

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Monday, February 20, 2012
- TIME:** 8:30 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:** Representative Buckner-Webb; Jason Hancock and Luci Willits, State Department of Education (SDE); Max Greenlee, Risch Pisca; Matt Kaiserman, Gallatin; Bert Marley, Idaho Education Association; Harold Ott, Rob Winslow and Phil Homer, Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA)
- Chairman Nonini** called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Thayn** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 16, 2012. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- MOTION:** **Rep. Chew** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 17, 2012 with the following correction: during discussion on **RS 21291**, **Rep. Nielsen** will be recorded as having invoked Rule 38 to disclose that he is a life and disability insurance agent and would be voting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- RS 21091C2:** **Rep. Shirley** presented **RS 21091C2**. He stated that he recently attended a workshop with the National Endowment for the Arts. Elimination and cuts to arts programs in public schools was discussed, and participants were given the task of determining how to address the problem in their home states. Rep. Shirley stated that he and **Rep. Buckner-Webb** decided to begin addressing the problem in Idaho through the introduction of a resolution. **RS 21091C2** makes recommendations including the use of online courses and utilizing the expertise that already exists in each community through the use of volunteers.
- Rep. Buckner-Webb** stated that the arts offer a historical perspective and stimulate critical thinking. They offer diverse opinions and modes of expression. She said that computer technology is developed through creative thinking, and that creativity is stimulated through the arts. She discussed the use of drumming to teach math to inner city children.
- Rep. Wills** stated that he has seen students benefit greatly from arts education, which enhances communication skills.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Wills** made a motion to introduce **RS 21091C2** and send it directly to the Second Reading Calendar.
- Rep. Nielsen** stated that learning music makes learning math easier.
- Rep. Cronin** stated that his daughter's school fully funds arts education.
- VOTE ON MOTION:** **Chairman Nonini** called for a vote on the motion to introduce **RS 21091C2** and send it directly to the Second Reading Calendar. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Shirley** will sponsor the bill on the floor.
- RS 21294:** **Rep. Thayn** presented **RS 21294**, which would provide for contribution of funds to Health Savings Accounts for state employees. He stated that this would encourage state employees to open Health Savings Accounts and would have no impact on the State General Fund.

In response to a question, **Rep. Thayn** stated that the difference in premiums between high and low deductible health insurance plans can be as much as \$5,000.

MOTION: **Rep. Marriott** made a motion to introduce **RS 21294**.

Responding to additional questions, **Rep. Thayn** stated that last year, a concurrent resolution dealt with this issue. He stated that health care costs in the United States are approximately twice what they should be. He referenced health care in Singapore, where costs are approximately 1/5 what they are in the United States, with better life expectancy rates. He also referenced the State of Indiana, where \$2,500 a year is put into Health Savings Accounts for high deductible employees.

Rep. Nielsen referenced his wife's recent illness, saying that senior citizens will use their health insurance and will easily meet deductibles during any hospitalization. Health Savings Accounts offer tax deductible funds that are cumulative from one year to the next, and therefore can build substantial amounts to support future health care needs.

In response to questions, **Chairman Nonini** said that Health Savings Accounts and higher deductible plans have a tendency to drive down overutilization.

Rep. Block stated that she believes **RS 21294** could provide advantages to the health care system for Idaho's state employees.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Chairman Nonini** called for a vote on the motion to introduce **RS 21294**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 521: **Jason Hancock**, State Department of Education (SDE), presented **H 521**. This would allow the SDE to eliminate their curriculum library. The library receives very little use, and Boise State University offers a curriculum library that provides more complete and better information.

In response to questions, **Mr. Hancock** stated that eliminating the library would not necessarily produce a cost savings, however, it would allow some cost avoidance. The physical space would be very helpful for the Department as they seek to eliminate the need to rent spaces for activities.

MOTION: **Rep. Bateman** made a motion to send **H 521** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Bateman** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 a.m.

Representative Nonini
Chair

Mary Tipps
Secretary