

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 12, 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:** Representative(s) Boyle, Cheatham

GUESTS: Senator Dean Mortimer, Idaho Senate; Mike Keckler, Idaho State Board of Education; Jason Kreizenbeck, Carlie Foster, Lobby Idaho, LLC

Chairman VanOrden called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

RS 26346: **Chairman VanOrden** explained that **RS 26346** is the concurrent resolution to reject the one paragraph of the science standard from **Docket No. 08-0203-1705** which the committee voted to not approve.

MOTION: **Rep. Mendive** made a motion to introduce **RS 26346**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

S 1291aa: **Senator Mortimer**, District 30, spoke to **S 1291aa**. He said the bill will allow the Accountability Oversight Committee, which exists in the State Board of Education, to assist the schools performing at the lowest five percent by providing turnaround experts to help them improve their performance. The schools are required to form a committee and given one year to formulate a plan and two years to fully implement the plan, said Senator Mortimer. A consistent appropriation of \$750,000 to the State Department of Education will be used to assist the low-performing schools with their improvement plans. The bill specifies who will be on the board of the Accountability Oversight Committee, including **Dr. Linda Clark, Superintendent Sherri Ybarra, Debbie Critchfield** and five at-large members. The language of the bill uses "may," not "shall," as this is a voluntary program, said Senator Mortimer. There is not enough funding to make it a required program, he added.

Senator Mortimer said school boards who wish to participate apply for the funding and appoint members of a turnaround committee. July 15 is the deadline to apply for the program, and the school board identifies two or more experts from a predetermined and qualified set of experts to help with the improvement plan. The legislation gives the low performing school a school turnaround expert selected from a predetermined and qualified set of experts to assist the school in its efforts. The expert the school chooses must be willing to receive a portion of payment based on the school performance, added Senator Mortimer, and must be willing to work with any low-performing school. The school board must choose the expert it wishes to work with by August 30.

Senator Mortimer explained that **S 1291aa** outlines how the experts are compensated and what they must accomplish, as well as how they collaborate with the Idaho State Department of Education and report to the Accountability Oversight Committee. The improvement plan must be submitted before January 1, and the turnaround committee must be formed by October 1, he added. The bill outlines the duties of the turnaround committee formed by the school board. He said the bill recognizes the importance of the school leadership program and the training of school leadership. The State Department of Education provides resources to the Accountability Oversight Committee. Senator Mortimer said the reason the bill is needed is that experts can help schools understand what the issue is and how to fix it, and they can help schools make changes which are critical to student success.

Mike Keckler, State Board of Education, spoke **in support** of **S 1291aa**. He said the Accountability Oversight Committee would identify the low-performing schools. Participation is voluntary, he added.

In response to questions from the committee, **Tracie Bent** said the Accountability Oversight Committee was created approximately eight years ago. It makes recommendations to the State Department of Education based on how the schools are doing. The Idaho State Board of Education does have an accountability role enumerated in the statute, she said. This program does not interface with schools at the local level, said Ms. Bent. The State Board of Education works with the experts and the State Department of Education. The process for determining which of the awards are made is a collaborative process, she said. The school board has the ability to delegate any of these responsibilities to the State Department of Education or the State Board of Education.

In response to questions from the committee, **Senator Mortimer** said the turnaround specialists can be individuals both in and out of the state which meet the criteria. He said he is hoping the bill will allow those people with this kind of knowledge and experience to start working with the schools. The data will be used to show where the school begins and where it is improving.

MOTION:

Rep. DeMordaunt made a motion to send **S 1291aa** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Rep. DeMordaunt spoke **in support** of **S 1291aa**. She said she thinks the composition of the turnaround committee is balanced in composition of people both in and out of the school, and it will provide an objective overview. She said making the program voluntary is also important, because choice is empowering. She also liked that the expert's compensation is based partly on the school's performance, because it provides accountability.

In response to questions from the committee, **Senator Mortimer** said the Accountability Oversight Committee already monitors the lowest five percent of schools. However, for schools which do not receive Title I Funding, this will take on a new significance, he said. Currently, the Department has been using the \$750,000 school recognition and rewards funding, said Senator Mortimer, which is a start. The money would be used to pay for the turnaround experts. Currently, schools are given options of how to use the leadership premiums funding. **S 1291aa** will help them know how to use the funds better.

Rep. Clow spoke **in support** of **S 1291aa**, saying many organizations exist which fit the role of a turnaround expert.

In response to questions from the committee, **Ms. Bent** said the State Board of Education is half-way through the implementation of the school recognition and rewards plan. One school in each region has been asked if they would like to participate, and the Board has worked with the school districts to identify areas of support. The Board does not expect to start to see improvement until the end of the current school year, because research says it takes three years to see improvement, she said. The Board has reached out to those schools with students scoring in the bottom 25%. **S 1291aa** addresses the schools scoring in the bottom five percent, she added. Hopefully, as the program progresses, the schools will improve, but there will always be a lowest five percent, based on performance, said Ms. Bent.

In response to questions from the committee, **Senator Mortimer** said the catalyst for the current program was a review of the data from the last two years. There are a number of schools with students struggling with literacy and math skills, he said.

In response to questions from the committee, **Ms. Bent** said the performance criteria for the existing program is to use statewide assessments of students when they move from one grade to the next, as well as college entrance exams, high school graduation rate, and the post-secondary education go-on rate of high school students. The Board looked at the equity across different types of schools, she added. The current program uses state funds and is not targeted to Title I Schools, said Ms. Bent. Federal funds are tied to a designation as a Title I School, and the program allows the state to help schools without that designation. The current program used a competitive process to determine colleges of education as the turnover experts, said Ms. Bent. The program proposed by **S 1291aa** allows schools to choose experts from multiple ones identified by the State Board of Education. The Board anticipated there may not be as much need for funds the third year of the current program, said Ms. Bent, so **S 1291aa** will not take money away from those schools participating in the current program. The Board addresses how the funding is targeted to schools with the least resources in its rules, she added. Ms. Bent said the State Department of Education is responsible for finding the turnaround experts. It does that now with qualified trainers, which is a different section of code. The application process for the experts will be created through the rule-making process, she added.

In response to questions from the committee, **Senator Mortimer** said the contract with the turnaround expert is three years. Contracts with principals trained by the state are for five years. It may be possible for one expert to work for more than one district at a time, depending on the time and the capacity of the expert, said Senator Mortimer. The school boards choose who they want to work with based on the list of recommendations from the State Department of Education and on interviews. The compensation for the experts will be based on the size of the school, said Senator Mortimer. Utah has a similar program.

In response to questions from the committee, **Ms. Bent** said funding for the current program has been spent for the first two years of the three years. The University of Idaho College of Education won the grant, and it is working with school districts. The University reports to the Board of Education quarterly on the progress made and how the money was spent, she said. **S 1291aa** provides that the contract is with the school district and the provider of services, and the funding is based on student outcomes. The old program grants an award for each year based on the progress made.

Rep. Moon spoke in opposition to **S 1291aa**. She asked why the Board of Education is involved, and she said she thought the ability to do a program like this should already be addressed somewhere.

Rep. Kerby spoke in opposition to **S 1291aa**. He said the bill takes the State Department of Education's authority and gives it to the State Board of Education. He expressed concern that the Department's authority over day-to-day operations had been gradually eroded over the past several years.

Rep. McDonald spoke in support of **S 1291aa**. He said the bill establishes accountability, and he sees the Department being involved in addressing the outcomes.

Rep. DeMordaunt spoke in support of the motion, saying there is a balance between the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education. The bill empowers parents to have input about improvements to their children's education, she said. The bill balances the input of parents, community and school members. It allows those with innovation successes, like Horseshoe Bend, to participate and guide the other districts, she added.

In response to questions from the committee, **Ms. Bent** said if **S 1291aa** does not pass, the State Board of Education will evaluate the progress of the current program and move forward with current programs.

Rep. Amador spoke in support of the motion.

Chairman VanOrden spoke in support of the motion. She said the Superintendent of Public Instruction is a member of the State Board of Education and is on the Accountability and Oversight Committee. On page six, the bill specifies the State Department of Education's responsibilities, she said, and the involvement of the Board and the Department is the same. She said she liked that a certain percentage of the turnaround experts' fees are based on performance, and the bill would allow the state to pull capacity builders to help other districts. A number of other states have used this type of program with tremendous success, and it gives the district choice and some expert help, she added.

VOTE ON MOTION:

Motion carried by voice vote. Reps. Moon, Kerby, Shepherd and Mendive requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**. **Rep. VanOrden** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

Representative VanOrden
Chair

Jenifer Cavaness-Williams
Secretary