

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 19, 2013

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman DeMordaunt, Vice Chairman Nielsen, Representatives Shepherd, Wills, Bateman, Boyle, Agidius, Clow, Gestrin, Harris, Horman, Mendive, VanOrden, Pence, Kloc, Ward-Engelking

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Rep. Bateman

GUESTS: Hannah Crumrine, Senior Performance Evaluator at Office of Performance Evaluations; Harold Ott, Idaho Rural School Association; Phil Homer, Idaho Association of School Administration; Marilyn Whitney, State Board of Education; Tamara Baysinger, Director at Idaho Public Charter School Commission

Chairman DeMordaunt called the meeting to order at 9:02 p.m.

Chairman DeMordaunt welcomed Legislative Page **Christina Nelson**, who will serve the committee for the second half of the session.

Rep. Kloc made a motion to approve the minutes of February 11, 2013, 4:00 p.m. "listening" session. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

S 1028: **Sen. Thayn** explained **S 1028** to the committee. He said the bill would end the pilot phase for the Mastery Advancement Program (MAP) removing the sunset clause. He noted that the program will permit students in Idaho public schools, including Idaho public charter schools, to successfully proceed through school curriculum at their own pace. He explained the savings to the General Fund when students graduate early. He also explained that students are given 35 percent of the savings as a scholarship if they attend in-state institutions. To date, \$40,000 has gone to students in the form of scholarships and \$90,000 has gone to the participating school districts.

Sen. Durst explained students use the MAP program for different reasons. He said they may be tired of high school, or the students may really like taking dual credits and/or accelerated classes. He noted the sunset clause made some districts apprehensive to be involved.

Responding to questions from the committee, **Sen. Thayn** said, if a student graduated his/her junior year, the school district still gets a percentage of the ADA during, or what would have been, the student's senior year. They said the MAP bill was previously passed, however, the sunset clause and broadening student opportunity for all high schools is contained in **S 1028**.

MOTION: **Rep. VanOrden** made a motion to send **S 1028** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

In response to questions from the committee, **Sen. Durst** said students who do not go immediately into college from early graduation, still have access to the scholarship when they decide to attend. He said students have to meet the qualifications in order to graduate early. **Sen. Thayn** noted there has only been one student in the program's history who has graduated from high school in two years.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Chairman DeMordaunt** called for a vote on the motion to send **S 1028** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Horman** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Jim Griffin, Colorado League of Charter Schools (CLCS), told the committee in 2007 there were 130 charter schools in Colorado. Together, they launched a Facilities Task Force whose goal was to advocate for removal of barriers to adequate and equitable access to public school facilities. The Task Force found that a key missing piece was reliable data on the condition and cost of charter school facilities. As a result, they developed a comprehensive survey. He said, with the data collected, they published a report which provided the Task Force with the necessary information to build its policy framework.

Mr. Griffin explained, CLCS went on to survey 9 more states. What the surveys found was charter schools spend between 2.8 percent and 13 percent of per pupil funding operating revenue on facilities, 13 percent being more typical. He said Idaho charter schools spend an average of 10.7 percent of per pupil funding operating revenue on facilities, or \$542 per student. He also explained nationally, 5 of the 10 states studied do not permit charter schools access to local tax revenue, and only 10-24 percent of charter schools in the ten states surveyed meet grade level standards for overall square footage per student. He added less than 50 percent of charters have an on-site kitchen facility. In Idaho, only 35 percent of charters had qualifying kitchens. He warned lawmakers that as Idaho charter schools grow, facility challenges may worsen. Mr. Griffin related the policy challenges which need to be addressed: (1) access to public space/local property tax revenue (i.e. revenue stream), (2) per pupil funding, (3) state grant programs that may be tied to facility repair and/or replacement, (4) a financing conduit, and (5) stability and security to attract credit lenders and credit enhancements.

Responding to questions from the committee, **Mr. Griffin** said, Colorado has done a variety of things to fill the funding gap. He addressed bond equalization and per pupil equalization. He stated the local school district has the taxing authority and charter schools are given what they have been authorized. He also said if a project specific bond levy passes in a district, the charter schools have access to it. He told the committee if charter schools close after a building has been bought, the charter is gone, the bond people look for a new tenant to make the best of their situation. He noted the building is usually inhabited by another school.

Mr. Griffin, in response to questions from the committee, said Colorado has 178 school districts, 50 have authorized charters; Denver has a large portfolio of charters. He added, superintendents manage the schools of the district. He told the committee that the preferences, or preferential treatment given to some subjects such as values training, is defined by the founding parents of the charter school.

Tamara Baysinger, Director at Idaho Public Charter School Commission, at the request of the committee, explained the circumstance behind the reported closing of the Di Vinci Charter School on February 22, 2013.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

Representative DeMordaunt
Chair

Jean Vance
Secretary