

**Report on Public Hearing for ARM Title 10, Chapter 63,  
Preschool Standards  
Monday November 3, 2014  
11:00 AM  
Conference Room, Office of Public Instruction  
1300 11<sup>th</sup> AVE  
Helena, MT**

45 individuals signed into the Sign in Sheet for this hearing.

Mr. Pete Donovan, Executive Director, Board of Public Education welcomed everyone and read the hearing script describing the nature of the hearing, review of Administrative Rule function, and the role of the Education and Local Government Interim Committee.

Mr. Donovan asked how many individuals were in attendance to testify as proponents. 15 people indicated they would testify as proponents.

Mr. Donovan asked how many individuals were in attendance to testify as opponents. 8 people indicated they would testify as opponents.

1 individual testified as a neutral party.

**PROPONENTS:**

1. Ms. Tammy Lacey, Superintendent, Great Falls Public Schools and Chair, Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council (CSPAC), testified in support of the Preschool Standards. Ms. Lacey pointed out that it is voluntary for school districts, and voluntary for parents. Ms. Lacey also discussed how the school district preschool in Great Falls works, how private preschools are still in operation, and the waiting list for the public preschool.
2. Ms. Mary Meehan, Evergreen Public Schools, testified in support of the standards. Ms. Meehan stated that 75% of the students in the Evergreen district qualify for Free and reduced lunch and how those students would benefit from district sponsored preschool and that the rules will allow them to offer preschool to ALL 4 year olds in their district.
3. Dr. Julie Bullard, Higher Education Consortium, emphasized the importance of standards in helping children during their most formative years. Dr. Bullard also added that family involvement, social, emotional, and friendship skills, and play based learning centers are also important.
4. Ms. Sherri Debrito, preschool instructor, stated that 60% of Montana children don't attend preschool and that the standards allow for high quality preschools.
5. Ms. Linda Hall, Evergreen School District, stated that she supports the standards and that they validate the work that she does as a preschool teacher.

6. Ms. Margaret Jensen, Evergreen School District, stated that she supports the standards.
7. Mr. Marco Ferro, MEA-MFT, stated MEA is in full support of the standards as written.
8. Ms. Patty Butler, Department of Public Health and Human Services Early Childhood Services, stated she supports the standards.
9. Dr. Kirk Miller, School Administrators of Montana, stated that he concurs with the previous statements and that SAM has contributed to the writing of the standards from day one.
10. Ms. Chelsea Segrest – concurs with previous statements in support of the standards. In addition Ms. Segrest stated that she supports the high quality and flexibility of the standards that allow school districts to meet special education student needs.
11. Ms. Diane Burke, Quality Education Coalition, stated she is supportive of the Chapter 63 Standards.
12. Ms. Patricia Dahl, Rocky Mountain Development Council, supports the standards and concurs with previous comments. Ms. Dahl requested that “early learning content standards” be changed to “early learning standards” and to add “physical” learning environment.
13. Ms. Peggy Hollow-Phelps, Early Childhood educator in the Helena School District Special Education Preschool, spoke to the collaboration and positive outcome with families.
14. Ms. Jane Arntzen-Schumacher, Childcare Connections, Bozeman, concurs with previous testimony.
15. Mr. Bob Vogel, Montana School Boards Association, supports the standards and the fact they support local control.

**OPPONENTS:**

1. Ms. Kari Zeier, Concerned Women for America-Montana Chapter, spoke in opposition to the proposed standards stating that schools are already overcrowded and cannot take on an additional population of students; the standards limit school choice and will shut down current private preschools. Ms. Zeier mentioned the resolution passed by the Education and Local Government Interim Committee that they did not support the standards. Ms. Zeier also stated that the standards take away the parents right to educate their children.
2. Mr. Dan Anderson opposes the standards and said he would submit written comment.
3. Ms. Constance Dratz, Montessori Preschool teacher, Bozeman, spoke in opposition to the standards saying that local, private preschools would be pushed out, the certification process is too onerous, and doesn't address religious private schools, instruction, prayer, etc.
4. Ms. Ann Morren, Conrad MT, has concerns with the studies used in drafting the standards because they focused only on extremely disadvantaged children, not middle or upper class

children. She stressed the importance of the family and in the child being home with their mother.

5. Ms. Lori Lee, concerned parent from Billings, MT, spoke of her concerns with the amount of time the standards require children to be in a preschool setting and said that amount of time is stressful for children. Ms. Lee cited a study that says “chronic stress predisposes the brain to mental illness.” Ms. Lee described the standards as “Common Core Preschool”.
6. Ms. Karen Cox, concerned parent from Billings, MT, questioned the timeframe in which the standards were drafted and asked why everything has to be rammed through citing first Common Core, now preschool standards. Ms. Cox stated that it is wrong for schools to teach values and beliefs. Those should be left to the family to provide.
7. Ms. Lavene Robinson, mom from Eureka, MT, opposes the rules and says that the reason 60% of Montana children don’t attend preschools is because Montana is a family based state. She questioned the 251 pages of material and would like more input from parents in the rulemaking process.
8. Mr. Ed Dratz, Bozeman, has concerns with the lack of consultation from professionals. Mr. Dratz stated that he is also in favor of voucher programs for preschools.

**NEUTRAL PARTY TESTIMONY:**

1. Ms. Victoria Brailsford, MT Montessori Educators Association, stated that Montessori teachers have to go through the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE), a very rigorous training and asks that the MACTE would be recognized as a certifiable training to licensure.

No other testimony was given and the hearing concluded.