

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 27, 2018

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman VanOrden, Vice Chairman McDonald, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Clow, Mendive, Kerby, Cheatham, Amador, DeMordaunt, Moon, Syme, Ehardt, McCrostie, Toone, Gannon(5)

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: Debbie Wilder; Ann Cordum, MD; Mike Keckler, State Board of Education; Rickey Kamimae; Lindsey McKinney; Marianne Stoddard; Rob Winslow, Idaho Association of School Administrators; Harold Ott, Idaho Rural School Administrators; Teresa Pitt, Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Duncan Robb, State Department of Education; Erica Compton, Finia Dinn, STEM Action Center; Shannon Decker, Kira Burgess- Elmer, Idaho Suicide Prevention Coalition; Annika Klein; Kent Kunz, Idaho State University; Marilyn Whitney, Governor's Office; Rober Brown, Boise State University; Joe Stegner, University of Idaho

Chairman VanOrden called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

S 1267aa: **Senator Nonini** spoke to **S 1267aa**. He said the bill creates an alternate, voluntary STEM diploma which can be awarded for high school graduation, to students who have taken four years of science credits, which is more than the state requirements. The purpose of the bill is to help students with college, scholarship and job applications. The emergency clause is so seniors who graduate in 2018 may receive this diploma, before the July 1, 2018 enactment date. If students have met these requirements before their senior year, they do not have to take math their senior year. These students are usually already taking college-level math classes, said Senator Nonini, and this provision allows them to take more science classes. Removing the requirement to take a math class during one's senior year will also work well with the mastery-based education model, he added.

MOTION: **Rep. McDonald** made a motion to send **S 1267aa** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

In response to questions from the committee, **Senator Nonini** said the Workforce Development Council was not involved in the drafting of **S 1267aa**, but it supports the bill, because the bill promotes a workforce for the technical jobs in Idaho. Senator Nonini said the North Idaho STEM Academy is in a rural district. Use of this diploma is voluntary, he said, and it is up to the school districts as to if they will implement them or not. The rules about how this will be implemented will be written by the State Board of Education, he added.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. DeMordaunt** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Chairman VanOrden turned the gavel over to **Vice Chairman McDonald**.

RS 26237C1: **Rep. VanOrden** spoke to **RS 26237C1**. She said state law requires local education organizations to prove they represent fifty percent, plus one, of the school certified staff when the local education organization and school district go to negotiations. Law does not currently require membership to be updated, and this legislation requires local education organizations to update proof of representation every two years.

MOTION: Rep. McCrostie made a motion to introduce **RS 26237C1**. Motion carried by voice vote.

Vice Chairman McDonald turned the gavel over to Chairman VanOrden.

RS 26244: Rep. DeMordaunt spoke to **RS 26244**. She said digital literacy is critical for every student in Idaho, and computer literacy has become a foundational subject. This legislation makes computer science courses accessible as an elective, said Rep. DeMordaunt, and requires school districts to offer at least one computer science course. The course can be offered online or in class, and it can be used to meet one of the math or science credit requirements. The legislation also makes a computer science endorsement available to teachers. The Idaho Digital Learning Academy has many computer science classes, she added.

In response to questions from the committee, Rep. DeMordaunt said the school districts may use any mode of delivery for the class which happens during the school day. She said the objective is to have a computer science class available in every high school as an elective.

MOTION: Rep. Amador made a motion to introduce **RS 26244**. Motion carried by voice vote.

H 504: Rep. Toone spoke to **H 504**. She said the bill creates another tool to help Idaho achieve its Go On Rate Goal of 60%. Three out of four schools in Idaho are classified as rural schools, and only one-half of students who graduate from rural schools go on to college. Many rural schools may start the first day of school with no teachers, she added. Twelve states have teacher loan forgiveness programs, said Rep. Toone. **H 504** gives teachers \$3,000 a year towards their loans while working in rural communities, up to four years. Teachers who are not supported will leave within five years, she added.

In response to questions from the committee, Rep. Toone said the loan forgiveness is available to teachers who have been teaching but still have loans. The reason for the full-time employee in the fiscal note is that it will take a while for the Board to get the information to districts, she said. The State Board of Education created a rubric for the loan which recognizes unfilled positions, she added. Rep. Toone said Idaho lost 1,500 teachers last year. Some left for retirement or to work out of the state, and some was due to attrition. She said she did not know the rate of retirement.

H 504 caps at five hundred recipients per year, for a fiscal impact of \$1.5 million each year. Rep. Toone said the Division of Career Technical Education is offering certification and paying for it. If the status of the school changes, and it is no longer considered economically disadvantaged or rural, the teacher may lose the ability to apply for the loan forgiveness, said Rep. Toone.

MOTION: Rep. Kerby made a motion to send **H 504** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Rep. Kerby spoke in support of **H 504**. He said Idaho has a crisis, with rural districts having difficulty attracting teachers. The salaries in urban areas are higher, and teachers have more access to university classes. He said he looked at **H 504** as a pilot project, and students deserve good teachers in every room in the state of Idaho.

In response to questions from the committee, **Rep. Toone** said school districts in rural areas cannot compete with neighboring states, which have higher starting salaries and signing bonuses. Statistics show that if teachers can be kept in the profession for the first five years, they will stay. At that time, they will have become part of the community and may buy a home in the community, she added. Rep. Toone said there is a severability clause, to protect the state if the economy becomes less strong. She said she heard from several teachers who moved to other states because of their loan forgiveness programs. It may be possible to give preference to teachers already in the program, she said, as the State Board of Education creates the rubric. The positions which are difficult to fill changes with the districts, she added. Rep. Toone said any loan repayment money is subject to federal taxes.

Rep. Clow commented that the fiscal note needs to include employment taxes. He also suggested changing "may" to "shall," to make sure the money is used to re-pay the student loans. In response to questions from the committee, **Rep. Toone** said any one on the career ladder may apply for the loan forgiveness program. For example, some schools have a shortage of counselors, she said. **Rep. Gannon (5)** commented that the medical profession has been doing loan forgiveness programs for a long time, but the hospital has a contract which says the doctor must stay a certain number of years. Rep. Toone said teachers who move to a different school in the district may lose their eligibility, if the new school does not qualify for the program.

Mike Keckler, State Board of Education, spoke **in support** of **H 504**. He said recruiting and retaining teachers in rural districts is a problem, and the bill was one of the work group's suggested strategies. The State Board voted to support **H 504**, he added.

Rickey Kamimae, Payette School District, spoke **in support** of **H 504**, saying the loan forgiveness would be an incentive to stay in rural areas.

Lindsey McKinney, Bruneau-Grand View Joint School District, spoke **in support** of **H 504**, citing the school district's high turnover rate of teachers. In response to questions from the committee, Ms. McKinney said teachers build relationships outside of school in rural areas, and it's difficult to build relationships and trust with the high turnover rate.

Harold Ott, Idaho Rural School Administrators Association, spoke **in support** of **H 504**. He said the bill does not ensure Idaho will recruit and retain all the teachers it needs, but it is a powerful tool. Two concerns members have are school funding and recruiting and retaining teachers.

Duncan Robb, State Department of Education, spoke in support of **H 504**. He said it shows support from the state and provides another tool to attract and retain teachers. In response to questions from the committee, Mr. Robb said three-fourths of schools in Idaho are categorized as rural, which is approximately three-fourths of 730 schools. Mr. Robb said the program is available to first-year teachers. The professional standards Commission reviews teacher preparation programs. The criteria to qualify as a rural school is to have fewer than twenty students per square mile, and for the county to have less than 25,000 residents,.

Marianne Sletteland spoke **in support** of **H 504**, saying her debt burden significantly impacts her life, and she would make more money and have better benefits if she taught in a neighboring state.

Rep. Mendive spoke **in opposition** to **H 504**.

Rep. Toone said there is a teacher shortage in Idaho, and **H 504** is designed to attract and retain teachers. In response to questions from the committee, **Rep. Toone** said Idaho created loan forgiveness programs for teachers and nurses in the 1990's. However, those programs were phased out during the recession. **Rep. Moon** commented the program could be a burden for taxpayers, and she thought bonuses for difficult-to-fill positions would be a better alternative.

In response to questions from the committee, **Rep. Toone** said the definition for being rural is made at the district level, and the designation of being economically disadvantaged is made at the school level. The intent of the sunset clause of July 1, 2023 is to review the program after five years to determine whether to keep it or not, said **Rep. Toone**. Rural districts employ approximately half of Idaho's 19,000 teachers, she said.

Rep. McDonald spoke in opposition to **H 504**, saying he could not support it as written. He said he would need guarantees that the money would go to the lender, and that the teacher would stay after four years. He said funding the next phase of the career ladder and funding master teacher premiums may be a better method of attracting and retaining teachers.

Rep. DeMordaunt spoke in opposition to **H 504**. She said her concern was the lack of prioritization of those already in the program. **Rep. Toone** said the priorities are first year teachers, then those who have received the loan assistance before, if there are fewer than 500 applicants.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Rep. DeMordaunt made a substitute motion to send **H 504** to General Orders.

Rep. Ehardt commented she thought paying more bonuses and performance pay made more sense than **H 504**.

VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Toone will sponsor the bill on the floor.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST:

Chairman VanOrden made a unanimous consent request to move **Docket No. 47-0101-1701** and **S 1294** to another agenda. There being no objection, the request was granted.

H 634:

Rep. Troy spoke to **H 634**. The legislature created a suicide prevention program with **H 634** in 2015, she said. **Rep. Troy** cited statistics for suicide in Idaho. **H 634** focuses on training all school staff who have interaction with students, she said. The training can be part of an existing in-service or professional development program. Health and Welfare was asked to approve the training materials.

Shannon Decker spoke in support of **H 634**. She said the gatekeeper training is missing in Idaho, and it was determined to be a best practice. It has been implemented in forty-two states, and nineteen states codify it in statute, said **Ms. Decker**.

MOTION:

Rep. Amador made a motion to send **H 634** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Rob Winslow spoke in support of **H 634**, saying suicide is an issue many administrators, teachers and staff deal with, and the bill gives school districts flexibility.

Annika Kline spoke in support of **H 634** and spoke of her experiences.

In response to questions from the committee, **Rep. Troy** said she worked closely with stakeholders. Originally, a two-hour training was suggested, but it was determined school districts need more flexibility in how they implement the training.

Rep. DeMordaunt spoke in support of the motion, saying she appreciated the section which stated teachers do not take on legal responsibility.

In response to questions from the committee, **Ms. Decker** said asking people if they have thought of suicide does not put the idea into their head, and asking directly is important.

Ann Cordum spoke in support of **H 634**. She said early detection is the key to suicide prevention.

VOTE ON MOTION:

Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Troy will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 629:

Rep. Horman spoke to **H 629**. Due to the way fees are collected for apprenticeships, it can be a hardship for high school students enrolled in CTE classes, she said. In response to questions from the committee, Rep. Horman said one example is students who are enrolled in construction classes.

MOTION:

Rep. Kerby made a motion to send **H 629** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** Rep. Horman will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 631:

Rep. Horman spoke to **H 631**. She said the bill addresses how residency is determined for students in graduate level university classes. Currently, the time a student is enrolled in Idaho in an undergraduate program counts against that student for graduate-level programs in Idaho. The bill allows students who have been in Idaho for undergraduate classes to enroll within thirty-six months in a graduate program. For non-resident students, in-state residency will be granted after residing in Idaho for twelve months, she said. In response to questions from the committee, Rep. Horman said a non-resident student must give up residence in another state.

MOTION:

Rep. Clow made a motion to send **H 631** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Horman** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Representative VanOrden
Chair

Jenifer Cavaness-Williams
Secretary