

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 63

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6 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
7 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON IMPROVING EARLY LITERACY AND NUMERACY; AND
8 REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.
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10 WHEREAS, early literacy and early numeracy skills are foundational to children's overall learning; and

11 WHEREAS, reading and mathematics proficiency rates among Montana schoolchildren are alarmingly
12 and persistently low and remain a cause for concern; and

13 WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature created early literacy targeted intervention programs in 2023 and
14 may modify those programs in 2025; and

15 WHEREAS, there is a growing convergence of evidence regarding the science of reading that is
16 grounded in rigorous research that encompasses cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and education; and

17 WHEREAS, research indicates that children who engage in early numeracy activities demonstrate
18 improved problem-solving skills and mathematical fluency as they progress through their education; and

19 WHEREAS, it is crucial that efforts to improve early literacy and numeracy are coordinated between
20 parents and all of the entities with a role in establishing policy and guiding early literacy and numeracy
21 development; and

22 WHEREAS, despite these investments and advances, the critical importance of developing literacy and
23 numeracy in young children warrants legislative attention.
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25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
26 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

27 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
28 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to conduct a study on improving early literacy and numeracy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee:

(1) collaborate in conducting the study with:

(a) the Board of Public Education;

(b) the Office of Public Instruction;

(c) school district trustees, administrators, curriculum specialists, early grade teachers, instructional coaches, reading and math specialists, special education teachers, and teachers of English learners;

(d) parents and parent and family advocacy organizations;

(e) early childhood education providers and organizations, including Head Start;

(f) the Montana State Library;

(g) national experts on early literacy and numeracy; and

(h) policymakers from states with exemplary and effective early literacy and numeracy programs;

(2) develop a basic understanding of:

(a) the importance of evidence-based and research-supported curriculum and instruction for reading and math beginning at age 4 and continuing through 3rd grade;

(b) the return on investment for early literacy and numeracy programs; and

(c) the impact of early literacy and numeracy initiatives outside of school related to:

(i) the importance of parental involvement in early literacy and numeracy efforts; and

(ii) how those initiatives can be better leveraged to improve early learning outcomes; and

(3) examine and seek improvement of early literacy and numeracy assessment and data systems to better inform:

(a) teachers of student progress and needs; and

(b) district leaders and state policymakers of the effectiveness of specific policies, curricula, and instructional strategies in order to maximize the return on investment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

