



MCASE Advocacy Talking Points 2017 Legislative Session



Article X, Section 1: Equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed for each individual.

20-9-309 MCA: The legislature shall consider the needs of isolated schools, the needs of students with a disability, the ability of school districts to attract and retain qualified educators and other personnel, and reflects the costs associated with providing for that system including self-executing mechanism for inflationary adjustments.

K-12 Vision Group Statement: Ensuring success in recruiting and retaining quality teachers and administrators, and mechanisms to guarantee the state's share of special education is annually adjusted for inflation.

Talking points for Special Education Funding Proposals – Special Education Inflationary Funding and Special Education Cooperative Funding – Current Bill Drafts LC0166 and LC0165

- Funding has not met the needs for mandated services (Adequacy Issue).
 - There are growing numbers of students with significant needs including mental health, medical, and autism.
- Students with disabilities must be provided equitable access to services (Equity Issue).
- Schools need the ability to attract qualified personnel.
- Special Education funding has unanimous support of all SAM affiliates through the SAM Delegate Assembly Process– MCASE, MASS, MASSP, MAEMSP, MACSS, META.

Talking Points for Special Education Inflationary Funding (LC0166)

- Increases to Special Education Funding have been inconsistent and not proportionate to the increased need for services.
- Funding has not met the needs for mandated services (Adequacy Issue).
- The lack of consistency of adequate special education funding has created a growing discrepancy between special education funding and general education funding. This discrepancy causes reductions to general fund programming in order to meet mandated special education services, thus impacting all students (Equity Issue).

Talking Points for Special Education Coop Funding (LC0165)

- Need for adjusting the Special Education Cooperative funding distribution – this formula hasn't been updated since 1992 and ongoing costs have increased significantly through that time. (Adequacy Issue)
- Equitable treatment of rural districts who received special education services for students through Montana's special education coops (Equity Issue).
(MCA 20-9-309 requires meeting the needs of isolated schools and students with disabilities)

Understand that other bill drafts may come forward representing similar funding proposals – the talking points will apply to those bills as well.