION ~~9~~8. REMOVAL. Any officer or agent may be removed, either with or without cause, by a vote of a majority of the whole Board of Directors at a regular meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose or, except in case of any officer appointed by the Board of Directors, by any committee or superior officer upon whom such powers of removal may be conferred by the Board of Directors.

SECTION ~~10~~9. RESIGNATION. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice of the effective date of the resignation to the Board of Directors through the President, or through the Executive Director of the Corporation. ~~Such resignation shall take effect when acted~~

upon by the Board of Directors.

SECTION ~~11~~10. VACANCIES. All officers disqualified from continued service as a Director under the provisions of Article IV shall also be immediately disqualified from continued service as an officer.

- (a) In the event of a disqualification of the President, the then-current President-Elect shall automatically ascend to the position of President for the remainder of the unexpired term of the disqualified President and for the originally scheduled Presidential term of the then-current President-Elect. The vacancy in the position of President-Elect created by this succession shall remain unfilled for the remaining term of the President-Elect who has ascended to the position of President.
- (b) Except for a vacancy in the position of President and a vacancy in the position of President-Elect under the specific circumstances described in (a) of this Section, any other vacancy in the offices of President-Elect, Vice President or Immediate Past President shall be filled by the Board of Directors. All officers appointed under the provisions of this Section shall hold office until the next annual meeting of the Corporation.

ARTICLE VI - OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

SECTION 1. MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE. At the annual meeting of the members of the Corporation, there shall be elected a representative to serve upon the Board of Directors of the Montana High School Association for a four (4) year term, or for the remainder of an unexpired term. Such person, at the time of his or her election, must be a member of the Board of Directors of this Corporation and, also, must be a member of a school board which is a member of the Montana High School Association.

Section 1(a). Vacancies. If the Montana High School Association Representative ceases to be a member of a school board which is a member of the Montana High School Association or the Montana School Boards Association Board of Directors during the tenure of his or her office as a Director of the Montana High School Association, the office shall become vacant, and the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall have the power to fill the vacancy by appointment of a school board member who is a Montana School Board Association board member to serve until the next annual meeting of the Corporation, at which time a member shall be elected to complete the unexpired term according to the qualifications and procedures outlined in Article VI, Section 1. In the event that the Montana School Boards Association Director serving as the Montana High School Association representative has served the allowable terms on the Montana School Boards Association Board, he/she shall remain an ex-officio member of the Montana School Boards Association Board of Directors until his/her Montana High School Association term has expired.

Section 1(b). Nominations. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall submit to the annual meeting of the members the names of persons as nominees for said office, but additional nominations may be made from the floor.

ARTICLE VII – CAUCUSES

SECTION 1. PURPOSES. The purposes of the MTSBA caucuses are:

- a. to serve as a statewide forum within the Montana School Boards Association to address issues that impact Montana's public school children in every school district in the state;
- b. to provide focused input to the MTSBA Board of Directors on issues where the impact on such children differs based upon diverse factors present in school districts qualifying for membership in each of the respective caucuses identified herein;
- c. to increase communication between, mutual understanding and awareness of, and respect for similar and differing challenges of leadership faced by fellow elected trustees of member school districts throughout the state;
- d. to ensure that MTSBA members' diverse backgrounds, beliefs, values and circumstances are recognized and incorporated into the governance, programs and services provided by MTSBA;
- e. to build consensus among the diverse members of MTSBA based upon our common collective interests in serving and promoting the interests of children in our public schools as the primary driving force behind MTSBA advocacy and policy.

SECTION 2: CAUCUS MEMBERSHIP VOLUNTARY. An MTSBA member school district may join and participate in any caucus for which it qualifies based on the criteria set forth in Section 3.

SECTION 3. IDENTIFICATION OF CAUCUSES. The following are categories of member school districts and individuals recognized as having distinct characteristics and issues meriting special attention of MTSBA, and as such are recognized as official caucuses of the Montana School Boards Association:

- a. Indian School Board Caucus. The membership of this caucus shall consist of school boards governing public education in Montana that serve American Indian students in their respective school districts and who are members of the Montana School Boards Association.
- b. AA Caucus. The membership of this caucus shall consist of school boards governing public education in Montana that are designated as AA Districts by the Montana High School Association and who are members of the Montana School Boards Association.
- c. A Caucus. The membership of this caucus shall consist of school boards governing public education in Montana that are designated as A Districts by the Montana High School Association and who are members of the Montana School Boards Association.
- d. B Caucus. The membership of this caucus shall consist of school boards governing public education in Montana that are designated as B Districts by the Montana High School Association and who are members of the Montana School Boards Association.
- e. C Caucus. The membership of this caucus shall consist of school boards governing public education in Montana that are designated as C Districts by the

Montana High School Association and who are members of the Montana School Boards Association.

f. Independent Elementary School Caucus. The membership of this caucus shall consist of school boards governing public education for all grades up to and including grade 8 only and who are members of the Montana School Boards Association.

g. Past Presidents Caucus. The membership of this caucus shall consist of those individuals that have served in the capacity of President of the MTSBA Board of Directors, regardless of whether such individuals continue to serve as elected trustees or members of the MTSBA Board of Directors.

SECTION 41. CAUCUSES - BYLAWS. Each of the caucuses identified herein in Section 3 that are Any Caucus of the membership that is formed shall be governed by B bylaws that are consistent with and do not conflict with the Bylaws of the Montana School Boards Association. The General Counsel of the Montana School Boards Association shall assist each of the Caucuses in the development of Bylaws consistent with these Bylaws. The Bylaws for each caucus shall be subject to approval by the applicable caucus and the MTSBA Board of Directors.

SECTION 5. EXPANSION OF CAUCUSES. A three quarters vote of those present at the annual meeting is necessary in order to expand caucuses beyond those provided in these B bylaws as of November 1, 2009.

SECTION 6. CAUCUS BOARDS. The composition of each caucus board shall be addressed in the Bylaws of each respective caucus.

SECTION 7. DUES. The dues of each caucus, if any, shall be set by the governing board of such caucus. Revenue generated from such dues may be used to pay for expenses of convening the caucus board and for services provided by MTSBA. If caucus dues are implemented, such dues shall be set as a percentage of regular MTSBA membership dues as set forth in Article II of these bylaws.

SECTION 8. OFFICERS. Each Caucus formed shall elect at least the following officers: Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson shall work with the MTSBA's Executive Director and/or other designated staff liaison and the chair of the Executive Caucus Board in setting the agenda for caucus meetings, making the respective caucus aware of issues being addressed by other caucuses identified herein and presiding over all meetings of the respective caucus. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall take on the responsibilities of the Chairperson.

SECTION 9. LIAISONS. The immediate past president of the MTSBA board shall serve as a liaison between the MTSBA board and the past presidents' caucus. With regard to any other caucuses formed, members of the MTSBA board of directors serving as trustees in districts with characteristics consistent with the characteristics of school districts qualifying for membership in a caucus identified in Section 3 shall serve as liaisons between the MTSBA Board and such caucus boards. In the absence of a member of the MTSBA board of directors

serving as a trustee in a district with characteristics consistent with the characteristics of school districts qualifying for membership in a caucus, the MTSBA president elect shall serve as the liaison between the MTSBA Board and such caucus boards.

~~SECTION 10. EXECUTIVE CAUCUS BOARD. The Chairperson of each caucus shall serve as a member of the Executive Caucus Board. The purpose of the Executive Caucus Board shall be to discuss the work of each Caucus Board, to build consensus on issues that impact children served by Montana public schools, to serve the purposes set forth in Section 1 above and to act as an advisory board to the Montana School Boards Association Board of Directors. The Executive Caucus Board shall elect one of its own to act as the Chairperson of the Executive Caucus Board. The Chairperson of the Executive Caucus Board shall serve as a liaison between the MTSBA Board of Directors and the Executive Caucus Board and shall report to the MTSBA Board on the activities, interests and needs of the caucuses.~~

ARTICLE VIII - THE DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

SECTION 1. GENERAL. The Delegate Assembly of the Corporation shall consist of the members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation and three (3) delegates from each MTSBA Region ~~and each Municipal~~ 7L Member. Each delegate to meetings of the Delegate Assembly shall be a regular member of a school board of a public school ~~district~~ system which has paid its current dues in the manner herein provided. Only accredited delegates shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the Delegate Assembly.

SECTION 2. DELEGATES. At the time of electing its Director, each Regional Director shall elect for a two (2) year term, three (3) school board members to serve as members of the Delegate Assembly. In addition, each Regional Director shall elect three (3) alternates at the same meeting to serve in the Delegate Assembly if a member of the Delegate Assembly is unable to participate or fails to qualify by having lost membership on the local board or by lapse of that school board's membership in the Montana School Boards Association. If any of the elected delegates or alternates are unable to attend or if a total of three delegates and alternates are not elected, the Regional Director ~~or 7L Director~~ may appoint replacement delegates in order to assure each MTSBA Region ~~and Municipal~~ 7L Member has full voting representation at Delegate Assembly.

SECTION 3. ANNUAL MEETING. The Delegate Assembly shall meet at least annually at the call of the Board of Directors. Ten (10) days notice of the time and place of such meeting shall be provided by the Executive Director to each member.

SECTION 4. QUORUM. ~~Trustees representing t~~ Twenty-three (23) or more members of the Delegate Assembly present at the annual meeting ~~of the Delegate Assembly~~ shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION 5. LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMMING. The Delegate Assembly shall study and formulate a ~~proposed~~ legislative program for the Corporation and recommend the same for consideration at the annual meeting of the Corporation.

ARTICLE IX - CONTRACTS, CHECKS, DRAFTS, BANK ACCOUNTS, ETC.

SECTION 1. CONTRACTS, ETC., HOW EXECUTED. The Board of Directors, except as in these Bylaws otherwise provided, may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances, ~~and unless so authorized by the Board of Directors, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable pecuniarily for any purpose or to any amount.~~

SECTION 2. LOANS. No loans shall be contracted on behalf of the Corporation and no negotiable paper shall be issued in its name unless authorized by the Board of Directors as provided in Section 1. When so authorized, any officer or agent of the Corporation may effect loans and advances at any time for the Corporation from any bank, trust company or other institution, or from any firm, corporation or individual; and for such loans and advances may make, execute and deliver promissory notes or other evidences of indebtedness of the Corporation; and when authorized as aforesaid, as security for the payment of any and all loan advances, indebtedness, and liabilities of the Corporation may, subject to the provisions of the Restated Articles of Incorporation, mortgage, pledge, hypothecate or transfer any real and personal property at any time held by the Corporation, and to that end execute instruments or mortgage or pledge or otherwise transfer said property. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

SECTION 3. DEPOSITS. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation under such condition and in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as the Board of Directors may designate.

SECTION 4. CHECKS. Each check issued by the Corporation shall be signed by any two (2) of the following: Executive Director, ~~Controller~~, Chief Financial Officer, a Director-Level Staff Member, or President. No officer may sign checks payable to himself/herself.

~~SECTION 5. EXPENSES. All expenses reimbursed by this Corporation must be substantiated by bill or voucher or approved by the Board of Directors.~~

ARTICLE X - SEAL

The Seal of this Corporation shall be circular in form with the words "MONTANA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC." on the circumference and the words "Corporate Seal-Montana" in the center.

ARTICLE XI – SOURCES AND HIERARCHY OF AUTHORITY

The Montana School Boards Association operates pursuant to authority granted and under legal restrictions imposed by virtue of its organizational structure as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit

corporation. Such authority and restrictions take precedence over all other sources of authority for the Montana School Boards Association. The Montana School Boards Association also operates under the authority of and pursuant to the restrictions imposed by various member-adopted documents. The hierarchy of member-adopted documents is as follows:

1. MTSBA's Bylaws;
2. Principles and Guidelines adopted by the membership;
3. Resolutions passed by the membership; and
4. Resolutions/Motions of any caucus of MTSBA.

In the case of a conflict between any of the above, the source of authority higher on the list above shall control.

ARTICLE XII – CONDUCTING BUSINESS THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEANS

The Association may conduct any business via technology and/or other electronic means. Therefore, any reference in these Bylaws to written notice, mailings, signatures, distribution of information, conducting meetings or otherwise conducting any business of the Association shall be construed to specifically authorize such conduct in whole or in part through technological means. Such authority shall include but shall not be construed as being limited to: video and conference calls, electronic ballots, electronic meetings, and elections.

ARTICLE XIII – DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS UPON DISSOLUTION

As an instrumentality of its member school boards, upon Upon dissolution of the Corporation, the assets of the Corporation shall be distributed to its member public school boards in proportionate amounts for each member's use consistent with any of the Corporation's charitable purposes set forth in its Restated Articles of Incorporation.

The calculation of the proportionate share of each member's assets of the Corporation upon dissolution shall be derived by dividing each member's annual dues paid to the Corporation pursuant to Article II, Section 2 in the Corporation's last full year of operation by the total annual dues revenue of the Corporation in its last full year of operation.

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and new Bylaws may be adopted at any regular or special meeting of the members, provided the written notice of meeting contains the proposed change and provided the change receives at least a majority of the votes which delegates present at such meetings are entitled to cast. Any such change shall become effective immediately upon passage.

MTSBA LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Presented for member information and discussion only unless otherwise noted.

The following section shifts from organizational governance and stewardship to the Association's long-term strategic advocacy priorities

Multi-Year Strategic Advocacy Resolution, 2025-2029 Sessions

– Previously Adopted by MTSBA Members

This previously adopted multi-year resolution remains in effect through the 2029 legislative session and is included in this booklet for contextual and reference purposes only. No amendment to or reauthorization of this resolution is presently proposed.

BE IT RESOLVED that MTSBA follow a vision-based strategic advocacy process in developing and executing its legislative priorities in each legislative session.

1. MTSBA shall convene and facilitate its members in ongoing strategic dialogue to ensure the ongoing relevance and value of its advocacy efforts before the Montana Legislature and other bodies impacting the constitutional rights, authorities and obligations under the Montana Constitution. MTSBA shall incorporate expanded consensus among all affected stakeholders with a focus on developing the full potential of each child in every public school and incorporating outreach to and engagement by teachers and administrators who have fostered high student achievement and successfully implemented available flexibilities.
2. MTSBA shall strive to ensure alignment between its priorities and corresponding priorities of other constitutionally empowered bodies to support transformative strategies that will support Montana's public schools in their mission to develop the full educational potential of each person and to ensure equality of educational opportunity for all children.
3. MTSBA shall study and provide references to and consider the adoption of priorities and strategic direction of other comparable strategic efforts at supporting public education, such as the National Conference of State Legislatures' "The Time is Now" initiative.
4. MTSBA efforts must include both development of internal clarity and consensus regarding the desired future for Montana's public schools and external outreach, collaboration with and pursuit of common goals with the Legislature, Board of Public Education, Governor and State Superintendent.
5. MTSBA shall route internal efforts through MTSBA's K-12 Vision Project and will engage our member trustees, administrators, clerks, and teachers from all MTSBA caucus groups.
6. MTSBA shall collaborate in a full partnership with the organizational partners in the Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Schools to ensure broad consensus and strategic alignment of our advocacy, focused on the best interests of the children we serve in Montana's Public Schools.
7. MTSBA shall facilitate the work of the K-12 Vision Project using knowledge-based decision making processes, emphasizing careful, deliberate and comprehensive analysis of issues, the use of open dialogue prior to deliberation, pursuit of insight regarding wants, needs and preferences of our members, consideration of the ethical implications of our choices and mitigation of disadvantage to all stakeholders.
8. MTSBA shall initiate outreach efforts to broaden and heighten awareness of the work of the- 12 Vision Project and the efforts of the Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Schools, including a combination of public opinion polling, facilitated community dialogue, outreach to business, higher education and other community leaders and public awareness campaigns.
9. MTSBA's overall advocacy efforts must always include: An ongoing analysis of the gaps between the vision for success under Article X of the Montana Constitution and the reality of and any impediments created by laws governing and resources provided to Montana's public schools, and development of proposals to resolve the gaps between the vision for success and current realities.

Gap Analysis Resolution for 2027 Interim and 2027 Legislative Session

Proposed Resolution for the Membership of the Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) – Prepared by the MTSBA Board of Directors for consideration by the members of MTSBA.

Primary Objective: Examine and address discrepancies between the envisioned success outlined in Article X of the Montana Constitution and the actual laws and resources that govern Montana’s public schools.

Title: Advancing Equity, Adequacy, and Innovation in Montana’s Public School Funding

Whereas:

1. MTSBA is committed to a vision-based strategic advocacy process that incorporates expanded consensus among stakeholders focused on developing the full potential of each child in every public school.
2. Montana’s Constitution guarantees equality of educational opportunity and mandates the provision of a basic system of free, quality schools that develop the full educational potential of each student.
3. Persistent disparities in student achievement, particularly those related to socioeconomic factors, have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions and equitable funding.
4. The current funding formula inadequately addresses the needs of at-risk students, despite a proven negative impact on student outcomes.
5. Montana ranks 38th nationally in per-pupil funding, far behind neighboring states and top-performing states, creating systemic challenges in achieving excellence in education.
6. Simplification of the funding formula can be achieved through adequacy and equity to ensure that all students have access to quality education.
7. Collaboration among stakeholders, including the Coalition of Advocates for Montana’s Public Schools, is essential to advancing meaningful solutions that align with constitutional rights of children.

Be it Resolved: The Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) commits to advocating for a transformative approach to public school funding that prioritizes equity, adequacy, and innovation, ensuring every Montana student has access to quality education. Specifically, MTSBA shall place special emphasis on each of the following:

1. **Help and Positively Influence the School Funding Interim Commission:** Inform and positively influence the School Funding Interim Commission to fulfill its responsibility to ensure ongoing relevance and compliance with constitutional guarantees afforded children under Article X of the Montana Constitution.
2. **Update our Funding Formula Proposal:** Update and advocate for implementation of the funding proposal upon which the Coalition of Advocates for Montana’s Public Schools and their respective members gained consensus prior to the 2025 Legislative Session. Updates to the proposal must:
 - a. Retain focus on better balancing funding elements to ensure the cornerstones of quality and resolve the disproportionate emphasis on per pupil funding constructs amid a

decades-long decline in the percentage of Montana's population represented by school aged children.

- b. Continue to reflect a sustained commitment to balancing the diverse needs of schools across Montana. This includes a focus on empowering public schools in rural and isolated areas, as well as urban centers, American Indian communities, and all other districts, regardless of their unique characteristics. Fostering an inclusive approach will ensure that every school receives the support necessary to thrive and contribute to the overall educational landscape of the state.
- c. Support school district efforts to ensure preservation of the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indian Peoples and Tribes.
- d. Address and target funding for school districts to meet the needs of at-risk students, including those affected by poverty, disabilities, and other challenges, to close opportunity and performance gaps.
- e. Support the establishment of a unified "Quality Assurance" funding model that guarantees adequate resources for all districts, complemented by local voter authority to authorize discretionary funding enhancements beyond to foster innovation.

3. Ensure Quality Through Adequacy and Equity of Resources: Advocate for a more equitable and stable funding environment for Montana's public schools through collaborative approaches to ensure that both our public schools and residential property taxpayers thrive. These efforts must include finding alternative revenue sources for Montana's public schools to alleviate the disproportionate financial burden currently placed on residential property taxpayers in Montana. The responsibility to implement comprehensive tax reform lies within the legislative body, which has the authority to appropriate funds and make significant changes to the state's tax structure and the Montana Legislature has both the authority and the capability to create sustainable solutions to the funding challenges facing our public schools.

4. Advocate for Increased State Support of School District Costs of Building and Maintaining Facilities:

- a. Legislative efforts should reflect implementation of updates to the most recent statewide school facilities study in 2008.
- b. The level of financial support committed for such expenditures should align to key findings of the 2008 study, including the existence of over 2,000 school buildings, constituting over 30 million square feet with an average age of over 50 years.

Be it Further Resolved that MTSBA shall execute the following strategies in pursuit of the goals of this resolution:

1. Empower Innovation and Excellence:

- a. Support programs that incentivize transformational learning, advanced opportunities, and innovative teaching approaches, ensuring Montana's schools are equipped to prepare students for success in a rapidly changing world.
- b. Encourage investment in research and development initiatives to address unique challenges and opportunities in education.

2. Collaborate with Partners:

- a. Work closely with the Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Schools, including MASBO, MQEC, MREA, and SAM, to align efforts and amplify advocacy for equitable and adequate funding.
- b. Route internal efforts through the K-12 Vision Project, engaging trustees, administrators, clerks, and teachers from across the state to ensure alignment and clarity in advocacy efforts.

3. Champion Legislative Action:

- a. Advocate for legislative reforms that align with Montana’s constitutional obligations, including adjustments to outdated funding mechanisms and exploration of alternative revenue sources.
- b. Encourage the School Funding Interim Commission to prioritize adequacy, equity, and innovation in school funding.

4. Educate and Engage MTSBA Members:

- a. Provide MTSBA members with resources, data, and advocacy to effectively engage in discussions and decisions regarding school funding.
- b. Mobilize school board trustees to actively participate in shaping policies that advance the mission of Montana’s public schools.

5. Facilitate Knowledge-Based Decision-Making:

- a. Ensure that advocacy efforts are guided by knowledge-based decision-making processes, emphasizing comprehensive analysis, open dialogue, and ethical considerations to ensure equitable outcomes for all stakeholders.

6. Expand Public Awareness and Outreach:

- a. Initiate public awareness campaigns and community outreach efforts to build broad support for equitable and adequate school funding, engaging business, higher education, and community leaders in the process.

7. Protect Previous Progress:

- a. Safeguard the invaluable institutional knowledge and preserving the significant progress that has been diligently achieved through previous advocacy, hard work and dedication of our members. This commitment is essential to maintaining a foundation of excellence in our educational systems upon which we can further build.
- b. MTSBA has collaborated with other public education advocates and with the legislative and executive branches of government to achieve significant improvements in current law that we must protect against future attacks. Progress from previous sessions over the last several years is reflected in an appendix to this resolution for reference.

8. Ensure a Structure of Shared Authority that Matches the Intent of Constitutional Framers:

- a. MTSBA shall increase awareness among public policy makers and the public regarding the interrelationships and shared obligations of the Montana Legislature, the Board of Public Education, the State Superintendent and Elected School Boards for ensuring a constitutionally compliant system of public education that develops the full potential of each person.
- b. The people of Montana have commissioned and assigned responsibilities to each of these groups to ensure that the peoples’ goal of developing the full potential of each person is within reach.
- c. The authority and obligation of community elected school boards to supervise and control public schools in each community is a power specifically greater than the power to generally supervise schools as vested in the board of public education. It remains important for MTSBA to remain vigilant in preserving the authority of supervision and control by elected school boards against proposals to infringe on that authority introduced before the Legislature and/or the Board of Public Education.
- d. Ensure codification of proper roles and scope of authority for all branches of government sharing a duty of fidelity to fulfilling the goals and guarantees afforded children under Article X of the Montana Constitution. MTSBA shall source its position on such issues by relying on guidance as to the proper role, balances of power and interrelationships among constitutionally empowered parties from the verbatim transcript of the Montana Constitutional Convention of 1972, with particular emphasis on portions of that transcript

related to the adoption of Article X, Section 8 vesting supervision and control of public education in each community in elected school boards. See the end note at the bottom of the appendix of verbatim transcripts relevant to this topic.¹

Be It Finally Resolved that through adherence with the efforts above, MTSBA shall visibly uphold its mission to unlock the full potential of each child through effective school board leadership, ensuring that Montana’s public schools are empowered to serve as the cornerstone of opportunity and excellence for the children of Montana.

Appendix Documenting Previous Progress

¹ **Selected Quotes from the Constitutional Convention Verbatim Transcript Pertaining to the Adoption of Article X of the Montana Constitution - Volume VI of the Constitutional Convention Notes, Verbatim Transcript, March 9-16, 1972:**

Page 2046 is where the delegates first considered what has become Article X, Section 8. Delegate George Heliker, who was an economics professor at the University of Montana moved: I move to amend Section 8 of the Education and Public Lands Committee Proposal on page 5, line 24, after the word and punctuation ‘elections’: ‘The supervision and control of schools in each school district shall be vested in a school board.’

Page 2046 – Heliker says that the fear has been expressed that local school boards would lose autonomy unless added to the Constitution. He also drew a parallel between the authority he was suggesting be provided to local school boards and the authority that the committee had previously granted to the board of regents.

“The committee proposal in Section 11 provides for autonomy to a certain extent for the Board of Regents, which they propose to establish as a constitutional board. And I feel, therefore, that we should give constitutional recognition and status to the local boards to-first of all, to allay the fears which have been expressed, which I think are well founded, concerning the preservation of local autonomy; and secondly, to give parallel treatment to the governing boards of the public schools, as well as the public universities and colleges.”

Page 2046-2047 - Richard Champoux, Delegate, a professor at Flathead Valley College and a Senate Democrat, added the following comments, noting a specific intent to reduce the power of the Board of Public Education over what it had been under the 1899 Constitution:

“I have also felt that there is quite a bit of fear on the part of many delegates here, and no matter what we say, perhaps they’d still have that fear that the local school districts are going to lose some control and some power. And if you’ll note in my remarks to the-when we get to 9,10 and 11, you will note that we have even eliminated the word “control” in the new Public Board of Education, where it is in the old Constitution, and only use the word “supervise”, By this amendment the intent is shown, I think, that this delegate-this body does want local control to remain with the local school districts, and I heartily support it.” Page 2048 – Reflects the proposal was adopted unanimously.

Page 2050 – Delegate Champoux emphasizes the deliberate reduction in power of the Board of Public Education vis-à-vis local school boards by reiterating that the removal of authority to “control” by the Board of Public Education was deliberate.

“I want you to notice, in this Number 9, if you look at the old section of the Constitution, it talks about supervision and control. In this section we have left out the word “control”. Again, we want to emphasize that we want the local public school boards to have as much power as possible.”

Page 2051 – Delegate Champoux addresses the relationship between the power of the Board of Public Education and local school boards:

The fear has been expressed that a separate board for public education might usurp the powers of local boards. There is no reason to be concerned about such a possibility-however, since the powers granted the state board would be almost identical to those now granted, and what we have just done is to guarantee the control by the local board at the local level. Indeed, the committee has actually deleted the word “control” from the powers and granted-now granted the board, so that the new section reads: “exercise general supervision over the public school system.” It would be difficult to argue that this grants any additional powers to the state board at the expense of local school boards.

MTSBA shall continue its ongoing efforts that we started in the 2009 Legislative Session to resolve findings of Judge Sherlock in his order in *Columbia Falls Elementary v. State* (Columbia Falls II). Although Judge Sherlock denied supplemental relief sought by MQEC, he also entered the following findings:

118. Throughout this document, the Court has noted many improvements to the situation that existed in 2004. The Court has also noted that some problems remain. As just noted, this Court, given the efforts of the State and the difficulty of providing an adequate remedy at this time, chooses not to grant any supplemental relief. However, as loath as this Court is to provide an advisory opinion, it will make a few comments so as to avoid future problems.

119. By and large, the Court finds that the State has done a good job of addressing the problems earlier addressed. Following are some of the problems the Court sees that could cause this Court's conclusion to be reversed in the future. According to Exhibit 784, the State has made excellent contributions to ongoing State aid from 2005 through 2008. However, beginning in fiscal year 2009, the increase in the amount of State aid will drop to 1.9 percent. In order to avoid future problems, this figure should reflect to the trend of 2005-2008.

120. Next, although the total State aid to the school districts' general funds has increased from 2004 until today, the Court notes a slight relapse in 2009, as set forth in Finding of Fact 88, above. In the view of this Court, this figure should not be declining, but should either be increasing or at least staying the same.

121. The costs of special education need to be addressed. This Court noted in Finding of Fact 72, above, that Exhibit 549 shows that State appropriations for special education have fallen far short of the growth in costs. The increased competition for general fund dollars between special and general education continues.

122. In Finding of Fact 86, this Court noted the continuing problems with the recruitment and retention of teachers in isolated districts. While the State has made progress in this regard, it would be helpful if more could be done to ease these problems. As noted, increasing salaries for rural and isolated district would have a noticeable impact on recruitment and retention problems.

Specific legislation previously passed through MTSBA efforts (in collaboration with others) pertaining to the above findings include:

2011 Legislative Session

MTSBA successfully drafted and passed Senate Bill 329, Senator Ryan Zinke, allowing school districts to form multi-district agreements. The most notable improvement here was a change in the law granting unified school systems greater flexibility in committing funds throughout their K-12 school systems. School districts throughout the state have used this law, not only to qualify for state incentive funding, but to also level out the difficulties of budgets that go hand in hand with enrollment fluctuations. MTSBA designed this increased flexibility consistent with Judge Sherlock's ruling in 2008 where he identified that drawing on other fund balances was a means by which schools should be able to respond to spikes in inflation during a biennium that were above inflation calculated under the law.

2013 Legislative Session

1. SB 175, Senator Llew Jones: In addition to a prorated basic entitlement that provided school districts of all sizes with millions in new funding, SB 175 also increased the basic and per-ANB entitlements, applied inflationary increases on portions of the formula that had been frozen since 2005, provided a new funding stream for student data systems, added a new natural resource development payment to mitigate local property taxes and provide a funding stream for school construction, and implemented:
 - a. Proficiency based ANB, with no seat time requirement. This can help facilitate accelerated learning for gifted and talented students while freeing up resources to pay for dual credit courses for such students and to devote more time to individualized instruction.
 - b. School board flexibility to increase its over BASE general fund levy without a vote, provided that the board reduces other non-voted levies by a corresponding amount.
 - c. Immediate increased funding for school districts experiencing an unusual increase in enrollment with more meaningful thresholds than what existed under previous law.
2. SB 191, Senator Taylor Brown: Allows a district to use the non-voted tuition fund to pay for any actual costs of providing a Free Appropriate Public Education to students qualifying for services under IDEA that are above the current federal, state and local funding streams available to serve such students. MTSBA

drafted and supported passage of this legislation to address finding 121 from Judge Sherlock’s 2008 ruling regarding the competition between general and special education. Schools today have access to \$28.5 million more for special education funding through the tuition levy than they did in 2013.

3. SB 348, Senator Fred Thomas: Allows a district to transfer state or local revenue from any fund other than debt service or retirement to its building reserve fund and use the funds for enhancements to school safety and security.

2015 Legislative Session

2015-2023 Legislative Sessions – After decades of funding K-12 public education last, after the Legislature first addressed every other key component of House Bill 2, the Legislature started funding K-12 public education inflation as one of the first substantive bills of each session. Inflationary increases in the two years affected by the 2023 Legislature will reflect a full decade of this new trend of prioritizing funding for K-12 schools in state budgeting discussions that reverses a trend that persisted during the first 150 years of the operation of public schools in Montana (1865-2015). Sponsors along the way included Representative Denise Hayman (2015); Representative Seth Berglee (2017); Senator Dan Salomon (2019); Representative Fred Anderson (2021); and Representative David Bedey (2023 and 2025).

2017 Legislative Session

1. Senate Bill 103, Senator Llew Jones: Extended new flexibility for personalized learning at the system level. Removed the obligation to provide the aggregate hours of instruction to all students other than those not gaining proficiency. From this point forward, state law authorizes school districts to implement personalized learning paths with funding attached based on proficiency over content.
2. Senate Bill 307, Senator Llew Jones: Created a new major maintenance funding stream of \$23 million annually, through a combination of nonvoted levy authority and guaranteed tax base support that pays for the majority of these total costs on a statewide basis.
3. House Bill 647, Representative Don Jones: Protected school districts against what would have otherwise been budget reductions of \$42 million. Used block grant funds to cover short term budget shortfalls and expanded guaranteed tax base aid from FY18-21 in a manner that provided tens of millions in savings to local property taxpayers on an annual basis. Through this bill and successor legislation, the GTB ratio has risen from 193% to 262% and local property taxes during the period covered (2017-2023) grew by only \$15 million statewide while state GTB support grew by over \$90 million.

2019 Legislative Session

1. House Bill 211, Representative Llew Jones: Passed funding for educator loan repayments for schools facing critical quality educator shortages.
2. House Bill 247, Representative Bruce Grubbs: Authorized school districts to use major maintenance resources to service debt on major maintenance loans. Authorized new borrowing authority of over \$250 million for major maintenance projects.
3. House Bill 351, Representative Wendy McKamey: Provided incentive funds to help pilot school districts converting to personalized learning models.
4. House Bill 387, Representative Llew Jones: Increased career and technical education programming and funding, expanding to middle grades, authorizing matching nonvoted adult education levy funds and more than doubling current CTE funding levels.
5. House Bill 576, Representative David Bedey: Increased flexibility over donated funds previously obligated to endowment funds. Expanded school district access to over \$30 million in such funds.
6. Senate Bill 92, Senator Dan Solomon: Expanded authorized use of funding transfers, major maintenance resources and authorized a new voted levy for operational and capital costs of school and student safety and security.

2021 Legislative Session

1. House Bill 46, Representative David Bedey: Applied the inflationary adjustment to the special education allowable cost payment and included it in the present law base in future biennia starting in the 2023 Legislative Session.

2. House Bill 143, Representative Llew Jones: The TEACH Act. Provided a financial incentive to Montana public school districts to increase teacher base pay to attract early career teachers to Montana school districts. Funding through the quality educator payment for school districts meeting the legislative goals set forth in the bill adds to K-12 Base Aid for qualifying school districts.
3. House Bill 246, Representative Marta Bertoglio: Codified and expanded flexibilities in personalized learning and teacher licensure and enhanced the state's recognition of the constitutional power of elected school boards. The broadened definition of instruction in 20-1-101(17) took pressure off districts trying to compute their aggregate hours of instruction requirements amid the challenges of COVID-19.

2023 Legislative Session

1. HB 15, Representative David Bedey - Implement K-12 Inflation. Sustained a 10 consecutive year streak in which school funding is determined early in a legislative session, compared to previous trend where school funding would be determined last.
2. HB 117, Representative Marta Bertoglio - Expand working retiree options under TRS. This removes red tape from the process of qualifying a person for working retiree status and expands coverage to administrative positions.
3. HB 257, Representative Courtenay Sprunger - Expand funding for advanced opportunities program. CTE funding is now at \$6 million per year, with \$4 million of the funds administered through advanced opportunity grants. This is an all-time high in CTE funding.
4. HB 321, Representative Linda Reksten - \$73 million transfer to school facilities trust. The school facilities trust will now be \$200 million, and interest generated off that trust provides GTB-subsidize major maintenance levies and debt service payments on bonds approved by voters.
5. HB 332, Representative David Bedey - \$40 million for startup funds for statewide school health trust. The trust must qualify no later than June 30, 2026, to claim these funds.
6. HB 352, Representative Brad Barker - Implement targeted interventions starting at age 4 to support 3rd grade reading proficiency. This is groundbreaking for Montana in providing early childhood education on a formula basis focused on early literacy. Options include any combination or a home based program (\$1,000), summer jump start program (120 hours for ¼ ANB) and a classroom program that can be either half time or full time starting with children who turn 4 on or before September 10 of the year of service.
7. HB 408, Representative Sue Vinton - Expand innovative education tax credits and broaden permissible expenditures. This bill expands the innovative education tax credit from \$2 million to \$5 million and now allows expenditure on equipment and facilities supporting innovative educational programming.
8. HB 549, Representative Fred Anderson - Authorizing establishment of public charter schools. We drafted this bill in collaboration with Representative Anderson and the Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public schools. The bill is constitutionally compliant with schools supervised and controlled by popularly elected trustees and subject to general supervision by the board of public education.
9. HB 587, Representative Llew Jones - Increase transparency and expand tax relief through 95 mills. This bill devotes the 95 mills to supporting K-12 education funding. The 95 mills now fund the general fund GTB program (262% ratio), and provides \$30 million in permanent local property tax relief for countywide retirement levies. The bill also provides for a contingent spill over to further support GTB support for major maintenance levies and debt service payments due to voter approved bonds.
10. HB 588, Representative Llew Jones - Expand TEACH Act to ensure the eligibility of class 5 provisional certified staff and to ensure that the "first three years of career" does not count for years when an individual is working under an emergency authorization.
11. HB 749, Representative Llew Jones - Expand Montana Digital Academy funding for nationwide clearinghouse. The \$950,000 increase in funding will exponentially expand student access to high quality distance learning opportunities, all accessed through enrollment in a resident public school on a part time or full time basis.
12. HB 833, Representative Brad Barker - Establish teacher residency program. This program funds approximately 70 new teachers each year in rural and isolated communities to help address recruitment and retention.
13. SB 70, Senator Shannon O'Brien - Ease rules to qualify for Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program to help address recruitment and retention. Removes red tape from the process of qualifying a person for

loan repayment by removing the content-specific criteria and qualifying anyone working in a rural or isolated school for loan repayment.

14. SB 373, Senator Dan Salomon - Provide for alternative teacher credentialing to help address recruitment and retention.
15. SB 444, Senator Jason Small - Protect unpaid internships related to work-based learning. To ensure student access to work-based learning partnerships and avoid a requirement that a work based learning partner must pay a student intern while that student is gaining credit for the work. Aligns with existing practice for unpaid internships consistent with federal law.

2025 Legislative Session

1. Through bills drafted by MTSBA in collaboration with the CAMPS Coalition, the Legislature cumulatively resolved all but 1% of an inflation gap that was over 10% going into the 2025 Session.
2. HB 15, Representative David Bedey, provided Inflation on the funding formula for the 6thth session in a row, marking over a decade during which the Legislature funded inflation early in the session, as one of its first substantive bills.
3. HB 252, Representative Llew Jones, the STARS Act provided an increase of over \$50 million annually, through incentives for increased base teacher pay, resource sharing and helping ensure students graduate ready for a successful future.
4. HB 266, Representative Luke Muszkiewicz, enacted an inflation reconciliation process that ensures an accountable means by which inflation is compared to actual percentage increases in the funding formula elements increasing budget authority. The first report published in September 2025 shows that the 2025 Session closed all but 1% of an inflation gap that had expanded to over 10% from 2020-2024.
5. HB 515, Representative Linda Reksten, provided a \$12 million annual increase (50%) in state support of major maintenance for public schools.
6. HB 168, Representative Jonathan Karlen, provides Preschool IDEA ANB
7. HB 260, Representative Luke Muszkiewicz, provided a stable, NBC Certification Stipend that will grow with inflation each session.
8. HB 338, Representative Melissa Romano, expanded Targeted Literacy Interventions to include Targeted Interventions for Numeracy, further expanding funding for education of 4 year olds.
9. HB 156, Representative David Bedey, replaced variable district BASE levies with countywide uniform BASE levies, providing tax relief to districts educating over 90% of Montana's public school children.
10. HB 483, Representative Courtenay Sprunger, preserved and stabilized the 95 school equalization mills and devotes future increased revenues to over BASE voted property tax relief through expansion of GTB up to the 90% of MAX level.
11. HB 567, Representative Brad Barker, improved and expanded school district use of multidistrict agreements, including a substantial incentive (50% of QEP) for school districts participating in countywide resource sharing.
12. SB 542/HB 231, Senator Wylie Galt/Representative Llew Jones, enacted substantial reductions in class 4 primary residence and long term rental property tax rates.

DISCUSS POSITION OF MTSBA REPRESENTATIVE ON THE MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS - TWO CANDIDATES JOINTLY NOMINATED BY THE MTSBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The following material is presented for member information, discussion, clarification, and development of shared understanding. Except as otherwise specifically identified in this booklet, no action will be taken during the Annual Meeting itself regarding the matters below.

Eligible candidates for the position of MTSBA Representative on the Montana High School Association Board of Directors must be current members of the MTSBA Board of Directors and serve on a school board that participates in MHSA activities. Tom Billteen from Butte Public Schools and Iris Kill Eagle from Dodson Public Schools, both of whom are highly regarded MTSBA Directors, have declared their candidacy for the seat.

The MTSBA Board of Directors has chosen to jointly nominate both Iris and Tom as recommended candidates. In accordance with the previously stated philosophy of expanding member involvement in the election process and in light of the anticipated lack of a quorum, this election will be conducted by electronic ballot following the meeting this summer.



MHSA Representative Nominee: Iris KillEagle, Dodson Public Schools Trustee
Jointly nominated by the MTSBA Board

Dodson, Montana native Iris KillEagle is a lifelong advocate for both Native and non-Native student education and has dedicated decades of service to strengthening schools and communities across Montana. She has served on her local school board for 36 years and was recently re-elected to continue serving another three-year term, demonstrating her enduring commitment to ensuring all students have access to quality educational opportunities. Iris also currently serves as the Region 2 director on the MTSBA Board of Directors.

For 20 years, Iris has served on the Indian School Board Caucus, including 12 years as president, where she has worked to promote educational equity, cultural understanding, and strong partnerships that benefit Native and non-Native students alike. She is passionate about building educational systems that honor Native culture and traditions while supporting academic success and opportunity for every child.

Iris also serves as a Qualified Expert Witness (QEW) for the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), advocating for the well-being of Native children and families. In addition, she has served for eight years as a Tribal Councilwoman for the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana and currently serves on the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE) Board.

After 41 years with the United States Postal Service, including 27 years as Postmaster of the Malta Post Office, Iris will retire at the end of June. She remains actively involved in all of her leadership roles and continues to be a strong voice for education, community service, and the success of future generations throughout Montana.



MHSA Representative Nominee: Tom Billteen, Butte Public Schools Trustee
Jointly nominated by the MTSBA Board

Tom Billteen is a Past President and current Board member of the Montana School Boards Association and has represented the Butte School District as a Trustee since 2015, where he currently serves as Vice Chair. Throughout his leadership experience, he has been a strong advocate for public education, effective governance, student opportunity, and community engagement across Montana.

Tom has also spent nearly three decades working in Montana's juvenile justice system and currently serves as the Bureau Chief for Youth Court Services with the Montana Judicial Branch. His work focuses on youth development, statewide collaboration, and system improvement initiatives aimed at strengthening outcomes for young people, families, and communities throughout Montana.

Tom values the important role academics, activities, athletics, and fine arts play in student success and healthy communities. He looks forward to supporting the mission of the Montana High School Association and representing MTSBA in a collaborative, thoughtful, and forward-looking manner.

Outside of his professional and board leadership, Tom enjoys performing music across Southwest Montana with the Butte-based band High Ore Road. He and his wife, Tara, enjoy spending time with their family and being actively involved in their community.

Election of Officers of the Corporation - *Quorum Dependent*

Quorum-Dependent Action Items. The election of officers will be acted upon if a quorum is present. These items are being presented for action at the meeting because no opposition or contested election exists regarding the matters presented. Jennifer Hoffman and Stephanie Esch were unanimously recommended by the MTSBA Board for their respective positions and are running unopposed.



President-Elect Nominee: Jennifer Hoffman, Billings Public Schools Trustee
Unanimously nominated by the MTSBA Board

Jennifer Hoffman is a proud Billings native and Skyview High School graduate. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Sociology with a minor in Political Science from Montana State University Billings and has long been committed to serving her community through public education leadership.

Jennifer has served as a trustee for Billings Public Schools since 2019 and joined the Montana School Boards Association Board in 2022. She currently serves as Acting President-Elect, pending membership approval. Her dedication to education also includes substitute teaching and serving as PTO President while her children were in elementary school.

Outside of her leadership roles, Jenn is a devoted mother of two teenagers, Payton and Mason. She enjoys baking, gardening, reading, spending time with family, and dreaming up home and DIY projects with her husband — alongside their two Goldendoodles, Charlie and Simon.



Vice President Nominee: Stephanie Esch, Stevensville Trustee
Unanimously nominated by the MTSBA Board.

Stephanie Esch is a dedicated education advocate with five years of service on the Stevensville School Board and a year and a half serving as Director of Region 6 on the Montana School Board Association Board of Directors. Grounded in a degree in social work and years of experience as a ranch manager, Stephanie brings both a people-centered perspective and a deep understanding of the practical realities facing Montana families to her work in education. Her commitment to her community reflects a belief that strong

schools are the foundation of thriving rural communities.

As a systems thinker, Stephanie approaches complex challenges with a focus on structure, process, and long-term impact. Her diverse background which spans social work, ranch management, and educational governance, gives her a unique ability to connect individual needs to broader institutional frameworks. Stephanie is a passionate advocate for Montana public schools, believing that by building on the existing strengths of Montana's school systems and pairing them with a bold vision for growth, the impact will be lasting and meaningful.