

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 04, 2014

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman DeMordaunt, Vice Chairman Nielsen, Representative(s) Shepherd, Wills, Bateman, Boyle, Clow, Gestrin, Harris, Horman, Mendive, VanOrden, McDonald, Pence, Kloc, Rubel

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Wills

GUESTS: Julie Hart, Westerburg & Associates; Amy Nelms and Marilyn Whitney, State Board of Education

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

MOTION: **Rep. Mendive** made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2014 meeting.

Tom Luna, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Department of Education, spoke to the committee on a critical issue in the education system, that of closing the digital divide. He said one of the key recommendations from the Rural Education Task Force was to close the technology gap that exists between urban and rural school districts. He explained the Legislature laid the foundation with high-speed broadband in public high schools, and is now investing in the necessary wireless infrastructure. He said the 2013 Legislature approved \$2.25 million to be "expended for the installation, repair, replacement and support of a wireless technology infrastructure, in each public school serving high school grades, of sufficient capacity to support utilization of mobile computing devices by all students in such grades." Supt. Luna said the 2013 appropriation bills clearly directed the state to build a wireless infrastructure and not to leave maintenance of those systems to local school districts. He indicated the state's responsibility is to repair and support.

Supt. Luna said, in meeting the intent of the legislation, experts advised the state to move forward with a managed service contract, which is the most cost effective. He said that is why the Request for Proposal (RFP) is structured to include: a complete and fully managed wireless service; content filtering; event logging; system implementation; user reporting, maintenance and upgrades of the technology as necessary; and deployment management. It will also include: help desk support, deployment of the wireless infrastructure, implementation of professional development at multiple levels, project management and customer relations management. He further explained the process used to procure the provider of services for the state. He said based on the selection committee's choice, the SDE signed a five-year contract with Education Networks of America (ENA), with the ability to extend the contract twice at the end of the five years, if both sides agree. After the contract was signed, the schools and districts signing on to the statewide contract numbered 176 with the installment completion deadline: March 1, 2014.

In response to questions from the committee, **Supt. Luna** said the state contracted the job rather than handle it within the SDE, because the state would need to make an initial investment of \$8 million and then hire the staff; the Legislature allotted only \$2.25 million. ENA had the experience and expertise, and is well-known in the state. The company has completed other connectivity projects. He indicated the other companies who made the "top three" list were: Tech Hut and Ednetics, both Idaho companies.

Joyce Popp, Chief Information Officer, SDE, was called upon to answer questions from the committee. She said the installation time frame given to the state to accomplish the task of wireless service throughout the participating school districts was the driving force to contract with a capable, proven company. She said before the deadline, 80 percent of the school districts opted into the wireless expansion. She stated ENA has an active help desk with engineers in Idaho, even though the company is headquartered in Tennessee.

To questions regarding the wireless capability of schools within the state prior to the 2013 Legislation, **Supt. Luna** said there had to be a 50 percent upgrade in all participating schools to have wireless in every classroom. Responding to further questions, he said the state wanted the districts, at the close of the contract with ENA, to have the option of either using the hardware or asking ENA to remove old, outdated equipment. Supt. Luna said flexibility was written into the contract so districts can also be involved in the discussion of upgrading. He said the contract anticipates equipment changes.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

Representative DeMordaunt
Chair

Jean Vance
Secretary