



The 64th Legislative Session....

The Good, The Bad and the Ugly!

The Good....

SJ 10 (Jones) Performance Audit of OPI's Data Collection Process. This resolution passed by the full legislature and recently approved for interim funding, was in direct response to the repeated concerns expressed by MREA members. SJ 10 has the potential to have a major impact on our small, rural and independent elementary schools across Montana as the independent Legislative Fiscal Division examines these issues.

HB 2 (Ballance) The inclusion of the remaining elements of funding from SB 175 and the 2013 Session.

HB 27 (Hayman) General Fund Inflationary Adjustments. Passed and signed by the Governor in February.

SB 213 (Thomas) Extension of School Safety Bill. As with the original bill by Senator Thomas, this bill has the potential to provide funding flexibility for schools across the state.

HB 373 (Staffanson) Raises the bond threshold to 100% of taxable value.

SB 252 (Jones) and **SB 260** (Moore) Provides additional funding for schools with oil/gas impacts. Funding structure of the bill should greatly expand the number of districts that qualify for these funds.

HB 162 (Schwaderer) Places the Montana Digital Academy on solid financial footing.

SB 410 (Jones) Directed Tax Credit – Pilot Project that provides a process for Montana taxpayers to direct a small portion of their taxes to either private or public schools. MREA believes that the process included for public school credits has positive potential for our small and rural schools that have very high levels of support from their communities.

SB 345 (Arntzen) Process for adoption of accreditation standards. Requires the State Superintendent to use a negotiated rule making process that involves many other school and public groups. It also must include any financial impacts of standards that are proposed for adoption by the State Board of Public Education.

HB 175 (Perry) Extends school leasing authority from 3 years to 7 years on personal property and 15 years on real property.

The Bad....

SB 107 (Brown) Failure of the legislature to return local control (as guaranteed by Montana's Constitution) to Montana's independent elementary schools.

HB 5 (Welborn) The failure of HB5 and the lack of any significant school facilities funding to emerge from this session.

Numerous "privatization" and voucher bills that were very poorly written and the valuable time/resources consumed during the session by these bills.

The Ugly...

SB 12 (Moe) 19 Year old Funding/5-Year High Schools. The State Superintendent and Office of Public Instruction have requested that this bill (and similar bills in the past) be brought before the legislature over and over. They continue to fail after taking up tremendous amounts of energy and resources.

HB 284 (Dudik) Revise Bullying laws. The original bill introduced by this sponsor would have caused tremendous problems for rural and small schools across Montana. MREA and the other state K-12 education groups were able to get these problematic sections stripped from the bill before it finally passed. Right up to, and including the day the bill was signed into law, proponents continued to use the bill as a vehicle to blame schools. Hopefully now that this stripped-down bill has been passed and certain politicians have gotten their "mileage" out of the bill, we can move on....