

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Friday, February 12, 2016

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

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

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Wills, McDonald

GUESTS: Sharon Harrigfeld, James Pannell, Ben Stoddard, Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections; Erin Downey, Idaho Library Association; Matt Freeman, Blake Youde, State Board of Education; Rod Gramer, Hollis Brookover, Idaho Business for Education; Harold Ott, Idaho Rural School Administrators; Louie Konkol, SOPI; Emily McClure, Idaho Charter School Network, IVC; Alejandra Cerna, Idaho Voices for Children; Helen Price, Phil Homer, Idaho Association of School Administrators; Sherri Ybarra, State Department of Education; Marilyn Whitney, Governor's Office; Dwight Johnson, Idaho Professional-Technical Education

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

MOTION: **Rep. Mendive** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 8, 2016. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

MOTION: **Rep. Rubel** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 9, 2016. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

SCR 134: **Lieutenant Governor Brad Little** spoke in support of **SCR 134**. He said it is important to have a target for educational goals. This resolution is important, because businesses in Idaho say the education level of the workforce is very important, and it is important the legislature stress the importance of education. There are many pieces necessary to accomplish the goal of 60% of Idahoans ages 25-34 attaining a post-secondary certificate or degree by 2020, such as dual credit classes and career counseling. Even the jobs in rural Idaho are more technical than they used to be, such as logging and agriculture. Having a work force with higher skill levels is important for every community in Idaho.

MOTION: **Rep. Kloc** made a motion to send **SCR 134** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

In response to questions from the committee, **Lieutenant Governor Little** said the goal is a very large one, and all contributing pieces must be improved, but increasing the number of career and professional-technical certifications granted will be the easiest to accomplish quickly, in time for the 2020 deadline.

Matt Freeman, Executive Director of the State Board of Education, said the Board and other stakeholder groups had all adopted the 60% goal. The amount of workforce needed for technical jobs is now at 68%. The board voted unanimously to support **SCR 134**. Mr. Freeman said he believes the initiatives which will help Idaho reach the goal by 2020 are intensive career advising, to help students know which credits will help them accomplish their goals, getting students out of non-credit bearing courses and into credit-bearing courses, and putting more focus on professional-technical counseling.

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

HCR 33: **Rep. Horman**, District 30, spoke in support of **HCR 33**. She said the current public school funding was established in 1994-95. Since then, there have been many changes, such as the addition of online schools and charter schools, and changes in student populations and learning environments.

Matt Freeman, State Board of Educaiton, said many parties were involved in the creation of **HCR 33**, including the State Board of Education, the president pro-tem, the chairs and vice chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees, and **Rep. Horman**. All parties support the legislation and look forward to working on it, he added.

MOTION: **Rep. Clow** made a motion to send **HCR 33** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Rep. Horman** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 451: **Rep. VanOrden** spoke in support of **H 451**. she said the bill brings to light the importance of parental involvement in education, such as reading with the child and helping with school work. Section 1, lines 13-14, stress the importance of collaboration among parents, teachers and schools. Parental involvement in a child's education is the most powerful force, and is more powerful than social class, family size or other variables, she added. Section 33-1614 codifies reading intervention programs for students performing below grade level on literacy tests in kindergarten through third grade.

Rep. VanOrden said the reading improvement plans are not like IEPs, requiring lots of paperwork. They are created by the teacher, administrator, library personnel, and parents. Library personnel were included, because they know each student, what that student likes to read about, and that student's reading level. The legislation gives schools thirty days after receiving test results to prepare reading plans for students, and to notify the parents of their children's reading level and the creation of a literacy intervention plan. Teachers already prepare reading intervention plans, she added, this just requires parents be notified within thirty days of the school receiving the test results. In Section 33-1614, subsection a, the bill tells what the parent notification must include, including any other services the child may be receiving. Should the school be unable to engage the parent or guardian in the development of the reading plan, the school may proceed with the creation of the plan without parental participation after fifteen days of having made a good faith effort to involve the parent or guardian. At the end of the year, the parent is notified of the child's progress, so the parent knows if the child should be in a summer literacy program.

Rep. VanOrden said the bill includes a requirement to report testing numbers to the State Department of Education and the legislature, so both agencies know what progress is being made. This information is already available to the Department, but the legislature usually doesn't request it, she added. One reason for the requirement to notify parents within 30 days after the test results return is that this usually happens before parent-teacher conferences, so it is a more timely notification to parents than waiting for parent-teacher conferences. Teachers can also discuss the plan and test results at parent-teacher conferences.

Superintendent Ybarra added, if a school district accepts funding, it must already conduct IRI testing and report the results to parents. The legislation does not ask schools to do more than they already are doing, but simply stresses the importance of literacy to parents, she said. Including the librarian in the reading intervention plan is at the discretion of the school. If the appropriation for literacy is approved by the legislature, said Ms. Ybarra, the Department will be able to use some of the money to evaluate changing the IRI or replacing it. Information on strategies to help their children with literacy has been made available to parents, she added, and the State Department of Education has created a parental advisory council.

Erin Downey, Idaho Library Association, spoke in **support** of **H 451**. She said librarians are an untapped resource which have the necessary resources and expertise to assist with the literacy intervention plans. They know what each child enjoys reading about, and what each child's reading level is, and kids are willing to make more of an effort to learn skills when the materials are ones they find useful and relevant to their interests. Each district determines how much of a librarian's time is used to assist children with literacy.

Rod Gramer, Idaho Business for Education, spoke in **support** of **H 451**. He said parental involvement in education is very important to success in school, and the bill simply codifies what should already be happening by involving parents in a timely manner, and reporting results to the legislature to determine if the literacy intervention is working.

Alejandra Cerna, Idaho Voices for Children, spoke in **support** of **H 451**. She said parents are important first teachers, and this bill unlocks the potential for parents to participate in and be involved in their children's literacy. It makes schools accountable for communicating more clearly to parents when students score below grade level. Other areas where the school is required to communicate with parents are substance abuse and English Language Learners instruction, and literacy is just as important.

MOTION: **Rep. Harris** made a motion to send **H 451** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Phil Homer, Idaho Association of School Administrators, answered questions from the committee. He said that, although more paperwork does create a concern, **Rep. VanOrden** had made changes to make the bill more acceptable to administration.

VOTE ON MOTION:

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

H 450:

Blake Youde, State Board of Education, spoke to **H 450**. This bill provides literacy intervention to students in kindergarten through third grade who score below proficiency on the IRI. Currently, districts are only providing literacy intervention to students scoring below basic (1), and this bill would expand the intervention to students with a basic score (2), which is still below proficiency at grade level. Of the 36,000 students who score below grade level, 20,000 are not receiving literacy intervention help. Some districts use discretionary funds to provide literacy intervention.

Because the funding is determined each year by the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC) and the legislature, said **Mr. Youde**, the bill establishes that the cost of the program is not to exceed the funding. It is very focused in how the funding can be used, and accommodates any level of funding determined by the legislature. Section 33-1616 is the new section, with guidelines for reading intervention programs, a requirement for parental input and being aligned with the statewide literacy plan adopted in 2015, and the minimum number of supplemental literacy instruction for students receiving basic and below basic scores. This section also states the State Department of Education shall provide professional development to districts and schools on best practices supporting literacy instruction, and a report to the legislature on intervention program participation and effectiveness.

In response to questions from the committee, **Mr. Youde** said including library resources and purchasing supplemental books can be part of a school's literacy intervention program. School districts can design programs which best fit the district and the students. If future funding is less than this year's funding, schools will still have some resources from previous years, and this bill is designed to be flexible.

Harold Ott, Idaho Rural School Administrators, said that IRSA, IEA, ISBA, and IASA support **H 450**. The research is clear regarding the importance of achieving grade level literacy by grade three, he said, and the governor is proposing \$10.7 million for literacy programs. He said it is critical to emphasize to school districts that reading intervention means doing something in addition to regular classes in reading. The Lapwai School District went from 15-10% of students testing proficient in literacy to 80% of students achieving scores of proficient, in five years, he said. He attributed the raise in scores to a parent training component and funding from the Albertson's Foundation, which allowed the school district to hire a full-time staff member for literacy intervention. Parents were given resources, and books were sent home with students. Also, interviews with elders were translated and available to take home as reading material, which made literacy relevant and meaningful to the community.

Alejandra Cerno, Idaho Voices for Children, spoke **in support** of **H 450**. She said she hopes the bill is allocated robust funding, and children often improve literacy scores with additional reading time. The bill will benefit students who are reading below grade level.

Hollis Brookover, Idaho Business for Education, spoke **in support** of **H 450**. She said this bill and **H 451** are the culmination of the work of the Governor's task force and funding agenda. All the members of the task force were united in their understanding that the future of Idaho businesses is dependent on having an educated workforce, and the bar for what educated means keeps being raised. Only one-third of students are reading at grade level by third grade, and intensive literacy intervention is the best way to achieve results. The bill provides the tools to achieve results, and the governor's line item request for literacy provides the funding.

MOTION:

Rep. VanOrden made a motion to send **H 450** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Rep. VanOrden said the literacy subcommittee of the task force has formed a group to determine if Idaho wants to replace the IRI or change it, and is addressing the competencies and incompetencies of the IRI. School districts using an intervention program had great success, and she is concerned the school districts won't have the funding to include all students reading below grade level. She supports **H 450**.

In response to questions from the committee, **Chairman DeMordaunt** said the bill has flexibility based on the current year's funding, which is determined by the legislature each year.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Rep. Mendive made a substitute motion to table the vote until a time certain, February 18, 2016.

Rep. Mendive said he wanted time to look at a table of IRI scores by school district.

Rep. VanOrden said she was concerned the bill would not make it through the legislative process before the education budget deadline of February 29th.

VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Chairman DeMordaunt requested a roll call vote on the substitute motion. **Motion carried by a vote of 7 AYE, 6 NAY, 2 Absent/Excused. Voting in favor of the motion: Reps. Shepherd, Boyle, Gestrin, Harris, Mendive, Dixon, Kerby. Voting in opposition to the motion: Reps. DeMordaunt, VanOrden, Clow, Pence, Kloc, Rubel. Reps. Wills and McDonald were absent/excused.**

James Pannell gave a presentation on the Department of Juvenile Corrections. He explained the Department receives its funding from the General Fund. It serves a diverse student population with complex needs, from ages ten to twenty-one. One of its main challenges is the recruitment and retention of education staff. Because the pay for teachers is rising, the Department no longer offers competitive pay. Also, the school year at the Department of Juvenile Corrections is 251 days, versus 142 to 175 days of a traditional school year calendar, and teachers have to prep for more classes than in a traditional school, act as substitutes for each other, and restrain students who are acting out.

The largest difference in student demographics, he explained, is the large percentage of students in the Department of Juvenile Corrections with emotional disturbances. However, math grades of the students it serves increased 90%. Reading scores increased 83%, and 47% receive a GED or high school equivalency diploma. The Department also received high marks, at the top or second to the top, in a recent survey of alternative school settings regarding the students' feelings of safety, support, and desire to learn.

Mr. Pannell thanked the legislature for 2015 funding for four full-time positions. Some of the students have severe emotional challenges, and the extra staff has helped. He added the Department has a high staff turnover, due to the high stress level. The focus of the Department is to maintain a strong high school program and post-secondary training, to help with transition from Juvenile Corrections to the workforce.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Representative DeMordaunt
Chair

Jenifer Cavaness-Williams
Secretary