

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 03, 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:** Vice Chairman Nielsen and Representative McDonald

GUESTS: Jen Swindell, Idaho Ed News; Genie Sue Weppha, Idaho Citizen; Ray Stark, Boise Metro Chamber; Elli Brown, IVC; Rob Winslow and Phil Homer, IASA; Marilyn Whitney and Tracie Bent, SBOE; LeAnn Simmons, Idaho Voices for Children; Colleen Fellows, Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children; Jayson Vial, Intern, BSU

Chairman DeMordaunt called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

RS 22885C1: **Rep. Rusche** presented **RS 22885C1** which recognizes the intense tie between education and workforce development and on to business growth and success. He explained the resolution calls on the Directors of Commerce and Labor with the cooperation of the State Board of Education to convene a working group composed of both industry and education to develop policy recommendations to strengthen the link between education and workforce needs. Rep. Rusche indicated he worked with the Governor, the Department of Commerce and Labor, and the State Board of Education in drafting this proposed legislation.

MOTION: **Rep. Pence** made a motion to introduce **RS 22885C1**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 22635: **Rep. Kloc** said **RS 22635** would establish a voluntary, three year pilot program in five schools to collect data and study the effectiveness of preschool in Idaho. He said two goals within the Governor's Task Force Recommendations have their success hinge on Idaho children being prepared for kindergarten: Idaho Core Standards and Literacy Proficiency. He indicated that two-thirds of Idaho children who come from high-income families attend private preschool, but many middle-class families cannot afford quality private preschool. Rep. Kloc said two-thirds of low-income families, who may qualify for the Head Start Program, find there are no additional openings available. He said one very important aspect of **RS 22635** is the parental involvement or "teach the parent" component.

Rep. Kloc cited a study from Idaho City showing children who attend preschool are significantly more apt to perform at grade level in third grade and even in 10th grade. He also cited a study from Psychology Today, the Urban Child Institute, a Michigan study and several other studies which supported positive findings of quality preschool programs. He indicated the return on investment for every dollar spent on quality preschool is enough to make it a good business decision. In addition he stated 55 percent of the funding will come from grants and the private sector. Rep. Kloc quoted from several newspaper articles and listed community leaders who support **RS 22635**.

Rep. Hancey said he spoke with constituents and school administrators in Madison and Bonneville counties who are in favor of the proposed legislation. He stated the money was not prohibitive because of the savings in nonremediation in the early grades.

In summation, **Rep. Kloc** said the kindergarten preparedness legislation will assist in providing an educated workforce and early childhood learning essential for Idaho. He urged lawmakers to support the proposed legislation.

In response to questions from the committee, **Rep. Kloc** said the wording in Section 8, lines 20-23, of the resolution was taken from the language now in statute. He also stated Idaho did not have empirical evidence as to the impact of Pre-K training. A discussion was held regarding the validity of the samplings in the studies cited by Rep. Kloc and the reliability of the data. Responding to a question regarding the definition of "high-income" as stated in the presentation of **RS 22635**, Rep. Kloc said a high income family would be one that earned above \$100,000 per year.

MOTION:

Rep. Bateman made a motion to introduce **RS 22635**.

Rep. Clow spoke in opposition to **RS 22635**. He said state funded preschool programs would compete with private preschools and the small group of pilot programs would be excessively expensive.

Reps. Rubel and **Bateman** spoke in support of **RS 22635** saying there should be an opportunity for discussion, plus the support of children during the fiercely informative years.

VOTE ON MOTION:

Chairman DeMordaunt called for a vote on the motion to introduce **RS 22635**. Motion carried by voice vote.

Chairman DeMordaunt, in the absence of **Vice Chairman Nielsen**, turned the gavel over to **Rep. Wills**.

H 557:

Rep. DeMordaunt presented **H 577** stating the legislation eliminates the June 30, 2014 sunset on "use it or lose it" flexibility in instructional staff funding for public schools. He explained that during the Great Recession, as school budgets were reduced, the Legislature provided some flexibility on the previous requirement that school districts must hire 100 percent of the instructional staff positions funded by the state, or lose funding for those positions that were not hired. He said this provided school districts with added flexibility in managing reduced budgets. Previously, the only option would have been to reduce pay, which was generally done through furlough days, shortening the school year and reducing instruction time. With flexibility, districts could also implement a reduction in force, or simply leave some vacant positions unfilled, as part of the budget-balancing strategy. Rep. DeMordaunt said now that public school budgets are growing again, and school districts have more money available to hire instructional staff, this legislation begins a targeted approach of reducing the flexibility by 1 percent for each year in which a school district's average class size is at least one student above the statewide average class size. This will begin in FY16. He said for school districts with large class sizes, general flexibility would reduce from 9.5 percent in FY15 to 8.5 percent in FY16, and by further 1 percent increments in the future for each year in which class sizes were at least one student above the state average. He indicated the approach allows for continued flexibility for those (primarily rural) districts in which class size is not a problem, while beginning to address it in those districts where it is a cause for concern. He said the schools need the predictability brought about by **H 557**.

In response to questions from the committee, **Rep. DeMordaunt** said the job of the committee is to have the appropriate number of teachers in the classrooms. He said it would reduce the student to teacher ratio. Rep. DeMordaunt also indicated today's structure is not the classroom of the future. Future classrooms may have 60 students being taught by content specialists with learning coaches for small groups both in and out of the classroom.

Rob Winslow, IASA, spoke **in favor** of the **H 557**. He said it would allow school districts to start planning toward compliance with the statute.

MOTION: **Rep. Horman** made a motion to send **H 557** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation

Reps. Batemen, Pence and **Wills** spoke **in support** of **H 557**. Rep. Bateman said although he supports the bill he does not envision the future of education with the same enthusiasm as **Rep. DeMordaunt** in light of his experience with open classrooms, albeit without technology, 40 years ago. Rep. Pence said the flexibility has helped and since the monies are going back into education funding, **H 557** is acceptable. Rep. Wills said those who have been in the House Education Committee knew the sunset clause would bring the legislation to a point of re-consideration.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Rep. Wills** called for a vote on the motion to send **H 557** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. DeMordaunt** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Rep. Wills turned the gavel over to **Chairman DeMordaunt**.

Jayson Vial, House Majority Intern, BSU, presented findings on competency-based strategies and the concept of mastery. He explained the recommendation from the Governor's Task Force was to shift to a system where students advance based upon content mastery rather than seat-time requirement. Mr. Vial said his research focused on the models of: Competency Level Rubrics, Seat Time Waivers, and Credit Flexibility. He indicated New Hampshire's Sanborn Regional School District operates on a rotating schedule within the block schedule. Embedded in this rotation is flexible grouping time to provide students with a weekly re-teach and enrichment period to intervene and support students, plus monitor success. Mr. Vial said using the Competency Level Rubric (See Attached.), a final course grade is calculated based on a student's performance on these competencies through various summative assessments.

Mr. Vial described a second model or "Seat Time Waivers." The Michigan Department of Education and the state legislature passed legislation in 2010 providing a seat time waiver to districts that want to offer pupils access to online learning options and the opportunity to continue working on a high school diploma or grade progression without actually attending a school facility. He said in this program, the State Superintendent is given oversight on approval of the waivers, allowing district exceptions and termination of waivers throughout the school year. In the third model, Mr. Vial indicated the state of Ohio implemented the "Credit Flexibility" program which gives students the opportunity to apply, via school application, to (1) stay in regular classroom instruction, (2) switch to competency system or (3) create a specific mixture of both. He said the Ohio State Department of Education does not provide a model plan. The student, school and family create the plan together. Some costs are covered by the school district while families may need to handle others.

In response to a question from the committee regarding the competency level rubric, **Mr. Vial** said the 10 points differs from the ABC concept because the mastery must be accomplished at each of the 10 levels before a student progresses. He said the scale more accurately identifies the student's level of accomplishment. To another question regarding the blended seat waiver, he said the teacher teaches all day with students logging in and out, depending on their waiver.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

Representative DeMordaunt
Chair

Jean Vance
Secretary