

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. 628

BY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION; AMENDING CHAPTER 16, TITLE 33, IDAHO CODE, BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION 33-1633, IDAHO CODE, TO PROVIDE FOR THE RURAL EDUCATION SUPPORT CENTER AND RELATED PROVISIONS AND TO DEFINE TERMS.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

SECTION 1. That Chapter 16, Title 33, Idaho Code, be, and the same is hereby amended by the addition thereto of a NEW SECTION, to be known and designated as Section 33-1633, Idaho Code, and to read as follows:

33-1633. RURAL EDUCATION SUPPORT CENTER. (1) The legislature finds that the establishment of a rural education support center in Idaho will be beneficial for Idaho school districts and public charter schools. The legislature further finds that a rural education support center will provide for Idaho school districts and public charter schools to be more flexible and to find cost-sharing opportunities and personnel-sharing opportunities.

(2) In establishing the rural education support center, the state department of education shall:

(a) Conduct a statewide awareness campaign to promote understanding of the rural education support center;

(b) Establish a cabinet of public school superintendents, administrators and stakeholders. The cabinet shall include two (2) superintendents from the region in which the rural education support center is located;

(c) Create a sample memorandum of understanding; and

(d) Facilitate the planning and development of an incubator process to identify one (1) region to serve as the incubator rural education support center in fiscal year 2017.

(3) The cabinet established by the state department of education shall:

(a) Identify roadblocks and possible solutions in implementing the rural education support center and develop recommendations for the incubator process; and

(b) Establish a pool of no more than three (3) credentialed educators, recommended by the cabinet, as candidates for selection as the director of the rural education support center. The final selection of the director shall be made by the superintendent of public instruction.

(4) The director of the rural education support center shall, with appropriated funds, be contracted with the state department of education with the following authority:

(a) To contract one (1) business manager to serve part time and one (1) administrative assistant;

(b) To pay for regional travel expenses and necessary utilities;

1 (c) To establish up to two (2) menu items, in which school districts may
2 participate if under an executed memorandum of understanding with the
3 rural education support center;

4 (d) To be directed by the local educational agencies under a memorandum
5 of understanding with the rural education support center.

6 (5) (a) A school district located within the region of the rural educa-
7 tion support center with interest in participating shall:

8 (i) Provide a written letter of support from the local board of
9 trustees to the director of the rural education support center
10 displaying intent to participate;

11 (ii) Establish a memorandum of understanding with the rural ed-
12 ucation support center. The memorandum of understanding between
13 the school district and the rural education support center shall
14 be established for one (1) year and the school district may opt out
15 in writing within sixty (60) days before the end of the agreement
16 at the direction of the local school board of trustees;

17 (iii) Provide a written request from the local board of trustees to
18 the rural education support center for each service requested.

19 (b) Once a memorandum of understanding is established with the rural
20 education support center, the superintendent of the local educational
21 agency shall be a board member of the rural education support center.

22 (6) It shall be the intent and purpose of this section to establish the
23 rural education support center as a regional agency that is intended to:

24 (a) Provide cooperative and informational services to local school
25 districts and public charter schools;

26 (b) Assist the superintendent of public instruction and the state de-
27 partment of education in the performance of their respective statutory
28 and constitutional duties; and

29 (c) Provide services to school districts, public charter schools and
30 Idaho educational services for the deaf and the blind, to assure equal
31 educational opportunities and to assure that local school districts may
32 enter into contracts, including contracts with the rural education sup-
33 port center.

34 (7) Upon written request of the local school district board of trustees
35 served by the rural education support center, the rural education support
36 center may provide cooperative and informational services not in conflict
37 with other laws that provide for the development and implementation of pro-
38 grams, activities, services or practices that support the education of pub-
39 lic school students in kindergarten through grade 12 or that support the ef-
40 fective, efficient and safe management and operation of the school district
41 or districts served by the rural education support center.

42 (8) Notwithstanding appropriated funds, the state department of educa-
43 tion may establish the rural education support center, but is not obligated
44 to do so without appropriated funds.

45 (9) For purposes of this section:

46 (a) "Incubator" means a process where districts and charter schools
47 that are willing and ready to be part of the rural education support
48 center would be identified through the rural education support center
49 planning and development process.

1 (b) "Menu item" means a list of services, programs, activities or prac-
2 tices in which a school district shows interest.

3 (c) "Rural education support center" means an opt-in cooperative en-
4 tity in which school districts and public charter schools may partic-
5 ipate in seeking opportunities for more flexibility, cost-sharing op-
6 portunities and personnel-sharing opportunities.

7 (d) "School district" means an Idaho public school district and in-
8 cludes Idaho public charter schools and the school for the deaf and the
9 blind.