

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 18, 2021

TIME: 8:30 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Representatives Boyle, Mendive, Moon, Ehardt, Marshall, Wisniewski, Shepherd, Yamamoto, McCrostie, Berch, Toone, DeMordaunt.

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative Galloway

GUESTS: Representative Wendy Horman; Senator Lori Den Hartog; Dustin Miller, Director, Idaho Department of Lands (IDL); Jim Elbin, IDL Trust Lands Division Administrator; Jeff Anderson, Idaho Lottery Executive Director; Julie Oberle, Chief Financial Officer State Department of Education (SDE); Pat Donaldson, Director, Public Works Division (PWD); Barry Peters, Homeschool Idaho; Carson Tester, Westerberg & Associates; Tim McMurtrey, Deputy Superintendent, Operations SDE; Megan Landen, citizen.

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

RS 28610: **Rep. Horman** presented legislation that provides a \$500 per student grant for public school students whose families earn less than \$50,000 annually and a scholarship program paying 90% of the average amount of state funds appropriated per student during the fiscal year for use at private educational institutions.

MOTION: **Rep. Mendive** made a motion to introduce **RS 28610**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Dustin Miller, IDL Director, presented information of the programs used to protect endowment lands for which public schools are the beneficiaries. IDL operates as a land manager, with revenue derived from timber sales and real estate leases. The Land Board provides oversight for the funds that flow from the trust to the schools. The Good Neighbor Authority from the 2018 Farm Bill allows timber sales and rehabilitation on national forest land, providing another source of income.

Jim Elbin presented trust land endowment land management and oversight by the Timber Management Bureau, Real Estate Services Bureau, Technical Services Bureau which work together to constitutionally serve the endowment lands. He stated the majority of the funds are produced by timber sales, with over \$96 million received in 2020 from over 150 contracts. He described the Forest Asset Management Planning (FAMP) which balances planting, growth inventory and harvests.

Jeff Anderson, Idaho Lottery Director, presented information regarding how the State-sponsored fund was designed to generate income for public schools through the Public School Building Fund and the Permanent Building Fund. Currently, the Bond Levy Equalization Fund receives approximately 60% of its funds from the lottery. The lottery runs efficiently with a cap on advertising, hiring and operations in order to provide as much revenue as possible back to the State. The Idaho Lottery is a member of the Multi-state Lottery Association which offers Powerball, a large contributor to the fund. They are currently supporting legislation to allow membership if international parties are added to Multi-state Lottery Association.

Julie Oberle, Chief Financial Officer, SDE, presented Bond Levy Equalization Support Program was created to provide subsidies for school bond payments, easing the tax burden on local property owners. Ms. Oberle confirmed the Lottery dividend contributes substantial funds to the Bond Levy Equalization Fund, of which her office oversees distribution to school districts based on need. Since its 2002 inception, approximately \$277.5 million has been distributed and 32 school bonds have been paid off. In 2021, approximately \$25.8 million is scheduled to be distributed.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Representative Clow
Chair

Christine Reynolds
Secretary