

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 26, 2020

TIME: 8:30 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:** None

GUESTS: Bicker Therien, Crystal Cornejo, Trevor Sparrow and Tanner Morales, IDYCA; Marilyn Whitney, SDE; Harold Ott, IASA and Rural Schools

Chairman Clow called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

MOTION: **Rep. Raymond** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2020 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 523: Continuation of the meeting of February 25, 2020.

Greg Wilson, Senior Policy Adviser for Education, Governor's Office, further presented on **H 523**. It is an effort to build out the career ladder to assist districts, especially rural ones, to keep their experienced educators. He stated it shows commitment to providing greater opportunities for students, reducing burdens for local taxpayers and contains strong accountability for educators and districts. It is fiscally conservative and shows a long-term commitment to education by making it more attractive to those entering the field.

Jonathan Gillen, Chief Financial Officer, West Ada School District; **Harold Ott**, Director, Idaho Rural Schools and on behalf of the Idaho Association of School Administrators; and **Quinn Perry**, Policy and Government Affairs Director, Idaho School Boards Association, spoke **in support** of the bill. They stated the career ladder has allowed for substantial teacher raises, but districts often have to pay more than the state allocation in order to offer a competitive salary. The bill will raise pay for veteran teachers in a responsible way and help address the teacher shortage, by making the education profession viable for the next generation.

Fred Birnbaum, Idaho Freedom Foundation, spoke **in opposition**. He raised concerns about the accountability metrics used, saying they are too nebulous and not based on hard data. He suggested using the \$32 million cost of the bill to give every teacher a raise, put in place a structure of accountability with minimums to be met and simplifying the pay system.

Following public testimony, **Mr. Wilson** was called upon to explain that different assessment options were included to be inclusive of all types of teachers. In regard to teacher evaluations being conducted with fidelity to the state framework, he noted every year the State Board of Education audits 20% of administrators and takes a sampling of their evaluations. The phased-in implementation of the Advanced Professional Educator endorsement will allow all districts to participate, whether they have been using the Danielson evaluation or not.

In response to Committee questions, **Alex Adams**, Administrator, Division of Financial Management, clarified teachers who move to the new Advanced Professional rung will get a 4% raise. The five-year build out was carefully calibrated based on a more pessimistic revenue forecast, so it is sustainable even with an economic downturn.

Mr. Wilson was recognized to close testimony on **H 523**. He noted superintendents have shared with him how the bill will help retain teachers they have invested in. The five-year build out sends a signal that the state wants to make a long term investment in education and provides fiscal stability to districts.

Rep. Goesling spoke to his motion to send **H 523** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. He said his legislative district is ground zero for losing veteran teachers to other districts and neighboring states. He said the bill contains strong accountability measures, so taxpayers know they're making a good investment.

Rep. DeMordaunt spoke in support of the motion. She testified research shows students are more likely to perform better in a classroom with an experienced teacher. The bill is responsive to the tight labor market and contains a solid accountability piece, using student growth.

Mr. Wilson was called upon to explain the difference between leadership premiums and the endorsement requirement to have held a leadership position. He said the leadership premiums and other ways teachers can add to their salary will not go away. He stated the bill concerns a different category of leadership positions, so there will not be a high degree of overlap.

Vice Chairman Kerby spoke in support of the motion. He said the bill will be especially helpful to rural schools with low property values; they cannot currently compete for teachers. He argued veteran teachers have waited their turn for their salaries to increase.

Rep. Ehardt spoke in support of the motion, noting she appreciated the bill's fiscally conservative approach.

Rep. McCrostie spoke in support, noting efforts to increase the teacher pipeline must address recruitment and retention and this bill takes significant strides towards addressing retention.

Rep. Raymond spoke in support, saying he sees this as an invitation for the Committee to work with the State Board and State Department of Education, superintendents and teachers to make this successful.

Rep. Marshall said he would support the motion, but expressed concern that the bill does not keep starting salaries competitive. He said he was deeply concerned about the complexity of the bill, but does want districts to be compensated more for their veteran teachers.

Chairman Clow noted the implementation is important, because there should not be unnecessary barriers to teachers entering the new rung.

VOTE ON MOTION:

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

Trevor Sparrow, Director, Idaho Youth Challenge Academy (IYCA), presented on the school, which is an intervention program for youth at risk of dropping out. The school is a residential program and uses a military model.

Bicker Therien, Principal, IYCA, discussed the academic programs. He emphasized the importance of accountability for students and noted they are a fully accredited alternative high school.

Tanner Morales and **Crystal Cornejo** shared their experience as IYCA graduates.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:09 am.

Representative Clow
Chair

Erica McGinnis
Secretary