

MINUTES  
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 11, 2016

**TIME:** 9:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW41

**MEMBERS:** Chairman DeMordaunt, Vice Chairman VanOrden, Representatives Shepherd, Wills, Boyle, Clow, Gestrin, Harris, Mendive, McDonald, Dixon, Kerby, Pence, Kloc, Rubel

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Wills

**GUESTS:** Blake Youde, State Board of Education; Robin Nettinga, Idaho Education Association; Phil Homer, Helen Price, Rob Winslow, Idaho Association of School Administrators; Harold Ott, Idaho Rural School Administrators; Marcia Jeding, I.A.C.I.; Ken Edmunds, Idaho Department of Labor; Larry Johnson, E.F.I.B.; Tim Corder, State Department of Education; Marilyn Whitney, Governor's Office

**Chairman DeMordaunt** called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Mendive** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 4, 2016. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**MOTION:** **Rep. Rubel** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 5, 2016. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**RS 24305:** **Rep. Nye** spoke to **RS 24305**. This legislation modifies the method of determining average class size from a state-wide average to an average for districts of similar sizes. The average class size for the Use It Or Lose It Rule is determined by comparing like-sized districts. Rep. Nye said this legislation has input from all stakeholders and is supported by all stakeholders, and he asked the committee to support **RS 24305**.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Kloc** made a motion to introduce **RS 24305**.

In response to questions from the committee, **Rep. Nye** said districts with class sizes larger than the average for their size would still be subject to the 1% penalty. This legislation only changes how the average class size is determined. Current statute states that if a district has enough students for 100 teachers, for example, it has to use state money to hire that many teachers. During the recession, districts were allowed to hire fewer teachers (.905), but that number has been steadily increased to the original calculation. This legislation addresses larger schools being penalized, because the average class size was based on all sizes of schools.

**VOTE ON  
MOTION:** **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**RS 24457:** **Rep. Kerby** spoke to **RS 24457**. This legislation creates scholarships for students who earn college credit while in high school, either through advanced placement classes, dual credit classes, summer school college classes, or international baccalaureate. Students who earn at least 10 credits are eligible for up to a \$1,000 scholarship, if they have a matching scholarship. Students who earn at least 20 credits are eligible for up to a \$2,000 scholarship, provided they have a matching scholarship. Students who earn an associate's degree are eligible for up to full tuition for two years, provided they have a matching scholarship.

**Rep. Kerby** added that section 3b adds language which allows students who have earned the college credit while attending an accredited high school in Idaho or its equivalent. The fiscal impact the first year will be \$1 million, and \$2 million the second year.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Gestrin** made a motion to introduce **RS 24457**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**S 1208:** **Blake Youde**, State Board of Education, spoke to **S 1208**. He said this legislation clarifies the qualifications for the armed forces and public safety officer scholarship, available to spouse or children of killed or disabled armed forces and public safety officers. Language is added which states the determination of disability may be made by the Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho (PERSI). In addition, changes would allow the Board the option to move responsibility for the investment of the Opportunity Scholarship Fund to be moved from the State Treasurer to the Endowment Fund Investment Board, based on which option would provide the greatest long-term investment return.

In response to questions from the committee, **Mr. Youde** said the State Board of Education would make public the agency responsible for the Opportunity Scholarship Fund at a meeting.

**MOTION:** **Rep. McDonald** made a motion to send **S 1208** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

In response to questions from the committee, **Mr. Youde** said the slain or disabled armed forces or public safety officer did not have to be vested in PERSI for the spouse or children to qualify for the scholarship. The reason the Endowment Fund Investment Board is being added as one of the agencies which can take responsibility for the fund is because it is capable of giving a higher rate of return on the investment. Neither the State Treasurer's Office, nor the Endowment Fund Investment Board, has an objection to the legislation.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. McDonald** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**Ken Edmunds**, Director, gave a presentation on the Idaho Department of Labor's efforts as a connection between businesses and education. The Department's funding, he explained, is provided primarily through the federal unemployment tax through grants. The two areas the Department has been working on are workforce development and research. Idaho has led the nation in job growth during the last few months of 2015, said Mr. Edmunds. However, businesses are having difficulty finding a workforce with the education and skills they need. Although Idaho is listed as 44th in the nation for salaries, when the number is adjusted for Idaho's low cost of living, Idaho becomes 34th in the nation.

**Mr. Edmunds** gave examples of how grant money is being used around the state, including employer grants, industry sector grants, and rural micro grants, to help Idahoans acquire the education and skills needed for the jobs available. BSU is using a grant to hire more computer science teachers, which will allow enough students in the program to grant three times the computer science degrees. The Department of Labor is not overlapping the Division of Professional-Technical Training, he added, but filling gaps.

**Mr. Edmunds** said one of the challenges of the Department is the decreasing percentage of tax funds in the Workforce Development Training Fund. The unemployment insurance tax rate was reduced from 3.3% to 1.488%. The projected annual revenues for the training fund will decline \$5.5 million. The Department's legislative agenda includes expanding the Workforce Development Training Fund to include innovative training solutions, adding retraining as an allowable activity, coordinating training fund activities with employers and the state Division of Professional-Technical Education, eliminating the unencumbered balance transfer requirement (funds in excess of \$6 are transferred to the Employment Security Fund), and extending the program sunset clause to 2022.

**Mr. Edmunds** asked the committee to support the legislation funding career advising, which is an issue for many groups. If career advising is funded, he added, the Department of Labor will be in a position to help communities and the State Department of Education collaborate and consolidate resources. The target audience needs to be students, not job seekers, and include career awareness and parental involvement, he added.

In response to questions from the committee, **Mr. Edmunds** said the Department of Labor is currently very involved with getting information about the job market to students and parents, especially with the CIS Program and the high school redesign task force. He said he considers the minimum wage discussion to be mostly political, because employers know that for many of their jobs they cannot hire someone for less than \$9 or \$10 an hour. For the jobs with higher salaries, there is very little difference between Idaho salaries and the national average. There is market pressure across the nation to increase wages. Decreasing the unemployment rate is one of the goals of the Department, he added, but it is focusing on education funding first. The Department has created a plan in which the Department trains people to be trainers in companies with large workforce needs.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

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Representative DeMordaunt  
Chair

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Jenifer Cavaness-Williams  
Secretary