_____ BILL NO. _____

INTRODUCED BY _____

BY REQUEST OF THE SCHOOL FUNDING INTERIM COMMISSION

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING EDUCATION LAWS RELATED TO STATE SUPPORT FOR CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION; CREATING A PROCESS THROUGH WHICH HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ARE IDENTIFIED AS PART OF THE CONTENT STANDARD REVISION PROCESS; REQUIRING THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, CONTINGENT ON APPROPRIATION FROM THE LEGISLATURE, TO PROVIDE REDUCED-COST ACCESS TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND CURRICULUM-ALIGNED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT CHOOSE TO ADOPT HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTIONS 20-7-101, 20-7-113, AND 20-7-114, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. High-quality instructional materials.** (1) When developing recommendations for new or revised content and performance standards under 20-7-101, the superintendent of public instruction, utilizing the applicable negotiated rulemaking committee, shall develop recommendations and cost estimates for high-quality instructional materials aligned with the content and performance standards as described in this section.

(2) The intent of this section is to:

(a) ensure the availability of high-quality instructional materials to school districts in the most cost-efficient manner, while respecting the supervision and control of schools in each district by elected boards of trustees;

(b) support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials, including professional development for teachers and instructional leaders in a district;

(c) enhance opportunities for teacher collaboration within and between schools and districts

across the state;

(d) reduce the amount of time teachers spend on developing instructional materials;

(e) enable partnerships with parents in supporting effective learning for their children with transparent curricula; and

(f) put Montana on par with other high-performing education systems.

(3) The recommendations and cost estimates under subsection (1) must:

(a) identify no fewer than three and no more than five sets of high-quality instructional materials for a set of content and performance standards;

(b) be developed during the negotiated rulemaking process with the support of the external consultant; and

(c) include cost estimates for providing access to each set of high-quality instructional materials based on various percentages of adoption by school districts for the appropriate grade levels. The percentages must be in 10% increments and based on the number of students, ranging from 10% of the total statewide enrollment for the appropriate grade levels to 100% of the total statewide enrollment. The cost estimates must also include the provision of curriculum-aligned professional development for teachers and instructional leaders in implementing the high-quality instructional materials.

(4) For the purposes of this part, the following definitions apply:

(a) "External consultant" means an individual or organization that:

(i) possesses deep expertise with high-quality instructional materials and experience in supporting broad and effective implementation of high-quality instructional materials as part of multidistrict initiatives;

(ii) does not receive financial support from publishers of high-quality instructional materials; and

(iii) is approved by the board of public education on the recommendation of the superintendent of public instruction to support the selection and implementation of high-quality instructional materials. The superintendent shall provide this recommendation to the board at the time the superintendent requests board approval to begin the content standard revision process.

(b) "High-quality instructional materials" means systematic, knowledge-building materials used for pupil instruction by a teacher that:

(i) align with, or can be readily adapted to align with, the content and performance standards

adopted by the board of public education in exercising its general supervision over the public school system;

(ii) are designed for, or easily adaptable to, proficiency-based learning as defined in 20-7-1601;

(iii) include:

(A) support for implementation at the district, school, and classroom level; and

(B) initial and ongoing professional development for teachers and instructional leaders; and

(iv) are recommended by the superintendent of public instruction as described in this section.

(c) "Instructional leaders" means instructional coaches, school principals, and district administrators with a role in supporting instruction and curriculum implementation.

**Section 2.** Section 20-7-101, MCA, is amended to read:

"**20-7-101. Accreditation standards -- process for adoption.** (1) (a) Accreditation standards, as defined in 20-1-101, for all schools must be adopted by the board of public education upon the recommendations of the superintendent of public instruction. The superintendent shall develop recommendations in accordance with subsection (2). For an accreditation standard that requires implementation by school districts, the recommendations presented to the board must include an economic impact statement, as described in 2-4-405, prepared in consultation with the negotiated rulemaking committee under subsection (2).

(b) (i) For accreditation standards addressing academic requirements, program area standards, or content and performance standards, the economic impact statement under subsection (1)(a) must include an analysis of the ability of school districts to implement the standard within existing resources, including time. The intent of this subsection (1)(b) is to ensure that school districts have the capacity to adhere to required accreditation standards within a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools.

(ii) For accreditation standards addressing content and performance standards, the economic impact statement must include recommendations and cost estimates for high-quality instructional materials pursuant to [section 1].

(2) The accreditation standards recommended by the superintendent of public instruction must be developed through the negotiated rulemaking process under Title 2, chapter 5, part 1. The superintendent may form a negotiated rulemaking committee for accreditation standards to consider multiple proposals. The

negotiated rulemaking committee may not exist for longer than 2 years. The committee must represent the diverse circumstances of schools of all sizes across the state and must include representatives from the following groups:

(a) school district trustees;

(b) school administrators;

(c) teachers;

(d) school business officials;

(e) parents;

(f) taxpayers; and

(g) for content and performance standard revisions, representatives of Montana Indian tribes, as required under 20-1-503.

(3) Prior to adoption or amendment of any accreditation standard, the board shall submit each proposal, including the economic impact statement required under subsection (1), to:

(a) during a regular legislative session, the joint appropriations subcommittee on education; or

(b) during the legislative interim, the education interim budget committee established in 5-12-501, for review at least 1 month in advance of a scheduled committee meeting.

(4) Unless the expenditures by school districts required under the proposal are determined by the appropriate committee under subsection (3) to be insubstantial expenditures that can be readily absorbed into the budgets of existing district programs, the board may not implement the standard until July 1 following:

(a) under subsection (3)(a), the current legislative session; or

(b) under subsection (3)(b), the next regular legislative session and shall request the superintendent of public instruction include a request in the superintendent's budget that the same legislature fund implementation of the proposed standard.

(5) The provisions of this section may not be construed to reduce or limit the authority of the education interim committee to review administrative rules, including accreditation standards, within its jurisdiction pursuant to 5-5-215.

(6) Standards for the retention of school records must be as provided in 20-1-212."

**Section 3.** Section 20-7-113, MCA, is amended to read:

"**20-7-113. Maintenance of curriculum guide file and publishing curriculum guides by superintendent of public instruction -- access and support for adoption of high-quality instructional materials.** (1) The superintendent of public instruction shall collect and maintain a file of curriculum guides to be made available to districts for the use of schools in planning courses of instruction. The superintendent may prepare, publish, and distribute curriculum guides for the use of schools in planning courses of instruction. The superintendent may solicit the assistance of educators and other qualified persons in the preparation of curriculum guides.

(2) (a) Contingent on appropriation from the legislature, the superintendent of public instruction shall, after surveying interest and preference from school districts, ensure reduced-cost access for school districts to high-quality instructional materials and associated professional development of up to three of the high-quality instructional materials recommended under [section 1] and in a manner that provides ongoing cost savings for participating school districts, if possible.

(b) A school district that is provided subsidized access to and adopts high-quality instructional materials under subsection (2)(a) shall use pupil-instruction-related days as necessary to ensure curriculum-aligned professional development for teachers and instructional leaders, coordinated by the office of public instruction in collaboration with the external consultant under [section 1] for the applicable grade levels and content areas utilizing the high-quality instructional materials for the first 2 years following adoption.

(c) School districts are encouraged to work with neighboring school districts in selecting the same high-quality instructional materials, especially if students frequently transfer between districts, to foster greater collaboration among teachers and greater instructional consistency and continuity for students and families.

(3) In implementing this section, the superintendent may:

(a) collaborate with the Montana digital academy; and

(b) partner with entities that provide curriculum support and curriculum-aligned professional development."

**Section 4.** Section 20-7-114, MCA, is amended to read:

"**20-7-114. Instructional assistance by superintendent of public instruction -- support and**

**professional development following adoption of high-quality instructional materials.** (1) The superintendent of public instruction shall, at the request of the district or county superintendent, assist the schools with the planning, implementation, operation, and evaluation of instruction through inservice training and individual consultation.

(2) Contingent on appropriation from the legislature, and in coordination with the external consultant under [section 1], the superintendent of public instruction shall:

(a) ensure reduced-cost, curriculum-based professional learning for teachers and instructional leaders in districts adopting high-quality instructional materials under 20-7-113(2); and

(b) monitor student achievement in districts adopting high-quality instructional materials through the statewide K-12 data system.

(3) In implementing this section, the superintendent may:

(a) collaborate with the Montana digital academy; and

(b) partner with entities that provide curriculum support and curriculum-aligned professional development."

NEW SECTION. **Section 5. Appropriation.** There is appropriated $5 million from the general fund to the office of public instruction for the biennium beginning July 1, 2027. The money must be spent in providing support to school districts in the implementation of the revised English language arts content standards adopted by the board of public education that are effective July 1, 2027, to support school districts in the adoption of high-quality instructional materials for English language arts in the manner described in [this act]. In identifying high-quality instructional materials aligned with the revised standards, the superintendent of public instruction may reform the negotiated rulemaking committee that developed the recommendations for the revised English language arts content standards or identify high-quality instructional materials in another collaborative manner with the assistance of an external consultant.

NEW SECTION. **Section 6. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 20, chapter 7, part 1, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 7, part 1, apply to [section 1].

NEW SECTION. **Section 7. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2027.

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