Governor Bullock Directs $75 Million to Support Montana Schools

Coronavirus Relief Funds will assist Montana K-12 schools with reopening, expanding online learning opportunities

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Governor Steve Bullock today directed $75 million from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to Montana K-12 schools to cover expenses incurred due to COVID-19 and take precautions to keep students and staff safe this fall.

“We know that our schools, along with teachers, administrators and parents, are tackling so much to prepare for students to return to some normalcy this fall. Things will certainly look a lot different in hallways and classrooms, but health and safety is our number one priority,” Governor Bullock said. **“We must provide schools with every opportunity available to ensure that they can adequately prepare for the upcoming school year and provide all Montana students with a quality education in a safe manner.”**

"The Governor's recognition that Montana K-12 schools need to cover expenses resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic to function safely, through Coronavirus Relief Funding, is appreciated by our school leaders. Using the research of the 'AASA/ASBO Cost of Reopening Schools' national study led to $75 million in CRF distribution to our K-12 schools,” Kirk Miller, executive Director of the School Administrators of Montana said. **“SAM, and administrators all across the state, appreciate the Governor's use of the study for determining that allocation, and further appreciate the efficiency and flexibility in the use of the funding to meet the needs of their schools.”**

Montana schools were allocated $41 million through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund from the U.S. Department of Education. Education advocates requested Governor Bullock direct additional funds from the state Coronavirus Relief Funds to ensure schools can take appropriate precautions to reopen this fall and provide adequate remote learning opportunities for students.

A total of $10 million will be reserved to cover incremental transportation costs related to the pandemic and will be available after transportation budgets for school districts are adopted this fall.

The remaining $65 million will be distributed based on the fiscal year 2021 budgeted ANB of each district. The Governor’s Office determined the amount of funding based on a per student funding level identified in a national study that takes into account costs for transportation, personal protective equipment, cleaning and disinfectant, and incremental staffing. Governor Bullock will also allocate an additional amount of Coronavirus Relief Funds to accredited private schools. All funds distributed to schools must be used for COVID-19 related costs.

Governor Bullock has also authorized a bulk purchase of personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves, thermometers, and sanitizer that will be distributed to interested school districts.

A list of how much money each district is eligible for is attached. The state will notify school districts and education partners when the application is available. The application process is to certify that schools will use their portion of funds for COVID19 related expenses before the funds are distributed.