

MINUTES  
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 20, 2019

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

**PLACE:** Room EW41

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Mendive, DeMordaunt, Moon, Ehardt, Goesling, Marshall, Raymond, Wisniewski, McCrostie, Abernathy, Berch

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Rep. Shepherd

**GUESTS:** Greg Wilson, Governor's Office; Quinn Perry, ISBA; Samantha Eichner, Willow Creek; Tim Hill and Marilyn Whitney, SDE; Paul Stark, Idaho Education Association; Rod Gramer, Idaho Business for Education

**Chairman Clow** called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Goesling** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2019 and February 14, 2019 meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**H 153:** **Greg Wilson**, Senior Policy Adviser for Education, Office of the Governor, presented **H 153**. This bill addresses starting teacher pay increases on the career ladder, specifically in the first three years. He stated the governor believes there are budget priorities that cannot wait and getting starting teacher pay in Idaho to \$40,000 is one such priority. Idaho's overall teacher attrition rate of 10% exceeds the national average and each year districts must fill 1,750 teaching positions, created by attrition and population growth. **H 153** is designed to assist efforts to attract, recruit and retain young educators and allow Idaho's teacher salaries to better compete with surrounding states. This bill would raise starting teacher pay to \$40,000 over a two-year period and increase teacher pay across the entire residency rung of the career ladder, which corresponds to the first three years of an educator's career. This bill also addresses the consolidation of cells along the professional rung of the career ladder, from ten to five cells, making clear how teachers would move and not see a decrease in their salaries. The fiscal impact for FY20 is \$3.8 million, and for FY21 is \$7.6 million. These figures account for projected movement of teachers along the career ladder and growth in schools, and cover salaries and benefits.

In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Wilson** stated the governor would like his proposed education task force to examine compensation for experienced educators. He also noted all teachers that move along the career ladder will see a pay increase, but districts can draft their own salary schedules based on this allocation.

**Quinn Perry**, Policy and Government Affairs Director, Idaho School Boards Association, spoke **in support** of the bill and noted the retention challenges facing border districts. She stated while the state may not have the resources to fully compete with neighboring states, this bill is a step in the right direction.

**Samantha Eichner**, Fourth grade teacher in Nampa, spoke **in support** of the bill and discussed her need to work additional jobs to supplement her teaching salary.

**Rod Gramer**, President, Idaho Business for Education, spoke **in support** of the bill and praised the two-year implementation as a recognition of fiscal realities. He stated investments in the career ladder will play a critical role in keeping teachers in the classroom and this bill provides a solid salary base for the professional rungs to build upon.

**Superintendent Sherri Ybarra** spoke in support of the bill and noted she supports increasing teacher pay across all experience levels.

**MOTION:**

**Rep. Marshall** made a motion to send **H 153** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

**Mr. Wilson** was recognized to close testimony on **H 153**. He expressed empathy with the committee's concerns about experienced teacher pay, but stated attrition is higher among starting teachers and the governor wants to focus on this side of the equation first. He anticipates the proposed education task force will examine how to provide extra incentives for experienced teachers and hard to fill positions.

**Vice Chairman Kerby** spoke in support of the motion, stating this is a nice signal from the governor that salary issues at all levels are going to be addressed.

**Rep. McCrostie** spoke in support of the motion, with the understanding this is a first step toward addressing retention issues.

**Rep. DeMordaunt** spoke in support of the motion and noted the flexibility of the career ladder will remain, so districts can set their own salaries after meeting the \$40,000 starting minimum. She stated this could allow districts to use the additional allocation to benefit veteran teachers.

**Rep. Berch** spoke in support of the motion, but noted the proposed salaries fall short of being competitive with surrounding states. He expressed fear Idaho will lose additional teachers in the two years it will take for the bill to be implemented.

**Mr. Wilson** was called upon to answer questions from the Committee regarding state-allocated funds and district salary schedules. He stated at the end of the two-year implementation starting teacher pay will be mandated in code as \$40,000. The career ladder is a distribution, but is not mandated. Many districts align their salary schedules with the career ladder because they do not have additional local funds to raise salaries beyond the state's allocation. By increasing the allocation for teachers in their second and third year, this will send additional funds to districts which may choose to use those funds for year two and three teachers, or they may put the additional funds towards experienced teacher salaries.

**VOTE ON MOTION:**

**Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Marshall** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**Tamara Baysinger**, Director, Public Charter School Commission (PCSC), presented on the Commission's current direction and focus. She stated the Commission is exploring if charters are seeing improvement in student learning, increased opportunities for students and if these opportunities are available and effective for all types of students. Among non-virtual charters authorized by the PCSC, 72% have higher proficiency rates than their surrounding districts and most of the charters with strong proficiency also show strong student growth. Unfortunately, the reverse is also true. The PCSC looks at each school every five years to determine whether to renew their charters; 55% have been renewed without conditions and 30% have been renewed with specific conditions for necessary improvement. She noted 8 of the 64 charters that have opened over the past twenty years have closed, for various reasons. She also noted the majority of charters are less diverse than their surrounding districts in the demographics of free and reduced lunch, special needs, ethnicity, English language learner and at-risk students. As an authorizer, the PCSC can encourage, but not enforce, change to increase diversity. The Commission also seeks opportunities to disseminate best practices from charter schools.

In response to Committee questions, **Ms. Baysinger** asked for legislator's support when difficult decisions about reauthorization must be made.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:32 am.

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Representative Clow  
Chair

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Erica McGinnis  
Secretary