

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 02, 2017

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman VanOrden, Vice Chairman McDonald, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Clow, Mendive, Kerby, Cheatham, Amador, DeMordaunt, Moon, Syme, Kloc, McCrostie, Toone

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

GUESTS: Trent Clark, Monsanto; Harold Ott, IRSA and IASA; Jess Harrison, ISBA; Jane Wittmeyer, Coalition of ID Charter Families

Chairman VanOrden called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Superintendent Ybarra stated that the whole purpose for **H 223** is to establish a network to share resources across the state, especially in the rural school districts. She introduced **Duncan Robb** to present and explain the bill.

H 223: **Duncan Robb**, Chief Policy Advisor of Public Instruction, presented **H 223** relating to the Rural Education Support Network. He explained Idaho is 70% rural with the schools being the hub of the communities. Beyond K-12 education, the network would also be dedicated to the workforce development and economic health of the community it serves. Each rural district has unique needs. This network would be under local control so it can be tailored to serve the needs of the students in their district. The network would receive an initial \$300,000 annually for 3 years, and then be self-sustaining thereafter.

Trent Clark, Monsanto Ag Company, and **Harold Ott**, IRSA/IASA, stated it will raise the quality of education by enabling the sharing and collaboration of resources with nearby communities and across the state. It will support and help the Superintendents in these rural districts who carry a large burden of wearing many hats in their workload because of limited staff.

Jess Harrison, ISBA, testified **in support** of this bill only if it was funded and that funding came from the Superintendent of Public Instruction's budget rather than the public schools budget. ISBA supports the concept of assisting our rural schools through these networks.

MOTION: **Rep. Moon** made a motion to send **H 223** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Moon** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Dr. Cheryl Charlton, Superintendent, presented the update for Idaho Digital Learning. It was created in 2002 and provides online courses, professional development, blended learning, digital portals, and tech innovation. They serve grades 5-12. They offer advanced opportunities and college and career readiness with age appropriate content to help them determine their higher learning and career direction. The Idaho Digital Learning teachers applaud the program and feel it allows them to support the student in choosing the right electives and help them to master the courses they need.

Jeff Simmons, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, said they offered 244 unique courses and 1,441 sections in the 2015-2016 school year. The students have the options of asynchronous or synchronous teaching. With asynchronous the students and teachers interact in a virtual environment at different times with set start and end dates. With synchronous, the students and teachers are together in real time through video conference, face to face, or web-based. He explained learning recovery students need additional support, and cyber learning environments appear to be a perfect venue to engage at-risk learners in school,. He said virtual and live tutors are also available for the at-risk learners. As the students are doing their assignments the program can predict when they are struggling. A strong relationship is formed between the online teacher and student. Mr. Simmons stated they have a Collaborative Counselor Training Initiative for counselors and advisors that have been very well received.

Sherawn Reberry, Director of Education Programs, explained that 71% of new STEM jobs are in computing and only 8% of STEM graduates are in Computer Science. Idaho Digital Learning is connecting students to Computer Science through their Computer Science Pathways which include, CTE Digital Cisco Academy, CTE/DC Web Development Pathway, AP Computer Science Pathway, and Dual Credit Computer Science Pathway. They have partnerships with BSU, Idaho Technology Council, Idaho STEM and others. IDL is linked up with the State Board and State Departments to help assist the student with additional resources that are available for college application and career planning.

Ryan Gravett, Director of Technology, explained the power of the portal where district and school portals provide resources for students, parents and teachers. The portals can be customized for each student and their individual needs. The State Department Portals give access to adult training through educational resource libraries, and the Parent Portal provides parent educational resources. IDL builds out features to the portals by continually adding to the portals from hundreds of schools, conferences and STEM centers. The resources used are specific to the community as well as statewide. Mr. Gravett explained that cyber security is high priority.

Lori Lodge, Public Policy and Legislative Chair, presented the American School Counseling Association Model. She explained that the model fits both urban and rural areas to meet the students academic, career readiness and social/emotional needs. They define a standard, consistent roll with accountability and expectations for Counselors and establish a comprehensive program for all schools, regardless of district size. She stated that professional training requires communication, oral and written, teamwork, problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and attitude. Their school counselors meet the needs of students from kindergarten through high school.

Angela Robinson, Idaho and American School Counselor Associations, stated that college begins in kindergarten. By the time children reach their senior year they should know what they want to pursue and be directed in that pursuit. They should be advised and directed to think about what they want and enjoy, by teachers and counselors starting in the 7th grade. They assist administrators through workshops, speakers, and technology to train their district's counselors.

Susan Bowen, Vallivue High School Counselor, stated that children deserve the very best from early education through secondary education. The special needs students need high intensity counseling that give students courage and belief in themselves to achieve in school and their future careers. The American School Counselors are passionate about counseling and helping each individual.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:38 am.

Representative VanOrden
Chair

Ann Tippetts
Secretary