

MINUTES  
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

- DATE:** Wednesday, January 18, 2012
- TIME:** 9:00 A.M.
- PLACE:** Room EW41
- MEMBERS:** Chairman Nonini, Vice Chairman Shirley, Representative(s) Trail, Block, Nielsen, Chadderdon, Shepherd, Wills, Marriott, Thayn, Hartgen, Bateman, Boyle, DeMordaunt, Nessel, Pence, Chew, Cronin
- ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None
- GUESTS:** Tracie Bent, Matt Freeman, and Harv Lyter, State Board of Education; Rakesh Mohan, Jared Tatro, Bryon Welch, and Amy Lorenzo, Office of Performance Evaluations; Kris Ellis, Benton Ellis; Rob Winslow and Phil Homer, Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA); Robin Nettinga and Penni Cyr, Idaho Education Association (IEA); Benjamin Davenport, Risch Pisca; Colby Cameron, Sullivan Reberger Eiguren; Luci Willits, State Department of Education (SDE), Erik Makrush, Idaho Freedom Foundation
- Chairman Nonini** called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Wells** made a motion to approve the minutes of January 11, 2012 as written. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- RS 20817:** **Tracie Bent**, Planning and Policy Officer for the State Board of Education, presented **RS 20187**. This legislation would amend Idaho Code to remove reference to state appropriations for the health education programs being deposited to the Professional Studies Account. This account was created by an act of the legislature in 1983, but the account was never formally set up in the state's accounting system, so no state appropriations have been run through the account. Auditors have recommended that either Code be followed or be aligned with current practice. Staff cannot identify any value added by using the account for appropriated funds.
- In response to questions, she said that she is not aware of private gifts or contributions coming into the account.
- Matt Freeman**, Chief Fiscal Officer for the State Board of Education, stated that during a recent audit, it was discovered that the account was not being used as directed in statute. The auditors suggested that current practice be codified, or code be followed. It was determined that putting funds through the account would not provide any benefit.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Wills** made a motion to introduce **RS 20817**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- RS 20822:** **Tracie Bent**, State Board of Education, presented **RS 20822**. This legislation would amend Idaho Code to provide that up to \$50,000 in annual Opportunity Scholarship Fund earnings may be used for costs related to administration of the program. Current law limits administrative funds to 5% of earnings (not to exceed \$75,000). Investment earnings on the fund have been consistent with national economic conditions for the past several years such that 5% does not generate funds sufficient to administer the program.

In response to questions, she stated that managing the current load of applications requires a great deal of time. Currently only one full time employee is working on this project. The current limit is \$75,000. It is anticipated that, based on projected earnings this year, there will be about \$8,500 available to manage the scholarship program, which pays about 20% of the cost for a single full time employee. During FY11 the earnings were roughly \$9,000. Taking the limit down to \$25,000 would only allow for a part time person to manage the program, and the Office is concerned that a full time employee is necessary.

**Ms. Bent** explained that the number of applicants has increased, which has brought an increase in employee work time.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Bateman** made a motion to introduce **RS 20822**.

**Rep. Hartgen** stated that he will vote to print the RS, however he would like to have additional details on revenue and costs. **Rep. Nonini** agreed.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**RS 20824:** **Tracie Bent**, Office of the State Board of Education, presented **RS 20824**. Idaho Code outlines the requirements for a public institution of higher education to recognize an individual as a resident for tuition purposes. Proposed changes recognize the Idaho residency status of Idaho residents in the armed forces who are stationed outside of Idaho.

Individuals who join the armed forces of the United States and continue to maintain their Idaho residency during their terms of service would be considered residents for tuition paying purposes. Under the current residency statute, these Idahoans would not be eligible for in-state residency status for fee payment purposes. Their dependents are also not eligible to benefit from the Idaho resident status of the parents for fee payment purposes.

In response to questions, **Ms. Bent** stated that based on a language review by the Deputy Attorney General, our military service members and their families do not currently have residency status as required by educational institutions. A similar issue came before the Idaho Legislature during a prior year, but due to an oversight, this code section was not included in changes that were made.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Shirley** made a motion to introduce **RS 20824**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**RS 20835:** **Tracie Bent**, State Board of Education, presented **RS 20835**. This legislation would amend Idaho Code to clarify that only liquor funds are deposited to the state junior college account, and that these funds are to be distributed by the Liquor Division directly to the community colleges on a quarterly basis.

In response to questions, **Ms. Bent** explained that currently deposits are made twice a year. Some of the liquor funds go to the counties, however the funds that go to the community colleges are being deposited on a different schedule. The change requested in this legislation would allow the colleges to receive deposits on the same schedule as counties.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Marriott** made a motion to introduce **RS 20835**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**RS 20840:** **Tracie Bent**, Office of the State Board of Education, presented **RS 20840**. This would amend Idaho Code to bring scholarship programs for military and peace officers into alignment, increasing the efficiency in the management of the programs. Other proposed amendments will clarify the process for determining disability and eligibility.

In response to questions, **Ms. Bent** stated that inserting the term "totally and permanently" before the word "disabled" is intended to bring the programs into alignment, and this language was discussed with the Deputy Attorney General and the Department of Labor, and was approved.

Based on this Code section, anyone who meets the requirements is eligible for a full ride scholarship. The requested changes would limit the number of those scholarships. These funds do come from state appropriations.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Nielsen** made a motion to introduce **RS 20840**.

**Rep. Nonini** stated that if the proposed legislation is printed, someone from the Department of Labor should attend the bill hearing to answer questions. He also requested an explanation of the differences between Social Security's definition of "totally and permanently disabled" and the definition used by the military.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**PRESENTATION:** **Rakesh Mohan, Bryon Welch, and Amy Lorenzo**, of the Office of Performance Evaluations, provided the committee with a presentation about reducing barriers to postsecondary education. It was stated that barriers fall into three main areas: academic readiness, access, and affordability. It is hoped that by 2020, 60% of Idahoans will have a college degree or certificate. Currently, at least 60% of Idahoans have some college education. It is recommended that the Board of Education establish performance measures and benchmarks to strategically increase the number of degrees that are awarded in Idaho at public institutions. It is also recommended that the Board of Education consider these questions: Which institutions and schools offer programs of at least one year? Are those entities reporting to the board? If not, how will they be accounted for? What data will the board use to determine current baseline and measure progress?

Beginning next year, Idaho high school students will be required to take a college entrance exam. The cost of the SAT will be paid by the state. The state is also offering these students the option of taking dual credit classes, as well as offering professional-technical training.

Idaho has a student-to-counselor ratio that is almost twice the level of what is recommended, which makes it much harder for students to receive time with a school counselor. Idaho does not have a statewide counselor coordinator. These issues, as well as insufficient parental support, serve as barriers. It is recommended that the Department of Education create a position for a statewide K-12 counselor coordinator, particularly related to college and career information. It is also recommended that steps be taken to decrease student-to-counselor ratios in Idaho schools.

College tuition in Idaho has risen faster than median household income, and state funded financial aid is lower than in neighboring states. It is recommended that the Board of Education work with the Idaho Legislature to review current appropriations for need-based scholarships and consider reallocating funds from merit-based scholarships or creating new scholarships that are primarily need-based. It is also suggested that data be collected on scholarship recipients in order to track academic progress, to better assess the effectiveness of existing scholarships.

The overall number of jobs in Idaho requiring a postsecondary education has hovered around 29% to 30% for the last nine years, and is not projected to change significantly in the near future. One approach to solving this problem would be to first increase the number of college graduates in Idaho in order to attract employers who require an educated workforce. Another is to first attract employers in order to incentivize more students to pursue college education. A third approach would be to coordinate education and employment initiatives simultaneously.

**Amy Lorenzo, Bryon Welch, and Rakesh Mohan**, Office of Performance Evaluations, responded to questions. The Board of Education will determine the appropriate use of Idaho's longitudinal data system. Most proprietary (non-degree granting) schools are not tracked in Idaho. Barriers to education for unemployed adults were not included in this presentation, however, they are currently being evaluated. There are a significant number of efforts and support for increasing postsecondary education, however, there is a concern that increasing the number of Idaho's college graduates could mean more difficulty in finding appropriate employment in Idaho for those graduates. This is something that needs to be discussed by the legislature and evaluated for potential policy changes.

One reason for requiring all high school students in Idaho to take the SAT is to allow each student the opportunity to see the potential within him or herself. School counselors are also able to assist students in viewing themselves as successful and capable as they consider college education. Studies that were completed by the Office of Performance Evaluations did not break down data by school district. It is possible that Idaho's rural nature contributes to a lower college completion rate. Many students and their parents are concerned about the level of debt that will be incurred by taking out student loans. School counselors are able to direct students to scholarships and options such as completing general education requirements at a less expensive community college. Tuition costs in Idaho remain lower than in many other states.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

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Representative Nonini  
Chair

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Mary Tipps  
Secretary