

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Wednesday, March 08, 2017
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Nonini, Den Hartog, Guthrie, Crabtree, Buckner-Webb, and Ward-Engelking
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** None
- NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.
- CONVENED:** **Chairman Mortimer** called the Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:08 p.m.
- PRESENTATION: Library Commission (Commission).** **Ann Joslin**, State Librarian and State Commission for Libraries, introduced Stephanie Bailey-White, Deputy State Librarian. **Ms. Joslin** reported to the Committee Ms. Bailey-White's background and expertise (see Attachment 1).
- Ms. Bailey-White** said the Commission is a State agency established in 1901. The mission of the Commission is to help libraries build the capacity to better serve their communities. She reported the services the Commission provides to the State libraries and to their customers. She said there are 147 public libraries statewide which are embedded in communities and campuses and helping to ensure that more students are ready for post-secondary education. The Commission is playing important role working toward the 60 percent goal of Idahoans between the ages of 25-34 attaining a post-secondary degree or certificate by the year 2020.
- Ms. Bailey-White** played for the Committee a video clip regarding the programs that support these goals. She reported about the many different public library programs patrons engage in and the positive learning experiences. They are currently partnering with STEM Action Center to enhance some of the different library programs. She concluded her presentation by thanking the Broadband Committee that brought new legislation forward which provides State funding to help support Internet access libraries.
- Senator Winder** asked if the Commission gathers any information from local libraries regarding the number library users and the potential issues of Internet misuse. **Ms. Bailey-White** replied that information is not collected by the Commission; those are local issues.
- PRESENTATION: Funds for Learning.** **John Harrington**, CEO, said Funds for Learning is a company that specializes in helping schools and public libraries navigate the federal e-rate funding program. He said to provide an effective learning environment it takes significant band width to support multiple users and the variety of uses. The E-rate program provides discounts on goods and services (see Attachment 2). **Mr. Harrington** explained the E-rate program is annual application process with bidding rules, procedures with deadlines, and multiple forms to complete. The failure to comply can cost a school or library their funding for the year.

Mr. Harrington reported the background and expertise of Funds for Learning. He explained the E-rate program funds support two categories: to campus through data lines, Internet access, telephone service; and on campus through wireless access points, data cabling, network switches. He stated in the last 10 years there was a yearly average of \$8.4 million dispersed to schools and libraries in Idaho. He said when teachers and librarians are trying to build their curriculum is important that they have constant and dependable access to the Internet. He explained the discounts available for school districts to buy fiber optics and spoke about the challenges from E-rate portals. He said applying for the E-rate dollars is becoming more difficult.

Senator Guthrie asked if the E-rate discount is a federal matching program. **Mr. Harrington** replied it is a discount program. He explained when an E-rate request is submitted, it is tied to committed and eligible products and services which are sold at a discounted rate. **Senator Guthrie** asked if the discount is covered by the federal government. **Mr. Harrington** replied in the affirmative. He said the discount is paid for by the Universal Service Fund which is collected from telephone users. Twenty-five percent of that tax goes to the school library program which is called the E-rate.

Senator Guthrie asked if his consulting services are paid by the State or the school district. **Mr. Harrington** replied school districts contract with Funds for Learning on a flat fee basis. The costs vary on the size of the school district and complexity of the applications.

Senator Nonini asked where Funds for Learning is headquartered. **Mr. Harrington** replied they are out of Oklahoma City. He explained his background in education.

S 1140

Chairman Mortimer announced that **S 1140** will be held in Committee subject to the call of the Chair.

H 186AA

Relating to Schools; Wireless Local Area Network Services. Representative Malek said **H 186aa** amends a statute that was enacted by the legislature in 2016. The statute came from recommendations made from the Education Opportunity Resource Committee (EROC). He said in the ever-changing world of technology it was recommended that EROC continues to review current standards to ensure that statute language is up-to-date. The changes define the scope and responsibilities of EORC, and it authorizes them to provide technical and other assistance for all connectivity to and between Idaho school districts. He invited William Goodman to the podium to explain the work of EROC.

William Goodman, Director of Technology, Mountain Home School District, Board Member, Idaho Education Technology Association, and Vice Chairman, EROC, said the changes in the bill include the current technology standards for connectivity. These changes help school districts secure E-rate discounts.

MOTION:

Senator Nonini moved to send **H 186aa** as amended to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Chairman Mortimer will carry on the floor.

H 199

Relating to Education; Pay for Success Contract. Senator Nonini presented the technical changes in **H 199**. He said two years ago the Pay for Success contracting was passed by the Legislature. He stated the program allows innovation in the schools by shifting the risk to a contractor. He said and if the metrics in the benchmarks are met, then the contractors will be paid. The program has not yet begun. The State Department of Education (SDE), in trying to enact this program, has concerns regarding the specifics. **Senator Nonini** said this bill will do two things: 1.) makes technical changes to conforming language; and 2.) allows the SDE to withhold payments to the contractor until the performance metrics are met.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked for clarification regarding the funding component. **Kate Haas**, Lobbyist, Kestral West, said contracts can span for more than one fiscal year. The purpose of the language allows the SDE to hold back the contracted funds without having it swept into the Public Education Stability Fund (PESF).

Senator Ward-Engelking asked if the funding comes from the average daily attendance portion. **Senator Nonini** replied the money is allocated from remediation dollars.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked if the funds are from the school funding formula or a line item account. **Ms. Haas** replied the money for school districts or public charter schools using the Pay for Success program comes from the established funding formulas. The changes in the legislation allowed the SDE to hold those funds for the school districts or public charter schools until the metrics are met.

Senator Ward-Engelking said the public schools funding formula is under review. She asked if the payment program to the contractors will work if changes are made regarding the public schools funding formula. **Ms. Haas** replied the changes are creating a bucket to hold the funds. She stated everything in the contracts are subject to appropriations and explained if the appropriation changes then the adjustment would be made to the contract.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Thayn** moved to send **H 199** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. Senator Winder seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote. Senator Nonini will carry on to the floor.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary