

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Friday, March 18, 2016

TIME: 8:30 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:** None

GUESTS: Jeff Church, Tim Hill, State Department of Education; Robin Nettinga, Idaho Education Association; Harold Ott, Idaho Rural Schools Administrators; Amy Lorenzo, Div. Professional-Technical Education; Rob Winslow, Idaho Association of School Administrators; Jess Harrison, Idaho School Boards Association; Marilyn Whitney, Governor's Office; Ann Joslin, Teresa Lipus, Idaho Commission for Libraries

Chairman DeMordaunt called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

RS 24731: **Superintendent Sherri Ybarra**, State Department of Education, spoke to **RS 24731**. Superintendent Ybarra said the legislation lays the groundwork and shows support for rural schools, by establishing one rural education center. All the stakeholders have expressed support for rural education centers, she said. Rural education centers create flexibility for rural school districts to conserve resources, to access additional resources, and to share job opportunities, she added. Some school districts have had to cut school days, classes, or services, or run supplemental levies, said Superintendent Ybarra. This is especially true of support services, such as custodians, counselors, and food service workers. Providing services to special education students can not be reduced, because it is a federal requirement, she added. The rural education centers can also help with the teacher shortage, said Superintendent Ybarra. Teacher shortages occur especially in areas such as special education, chemistry, and speech and language pathologists. A rural school may not be able to afford a full-time position by itself, so the rural education center can hire a full-time position and charge the school districts for only the services they need, she said. Other areas where rural education centers can be used to combine and share resources are STEM Education classes, career advisors, and reading specialists, said Superintendent Ybarra.

Superintendent Ybarra said rural education centers are not another layer of government, and money is not required for a brick and mortar building. The rural education centers bring services to students in their communities, and ties into the state's goals, especially the goal of providing more autonomy to school districts by removing constraints, she said. School districts pay only for the services they need, said Superintendent Ybarra. A rural education center would provide a menu of services for rural school districts, and the districts pay only for the items they need, said Superintendent Ybarra. Each service center will look different, based on the needs of that area, she added. Almost forty-five states have rural education centers, she said, and it is the fiscally-responsible business mode. Superintendent Ybarra encouraged the committee to send **RS 24731** to print.

MOTION: **Rep. Clow** made a motion to introduce **RS 24731**.

In response to questions from the committee, **Superintendent Ybarra** said the \$300,000 stated in the fiscal impact was the yearly estimate. The Fiscal Note is zero, said Superintendent Ybarra, because the money will come from the State Department of Education budget. She said she did not want to do more without speaking to JFAC.

Rep. Boyle spoke in support of **RS 24731** and said it would help rural schools tremendously.

In response to questions from the committee, **Superintendent Ybarra** said districts may choose which services they want to purchase from the rural education center.

Rep. Dixon spoke in support of **RS 24731**, and said the superintendent in his legislative district is excited about the possibility of a rural education center.

**SUBSTITUTE
MOTION:**

Rep. Dixon made a substitute motion to introduce **RS 24731** and recommend it be sent directly to the Second Reading Calendar.

Superintendent Ybarra said the Department is ready to move forward with rural education centers, and it wanted to show the groundwork has been laid. She said she understands it is late in the session.

Rep. Clow said he thought the Department would need less money for the rural education centers after the first one is established, as the centers would be selling services to school districts.

In response to questions from the committee, **Superintendent Ybarra** said the funding would be ongoing, and the Department will continue to analyze the funding requested and be fiscally responsible.

Rep. Harris said he agreed the rural education centers should become a self-funding model, and he thought **RS 24731** should have a bill hearing.

Superintendent Ybarra said the Department was asking for the minimum amount of money to start a rural education center, and more money would not be requested if more is not necessary. She said the Department will be transparent about how the money is spent.

In response to questions from the committee, **Superintendent Ybarra** said the rural education centers would have a partnership with the State Department of Education. It is difficult for the Department to have much interaction with rural districts, and this would provide a local level of support. Administrators and staff in rural districts are doing many jobs, she added, and they do not have time to look for ways to find and share resources.

Vice Chair VanOrden said she would like to see the first rural education center offer services to districts in all areas. She said rural education centers are a great idea, but she wants to see all school districts benefit.

Superintendent Ybarra said the rural education services can be shared with all the regions. Region 1 was chosen as the first region to be served by a rural education center, because the people in that region are the most interested in having one, and because it was the fiscally-responsible choice. One reason North Idaho was chosen is because **Mr. McBride** offered to help establish the rural education center without compensation.

Rep. Kloc spoke in support of the substitute motion. If more than \$300,000 of services are requested, he said, and the rural education center is able to provide them, it will require less state funding in the future.

In response to questions from the committee, **Superintendent Ybarra** said the \$300,000 will be seed money to get one rural education center started. It does not pay for the services the center will offer. As the districts pay for services, and as business partners are added, the center will grow. The Department knows this is the cost for this year, and she does not want to speculate about future funding, she added.

Rep. Kerby said the superintendents he spoke to support the program. The amount requested is a lot less than the amount spent in other states, he added, and the centers will bring people together.

Superintendent Ybarra said the \$300,000 is the amount required to start a center. The rest of the money will be from districts paying for services they use. Forty-five states have rural resource centers, she added.

Rep. Boyle said she sees the rural education centers as a way to fulfill Idaho's promise of equal education for all students, and the fiscal note can be changed, if necessary, to show the \$300,000 reflects the Superintendent of Public Instruction's FY17 public schools budget request.

**VOTE ON
SUBSTITUTE
MOTION:**

Motion carried by voice vote. RS 24731 will be sent to the floor with a recommendation it be sent to the Second Reading Calendar. **Rep. Boyle** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

The committee decided the fiscal note would be revised to indicate the \$300,000 reflects the Superintendent of Public Instructions' FY17 public schools budget request.

RS 24769:

Rep. VanOrden spoke to **RS 24769**. Rep. VanOrden said the funding for the bill was provided in the last session, and money was put into the career ladder funding for career counselors. **RS 24769** adds career counselors to the career ladder, she said, with \$10,000 and \$20,000 limits. A huge discrepancy exists between districts and the amount of funding they receive, she said, because the distribution is based on enrollment, not support units (see Attachment #1 and Attachment #2). The minimum amount in the legislation is \$5,000, she added.

Chairman DeMordaunt said the legislation is necessary, because the funding formula in Idaho Statute is designed around the district receiving a certain amount of money. JFAC has approved more money, and the current formula in statute does not conform to the funding available, he added.

MOTION:

Rep. Kloc made a motion to introduce **RS 24769** and recommend it be sent directly to the Second Reading Calendar.

The committee decided the fiscal note would be revised to note the fiscal impact of \$5 million, as determined by JFAC.

**VOTE ON
MOTION:**

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

RS 24762:

Rep. VanOrden spoke to **RS 24762**. She said the legislation raises the minimum amount for a leadership premium from \$850 to \$900. Idaho Code, §33-100J, sections (a) through (h) list activities which are reasons for awarding a leadership premium, said Rep. VanOrden, including section (h) which covers other leadership duties designated by the board of trustees, excluding duties related to student activities or athletics.

In response to questions from the committee, **Rep. VanOrden** said the minimum amount applies, whether the employee works full time or part time. The appropriation amount is not being changed, she added, only the minimum amount awarded for leadership premiums. The intent of the legislation, said Rep. VanOrden, is to discourage schools from giving premiums to all their employees.

Rep. Kerby said he had been told the leadership premiums helps the school climate, as employees are being paid for what they previously did for free.

MOTION:

Rep. Kerby made a motion to introduce **RS 24762**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Ann Joslin, Idaho Commission for Libraries, gave a presentation on the mission of the Idaho Commission for Libraries, how it would accomplish the mission, and examples of programs across the state. She said libraries connect people to each other, and are a statewide delivery system for services. Libraries are important for the state's 60% post-secondary education rate, she added, as they help strengthen the talent pipeline and support rural sustainability. She gave examples of programs which assist with the state's goals, such as the Make-It Program, the Microsoft Imagine Academy, and career guidance resources. Libraries also establish partnerships with community organizations and businesses, said Ms. Joslin, which benefit the public. A poll of rural community values found libraries rank just after fire protection in importance, she added (4.01 to 3.99).

Ms. Joslin commended the committee for supporting **H 451** and **H 526**, which recognize the importance of library resources and staff in helping students read at grade level by third grade, through inclusion in improvement plans, and by providing literacy training for library paraprofessionals.

Broadband in public libraries is a critical resource, said **Ms. Joslin**, and public libraries need more broadband. Ms. Joslin said public libraries are significant consumers of broadband for internet connectivity, and should be included in statewide planning.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

Representative DeMordaunt
Chair

Jenifer Cavaness-Williams
Secretary