

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, April 03, 2013
TIME: 8:00 A.M.
PLACE: Lincoln Auditorium WW02
MEMBERS: Chairman DeMordaunt, Vice Chairman Nielsen, Representatives Shepherd, Wills, Bateman, Boyle, Agidius, Clow, Gestrin, Harris, Horman, Mendive, VanOrden, Pence, Kloc, Ward-Engelking

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None.

GUESTS: Dick Selby, Idaho News Service; Phil Homer and Rob Winslow, Idaho Association of School Administrators; Colleen Johnson and Ashley Johnson, Paul Elementary School; Karen Echeverria, Idaho School Boards Association; Ryan Kerby, New Plymouth School District; Lisa Boyd, Vallivue School District; Jason Hancock and Luci Willits, Idaho State Department of Education; Marilyn Whitney, Idaho State Board of Education; Robin Nettinga, Idaho Education Association; Darwin Olberding, Idaho Farm Bureau; Lars Sandven, Jan Sylvester and Liz Clayton, citizens

Chairman DeMordaunt called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Chairman DeMordaunt explained the combined meeting was for the purpose of hearing testimony on **S 1199**. He said testimony would only be taken on the subjects of differential pay and technology pilot projects.

S 1199: **Tom Luna**, State Superintendent, Idaho State Department of Education, explained **S 1199** provides for two programs which carry a one-year sunset clause. The first program concerns differential pay and provides for the distribution of monies to school districts requesting grant funds for local excellence in achievement awards. Of these funds 40 percent could be used for professional development and leadership; the other 60 percent would be used at the discretion of the local districts. The achievement awards are subject to a variety of criteria, including: (1) the awards shall be based upon excellence in achievement plans approved by the local districts with evidence that various local stakeholders provided input to the plan; (2) the plans are not subject to collective bargaining; (3) the plans allow for expenditure on professional development; (4) the plans shall establish goals and objective measures of growth relating to student achievement; and (5) each district receiving grant funds must submit a detailed report to the Idaho State Department of Education reflecting student achievement.

Mr. Luna detailed the second program of **S 1199**, technology pilot projects. It provides that grant funding will be made available to public schools and public charter schools for technology pilot projects designed to improve student academic growth. He said a competitive grant process will be prescribed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The program also provides requirements for grant applications.

Responding to a question regarding clarification of Section 8 of **S 1199** concerning discretionary funds, **Mr. Luna** said **S 1199** provides for the flexibility that school districts already have. However, the Legislature recognizes that some districts are using discretionary funds to pay salaries and benefits. Under **S 1199**, the differential pay provisions will allow school districts to free up those discretionary funds for other uses.

In response to further questions, **Mr. Luna** said **S 1199** will not impact collective bargaining. He indicated the criteria used for awarding grants for technology pilot projects would be developed by a task force comprised of educators, school board members, business personnel and others. He said the grants in 2014 will most likely be fewer in number and larger in scope. However, the criteria must be "scalable and sustainable" statewide.

Rob Winslow, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA), stated that the IASA **supports S 1199**. The differential pay section gives flexibility to districts for professional development needed with implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and also provides for technology grants.

In response to a question, **Mr. Winslow** replied that most administrators support **S 1199**.

Colleen Johnson, Principal, Paul Elementary School, described the iSchool in her district, the product of a technology pilot project grant. The school is equipped with a full school deployment of iPads for every student and staff member, high definition TV, Apple TV, classroom audio systems, a reliable high speed network and training on the use of iPads. She said there is widespread acceptance by both parents and teachers. She noted the increase in academic achievement, along with the high student engagement and excitement.

In response to a question regarding the technology infrastructure, **Ms. Johnson** said their systems were extremely reliable.

Ashley Johnson, a 5th grade teacher at Paul Elementary School described how technology has accelerated learning and creative thinking. She said students now research projects on their iPads and present iMovies. She found individualized learning happens quickly and "time on task" has increased. Ms. Johnson explained high level students can pursue topics in more depth while slower learners have the time and assistance they need to stay on path.

Responding to a question, **Ms. Johnson** said the students "treasure those iPads." They know how important it is as their learning device. There has been no abuse or damage to the devices.

Karen Echeverria, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), explained her organization represents 113 school districts and over 550 school board members. In addition, over 40 charter schools are affiliate members of ISBA. She stated the ISBA stands **in support of S 1199**. Ms. Echeverria said the goal of the ISBA will be to work with any school district who wishes to submit a grant application for either the differential pay plan or technology plan, and to assist them to ensure that school districts make the best use of these funds.

Ryan Kerby, Superintendent, New Plymouth School District, stated he and Dr. Heather Williams, Superintendent, Gooding School District, work with superintendents all over Idaho. He said **S 1199** seems stronger now and expectations are clearer. He added the stakeholder groups are closer together, and have a better working relationship on these concepts, than in many years. He invited the committee members to visit with superintendents, administrators, teachers and parents in their districts to describe how **S 1199** was crafted, and discuss expectations for the coming year.

Lisa Boyd, Principal, Desert Springs Elementary School in the Vallivue School District, discussed how her district had used discretionary funds to purchase iPads and upgrade their technology infrastructure. She said, in her school of 660 students, a high number are low-income students and students who are just learning English. She testified that her students love their learning devices.

Robin Nettinga, Executive Director of the Idaho Education Association, spoke **in support of S 1199**. She said IEA realizes while the public school funding bill is yet to be written and vetted, **S 1199** codifies certain areas that were of concern to members of the committee. She noted the language, at least in terms of differentiated pay, is almost identical to **H 323** and the IEA supported **H 323**. Ms. Nettinga reported the IEA's white paper, "Ensuring a World Class Education for Every Idaho Child," notes its commitment to encouraging, recognizing and rewarding excellence in teaching because it leads to increased student achievement. She added, changing the way school employees are paid is complex. If done well, it can drive achievement, while if done poorly, it can create dissension. She said IEA also supports **S 1199** because it allows for local decision-making.

Mr. Luna was called upon to close debate. He noted the broad support for **S 1199** and asked lawmakers to pass **S 1199**.

ADJOURN: Having no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:42 a.m.

Representative DeMordaunt
Chair

Jean Vance
Secretary