

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, April 08, 2021

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

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

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Reps. Galloway, Moon, Boyle, and DeMordaunt

GUESTS: Dr. Charlie Silva, Director of Special Education, State Department of Education (SDE); Christine Stoll, Executive Director IDEal; Lisa Pofelski-Rosa, Financial Specialist (SDE); Idaho State Treasurer Julie Ellsworth

Chairman Clow called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Toone** made a motion to approve the minutes of March 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 18, and 19, 2021. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Dr. Charlie Silva, Director of Special Education, presented an overview of the special education process, how the program is funded and which students are served by the program. Federal programs provide supplemental entitlements which cover approximately 31% of the cost, with the State funding the other approximately 69%. The students covered are age three through twenty-one. Eligibility for services is determined by evaluation and creation of an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). The plan must be reviewed annually in order to maintain compliance. Approximately 11.5% of the students in the State qualify for services. The program is challenged by continued funding and personnel shortages.

Lisa Pofelski-Rosa, Financial Specialist SDE, explained the Local Educational Authority (LEA) funding formula and how charter schools and school districts are funded based on the number of students and specific needs of the students in the program. Private schools have students on service plans instead of IEP's and receive some funds for services as well. As the percentage of students identified as qualifying for special education programs increases each year, the amount of federal support also increases. Maintenance of the IEP's must be met by 100% in order to qualify for funding.

Christine Stoll, Executive Director of IDEal, presented the Idaho College Savings Plan 529 program, which has been designated in the top 25 in the nation. Withdrawals for qualified education or apprenticeship programs are tax free. Students who have savings for higher education are seven times more likely to achieve an advanced degree. Employers who contribute directly to 529 accounts receive tax benefits. The program also funds community scholarships. In response to committee members questions, Ms. Stoll confirmed there was a financial impact to the State for tax credits.

Chairman Clow discussed setting up an IDEal 529 account for each grandchild and making a small contribution each month which will equate to covering the first year of college for each student. **Ms. Stoll** confirmed the gifting code to contribute funds into the account can also be shared with others to grow the account.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Representative Clow
Chair

Christine Reynolds
Secretary