



MONTANA
SCHOOL *for the*
Deaf & *the* Blind

giving kids the building blocks to independence

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September 8, 2017

Mr. Dan Villa
Budget Director
Office of Budget and Program Planning
Capitol Building – PO BOX 200802
Helena, MT 59620-0802

Mr. Villa:

I received your memo to all agencies and the separate letter to the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) last week. After much heartache and honest panic, we were relieved and very appreciative that we are exempt from the mandatory spending reductions required under 17-7-140, MCA.

Donna Schmidt, the Business Manager, and I spent several days reviewing our numbers and making plans for the initial \$328,000 reduction (5% of our budget), the additional 0.5% reduction mandated by SB 261, and the 1% and 1% increases to salary mandated by the legislature and now unfunded triggered by SB 261.

With some further reductions to our anticipated spending, we believe our plan to meet these reductions will be successful while maintaining our current staffing levels, which are below our staffing allotment. We have a few necessary positions open and yet, we both know filling positions at our school is difficult. With those positions filled, we will continue to provide adequate and appropriate services to our students. Without those positions, we will be negatively impacting our services to students, their families, and to schools across the state.

At this time, we cannot foresee having additional dollars to offer. The dollars offered in the past were reductions mandated by the legislature and by the trigger language in SB 261. We will continue to keep a very close eye on our budget. If the situation occurs where we will have additional dollars that we know will be unspent, we will be communicating with you and with Nancy Hall.

I appreciate the work you are doing and I know you and those around you are making some very difficult decisions. As I watch partner agencies experience additional reductions, I realize those reductions impact the services provided to our students and their families making our services that much more critical.

Wishing you much peace,

Donna E Sorensen
MSDB Superintendent

cc: Nancy Hall