

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020
- TIME:** 9:00 A.M.
- PLACE:** Room EW41
- MEMBERS:** Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Mendive, DeMordaunt, Moon, Ehardt, Goesling, Marshall, Raymond, Wisniewski, McCrostie, Abernathy, Berch
- ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None
- GUESTS:** Fred Birnbaum, Idaho Freedom Foundation; Tim Hill and Julie Oberle, SDE; Mike Smith, Richfield School District; Jonathan Gillen and Brian Smith, West Ada School District; Harold Ott, IASA and Rural Schools; Peggy Hoy, Annette McFarlin, Melanie Hammond, Sharee Barton, Erin Murillo and Angela Hoopes, IEA; Luke Schroeder, Kimberly School District; Debbie Critchfield, Shawn Keough and Tracie Bent, SBOE; Quinn Perry, ISBA; Paula Kellerer, NSD #131; Colby Cameron, DFM; Shawn Tiegs, Nezperce
- Chairman Clow** called the meeting to order at 9:01 am.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Abernathy** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2020 and February 19, 2020 meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- H 523:** **Greg Wilson**, Senior Policy Adviser for Education, Governor's Office, presented **H 523**. Last year **H 153** increased starting teacher pay. The current bill creates a long-term career path so experienced educators stay in the classroom. He stated it is a critical investment in improving student outcomes, since the teacher is the most important factor. He reviewed the creation and funding of the career ladder over the past five years, noting 70% of districts use the career ladder in some form to structure their salary schedules. The state allocation for teachers currently tops out at \$50,000; anything beyond that comes from district funds, including bond and levy dollars from property taxes. Attracting, recruiting and retaining quality educators is an ongoing challenge, especially in rural and border districts. Mr. Wilson noted while Idaho has been making progress in teacher salaries, neighboring states have been raising their pay; he also argued levies are not a sustainable funding source for personnel costs and charters do not have the ability to levy.
- The bill creates an Advanced Professional Educator endorsement, with eligibility requirements including: holding a renewable certificate for a certain amount of time, meeting the performance criteria of the professional and advanced compensation rungs, having held a leadership role, a written recommendation and having a professional learning plan. Meeting the performance criteria includes strong accountability measures, focused on classroom achievement. The bill also creates a corresponding Advanced Professional rung on the career ladder, with the cells built out over five years. It increases allocations across the career ladder, including the base for beginning educators. It contains accountability measures for administrators, stating teacher evaluations must be conducted with fidelity to the state framework, or the district will not be eligible to receive leadership premium funds.

Alex Adams, Administrator, Division of Financial Management, discussed the fiscal impact of **H 523**. He explained the governor's fiscal year 2021 recommendation is based on conservative growth estimates and includes the \$32 million cost for the first year. The bulk of the first-year cost is a "true up" to ensure the right number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions are in the right cell of the career ladder. As time has passed from the initial career ladder set-up, the predicted and actual movement on the ladder has varied. The true up is included in the fiscal note in an attempt to align the appropriation with the cost, as the five-year build out begins. It will also reduce withdrawals on the Public Education Stabilization Fund (PESF) to cover unexpected costs. This is the only year the true up is anticipated to be needed. The total fiscal impact of the bill, after full implementation, is \$223 million, which fits within the governor's conservative five-year revenue forecast.

Debbie Critchfield, State Board of Education President and Co-chair of the Governor's Task Force on Education, noted the Board has worked hard to address the teacher shortage. However, it has been unable to address distribution and even the playing field in attracting teachers outside of urban areas. She stated her belief that the original goals of the career ladder were to attract and retain teachers. She contended the first part is being addressed and this bill now works on retention.

In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Wilson** stated if the school funding formula was changed, attributes of the career ladder could be retained in a student-based formula. The fiscal note estimates 70% of eligible teachers will move to the Advanced Professional rung in the first year. This estimate is based on teachers and administrators adjusting to the implementation. He clarified the minimum required experience to move to the new rung is eight years of holding a renewable certificate. The average raise as a teacher moves cells, regardless of rung, is 3.75%. The career ladder amounts are state minimums and although the base starting salary will not greatly increase during the five-year build out, the emphasis on the top end creates a career path so educators see a way to remain in the profession.

MOTION: **Rep. Goesling** made a motion to send **H 523** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Mike Smith, Superintendent, Richfield School District; **Luke Schroeder**, Superintendent, Kimberly School District; and **Shawn Tiegs**, Superintendent, Nezperce School District, spoke **in support** of the bill. They discussed how the career ladder allows districts to increase teacher salaries, without using supplemental dollars. They testified this will have a dramatic impact on teacher retention and provide property tax relief.

Annette McFarlin, middle school teacher in Twin Falls; **Melanie Hammond**, sixth grade teacher in Rexburg; **Sharee Barton**, district coordinator for gifted and talented services in Rexburg; and **Angela Hoopes**, eighth grade teacher in Teton School District, spoke **in support** of the bill. They discussed the challenges of retaining veteran teachers, especially for border districts. They noted veteran teachers have only received negligible pay raises over the last few years, while the focus was on increasing starting teacher pay.

Due to time constraints, **H 523** will be carried over to the meeting of February 26, 2020 at 8:30 am.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 am.

Representative Clow
Chair

Erica McGinnis
Secretary