

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 20, 2014

TIME: 8:30 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:** None

GUESTS: Rod Gramer, Idaho Business for Education; Jason Hancock, SDE; Jamie Holyoak, Grace and North Gem Superintendent; Harold Ott, Rural Schools; Phil Homan, Rob Winslow, IASA; Karen Echeverra, Jessica Harrison, ISBA; Marilyn Whitney, Amy Nelms, SBOE; Robin Nettinga, IEA

Chairman DeMordaunt called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

H 503: **Rep. Gibbs** presented **H 503**, regarding Board of Trustees authority to employ spouses. This legislation is a fix to a problem that small schools are having. Rep. Gibbs stated that he represents nine schools, and three of the nine would like to utilize this legislation. In small school districts, sometimes the only person that applied for a job is a school board member's spouse, but the current law prohibits this. School districts with enrollment of 1,200 or more cannot utilize this legislation. A concern at the print hearing was the hiring process and that someone might craft a job description that would only qualify a spouse for the job. Rep. Gibbs stated if someone were to craft the job description so narrowly, the school district would have the opportunity to vote them out of office. He also stated the reason they chose the enrollment number of 1,200 was because it fit most of the schools that he represents. He did ask the Teton community what their number of enrollment was, but no one responded back to him. Districts with enrollments over 1,200 do not seem to have a problem or an issue with finding qualified people as well. Rep. Gibbs said that it would be up to the school board to make sure a spouse of the school board member would not have a one-up on any other candidate. And the members of the school board would need to make sure that does not happen.

Jamie Holyoak, Superintendent, stated spouses are working, but not being compensated in both school districts that he represents. They are not even allowed to compensate fuel costs. The hiring processes are no different than any other school districts. Mr. Holyoak stated that sometimes they have to run their listings in the paper for six months because they do not have people qualified for the position. Mr. Holyoak also stated that this pertains to much smaller districts. Mr. Holyoak said that they have a hiring process that must be maintained, and they are obligated to follow that. He also said that most of the concerns with hiring people seem to be for part-time positions such as music teachers or drama teachers. Mr. Holyoak responded to concerns from the committee regarding a person not being fired for non-performance issues due to that person being a spouse to someone else employed. He stated that in small areas it is hard to find someone that is not related to someone else. But they cannot avoid the unattended consequences.

Jessica Harrison, ISBA, testified in support of **H 503**. She stated they have heard from smaller school districts and they are in support of **H 503**.

Robin Nettinga, IEA, said they have several concerns and it appears the language of this legislation is contradictory. Ms. Nettinga stated they should be able to hire staff qualified without having to hire a spouse. She also said it is their responsibility to retain the qualified work force.

Harold Ott, Idaho Rural Schools Association, stated his experience in Idaho has been in Region 2 which contains many rural schools. Mr. Ott stated they do not want to hire people that are not qualified, and have run every kind of advertisement available. When they run into the problem of having no one qualified to hire, the school has the option to deny students the programs or they have the option to allow someone to come in. He said sometimes a spouse is the only person that can fill that position. Mr. Ott explained while this is not their first option, sometimes it is their only one.

MOTION: **Rep. Wills** made a motion to **HOLD H 503** in committee. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 501: **Karen Echeverra**, Executive Director of Idaho School Boards Association, presented **H 501**, grievance procedures for non-certified staff employees. She stated this bill makes changes to Idaho Code which outlines the procedures for non-certified staff grievances. This legislation provides definitions and clarification on the appropriate subject matters for grievances. The existing language requires all school districts to have a grievance policy for non-certified/classified personnel. Ms. Echeverra stated that there was a question during the print hearing about whether or not employees would be able to grievance harassment issues, and the answer is yes. Those are federal issues and covered by federal laws, and every school district has policies on harassment. She also stated that the five day time line to submit a complaint was changed to six days to allow a weekend for the employee to think about what to do.

Rob Winslow, IASA, spoke **in support** of **H 501** and said this clarity is very positive and gives clear direction.

MOTION: **Rep. Shepherd** made a motion to send **H 501** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Shepherd** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 521: **Rep. Horman** presented **H 521** regarding strategic planning. This legislation directs each school district and public charter school to develop a strategic plan that focuses on improving student performance. It directs professional development funding to be provided to local school boards and superintendents, boards of directors, and administrators of public charter schools in the content areas of strategic planning, governance finance, ethics, and/or superintendent/administrator evaluation. Funds will be distributed to districts and charter schools on a reimbursement basis upon completion of training. This legislation addresses two recommendations from the Governor's Task Force for Improving Education: #7 annual strategic planning, assessment, and continuous focus on improvement; and #18 training and development of school administrators, superintendents, and school boards. Rep. Horman said there is existing training offered through any trainers they would like, and that funding would be available for whatever training they do choose. She also stated that because the funding is referenced in statute, it is intended to be ongoing.

Rod Gramer, Idaho Business for Education, testified **in support** of **H 521**. Mr. Gramer stated that one of the things that is very foundational is annual planning, and it is very important that these goals are measurable because the most effective organizations are those that set measureable goals.

Rob Winslow, IASA, testified and stated that this did come from the task force and a key component is that these strategic plans may allow you to work in a plan you might currently be working on.

Karen Echeverra, ISBA, testified **in support of H 521**, and stated that ISBA has long supported life-long professional development for school board members. Ms. Echeverra also stated that this legislation would help and hopefully encourage all school board members to participate in ongoing professional development.

Robin Nettinga, IEA, testified **in support of H 521**, and stated that they support the concepts outlined in the Bill and also appreciate that the plan is data driven.

MOTION:

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

Zach Wesley, Vice President of Idaho PTA, gave a presentation on the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). One of their goals is to advocate for their children in the school districts. The members are in the classrooms and planning activities for the schools along with fundraising. The Idaho PTA priorities are education funding, education standards, early childhood education, parent involvement and responsibility, Idaho endowment lands, and promoting childhood nutrition, health, and safety. They support any program that would provide for early education for children from birth to age five. Mr. Wesley stated there are parents who have the time and opportunity to teach their children, but that is not always the case. Research shows that these programs are very helpful to children.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

Representative DeMordaunt
Chair

Amber Duke
Secretary