

Browning Public Schools
Board Agenda Request
Meeting To Be Held: 6/24/20



Recognition: ☐ Students ☐ Staff ☐ Parents
Information: ☐ Building Report ☐ Old Business ☐ Superintendent's Report
Action: ☐ Resignation ☐ Hiring ☐ Contract Service Agreements
 ☐ Travel Out-of-State ☐ Travel In State ☒ Approvals
 ☐ Termination ☐ Legal Matters ☐ Other:
 This action request pertains to ☐ Elementary (only) ☒ High School/District Wide

Date: 6/15/20

To: **Board of Trustees**
 Browning Public Schools

From: Corrina Guardipee-Hall
Title: Superintendent

Subject: **Approve MQEC Membership 2020-2021**

Description: I recommend the school board continue their membership to Montana Quality Education Coalition.

Financial Impact: \$2,500.00 (Impact Aid funds)

Attachment(s): Letter/Invoice

Approval: Superintendent's Office/Finance/Personnel as applicable (Initial) _____

Comment: _____

Board Action: ☐ N/A (Info) ☐ Approved ☐ Denied ☐ Tabled to: _____



April 23, 2020

MQEC is the “Constitutional Guardian” of Article X of the Montana State Constitution, working for public school students and their communities.

We advocate for, pursue, and defend the need for adequate and equitable funding to provide quality education for each of Montana’s public school students.

Dear Corinna,

The MQEC Board of Directors would like to thank Browning Public Schools for your membership this year, and we invite you to renew membership for the 2020-2021 school year. MQEC is a collaborative effort of the entire education community, providing the vital advocacy function of holding the state accountable to the guarantees of the Montana Constitution:

- *The legislature shall provide a **basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools** (Article X, Sec 1).*
- *The legislature, counties, cities, towns, school districts, and public corporations **shall not make any direct or indirect appropriation or payment from any public fund or monies, or any grant of lands or other property for any sectarian purpose or to aid any church, school, academy, seminary, college, university, or other literary or scientific institution, controlled in whole or in part by any church, sect, or denomination** (Article X, Section 6).*
- *The **supervision and control of schools in each school district shall be vested in a board of trustees to be elected as provided by law** (Article X, Section 8).*
- *There is a **board of public education to exercise general supervision over the public school system and such other public educational institutions as may be assigned by law** (Article X, Section 9).*
- ***No appropriation shall be made for religious, charitable, industrial, educational, or benevolent purposes to any private individual, private association, or private corporation not under control of the state** (Article V, Section 11(a)).*

These constitutional guarantees are challenged in each legislative session, and the education community has turned to the courts for relief when necessary. In the 1980s, these actions addressed equity issues (Lobel decision, 1989). Since MQEC’s inception in 2002 and through the support of our membership, we have worked with the education community to pursue adequacy (Sherlock decisions, 2004; 2008) and to maintain equity in state funding. In 2011, the education community through MQEC returned to court and successfully restored statutory inflation increases for the 2011-2012 biennium.

In December 2018 the Montana Supreme Court affirmed MQEC’s position that tax credits for donations to sectarian schools is unconstitutional. This pivotal decision was a milestone in our multi-year effort to challenge the channeling of public tax dollars to sectarian schools following the passage of SB 410 in the 2015 legislative session. This decision was appealed to the United States Supreme Court and a decision is expected in June 2020. MQEC’s actions have been and remain critical to public education funding. In this instance, if we do not successfully defend the constitutional prohibition of aid to sectarian schools, this could open the door for additional mechanisms that direct public funds to private educational purposes – any of which would be harmful to public education funding.

Montana Quality Education Coalition | Dianne M. Burke | Executive Director
Post Office Box 993 | Helena, MT 59624 | dburke@mqec.org | 406-449-4594

In addition to serving as the “constitutional guardian” for education-related bills, ***MQEC’s priorities for the 2021 legislative session will focus on preservation of the existing school funding formula; application of the final year of expanded GTB funding; continuing statewide aid to improve teacher recruitment and retention, continuing funding for school facilities program; and adding the automatic inflationary adjustment to special education funding.*** Dependent upon the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court regarding the use of tax credits for donations to sectarian schools, we will not be surprised to see new efforts to channel public funds to private education endeavors, both religious and non-religious. MQEC will vigorously oppose these efforts, and we will continue our collaborative work with the education community to secure constitutionally sound and positive outcomes for Montana’s K-12 public schools.

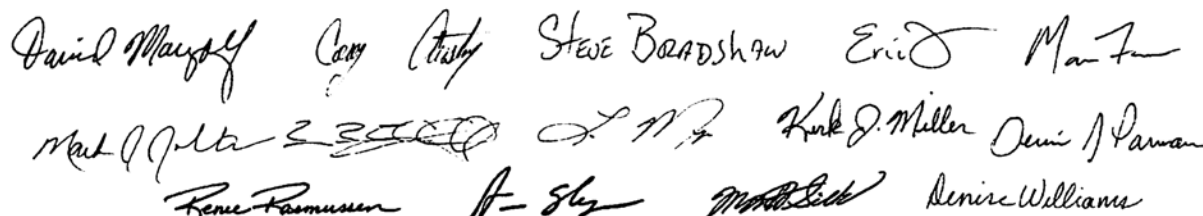
As described in the attached datasheet, the education community and MQEC have been effective in protecting the interests of public education. The gains from our 2004 litigation continue to multiply, and today each school district in Montana receives significantly more funding per pupil than we would have seen without intervention of the courts – a difference of \$1,255 per pupil in the 2019 school year. ***Just think how different your district budget decisions would be without these additional dollars.***

The educational community has worked successfully together over the past several years, finding substantial areas of common ground and presenting a united front in our lobbying efforts. MQEC’s voice is an essential component of that solidarity. Your MQEC membership is important to our continued and collective success in providing quality public education for each child in Montana. ***Please consider supporting our efforts this year. Simply put, you make our work possible.***

If you have any questions about membership please contact our Executive Director, Dianne Burke, at 406-449-4594 or at dburke@mqec.org.

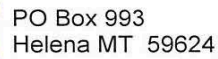
Sincerely,

Your MQEC Board of Directors



Dave Marzolf, Chair – Sun River Valley Schools
Corey Austin – Target Range Public School
Steve Bradshaw – Columbia Falls Public Schools
Jan Cahill – Vaughn Public School
Eric Feaver – Montana Federation of Public Employees
Marco Ferro – Montana Federation of Public Employees
Mark Johnston – Ronan Public Schools
Lance Melton – Montana School Boards Association
Les Meyer – Fairfield Public Schools

Kirk Miller – School Administrators of Montana
Dennis Parman – Montana Rural Education Association
Renee Rasmussen – Bainville Public School
Tyler Ream – Helena Public Schools
Monte Silk – Sidney Public Schools
Aaron Skogen – Baker Public Schools
Denise Williams – Montana Association of School Business Officials



Fiscal Year 2021 Invoice

Bill To:

Ms. Corinna Guardipee-Hall
Browning Public Schools
PO Box 610
Browning, MT 59417

Invoice #: 3206
Invoice Date: 4/17/2020
Due Date: 7/1/2020

Date	Description	Amount
4/17/2020	MQEC Annual Membership Fiscal Year 2021	2,500.00

Thank you for your support.

Total	\$2,500.00
Payments/Credits	\$0.00
Balance Due	\$2,500.00

Working for public school students and their communities pursuant to Article X, Montana State Constitution.