

MINUTES  
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026

**TIME:** 9:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW41

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Hawkins, Vice Chairman Handy, Representatives Mendive, Ehardt, Wisniewski, Garner, Nelsen, Sauter, Marmon, Pickett, Hostetler, Veile, Mathias, Galaviz

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None

**GUESTS:** The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

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

**MOTION:** **Rep. Mathias** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 18, 19, 20, and 23, 2026. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**H 657:** **Rep. Leavitt** presented **H 657**, legislation to adjust the priority of student selection in public charter schools. This priority selection would include children of military families and foster children.

**Tammie Perreault**, Department of War, **Nanette Merrill and Blake Youde**, Idaho Charter School Association, **Christopher Knaus, and Christopher Collins**, Military Service Members, **Ashley Cotton, Anna Garvin, Jamie Searcy, and Emily Downey**, Military Family Members, and **Marty Anderson**, Veteran, testified **in support of H 657.**

**Ralph Binion**, Mountain Home School District, and **James Gilbert**, Superintendent, Mountain Home School District, testified **in opposition to H 657.**

Committee members discussed charter school enrollment, lottery selection, military students, school transfers, funding, and new charter schools.

**Rep. Leavitt** asked the committee to hold the bill in committee because a new RS would be presented to replace **H 657.**

**MOTION:** **Rep. Hostetler** made a motion to **HOLD H 657** in committee. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**RS 33489:** **Rep. Leavitt** presented **RS 33489**, proposed legislation to replace **H 657**. This addresses priority of student selection in public charter school lottery admissions. He explained language changes, transferring school levels, and local control based on needs.

**Blake Youde**, Idaho Charter School Association, answered committee member questions regarding priority levels, student performance preferences, and charter school control.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Hostetler** made a motion to introduce **RS 33489**, and recommend it be sent directly to the Second Reading Calendar. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Leavitt** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**Chairman Hawkins** turned the gavel over to **Vice Chairman Handy.**

- H 711:** **Rep. Hawkins** presented **H 711**, legislation to create an Alternate Authorization Program for prospective school principals and superintendents who do not otherwise hold an administrator certificate. Applicants must be sponsored by a public school district, meet specific preliminary requirements, and complete an embedded mentorship program, which will focus on operational duties of an administrator. He said this would especially help rural communities.
- Quinn Perry**, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), shared a testimony from **Jason Sevy**, ISBA, **opposing H 711**. **Tabitha Miller**, Boise School District, testified **in opposition** to **H 711**.
- Andy Grover**, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administration shared a **neutral** testimony regarding **H 711**, but he would like to see "master's degree" added back into the bill.
- Rep. Hawkins** and **Debbie Critchfield**, Superintendent of Public Education, State Department of Education, spoke about expanding candidate searches, mentorship training, board approval, and said this is already available for charter schools. She explained this would not be a requirement, but an available option to help fill positions.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Pickett** made a motion to send **H 711** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote**. **Rep. Mathias** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**. **Rep. Hawkins** will sponsor the bill on the floor.
- Vice Chairman Handy** turned the gavel back over to **Chairman Hawkins**.
- RS 32862C1:** **Rep. Tanner (14)** presented **RS 32862C1**, proposed legislation consolidating the Idaho STEM Action Center into the Idaho Workforce Development Council, integrating its functions, programs and staff to enhance the Council's existing purpose. This consolidation will streamline operations, reduce administrative overlap, and more closely align STEM education and outreach with Idaho's workforce development strategies.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Pickett** made a motion to introduce **RS 32862C1**. **Motion carried by voice vote**.
- ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:54 am.

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Representative Hawkins  
Chair

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Amy Bengtzen  
Secretary