

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 19, 2018

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Lincoln Auditorium

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Guthrie, Crabtree, Buckner-Webb, and Ward-Engelking

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Nonini

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 3:03 p.m. He opened the meeting with a reading from the book, A Heap O'Living, Along Life's Highway, by Edgar A. Guest, "What Makes the Game." **Chairman Mortimer** welcomed the new page, Brenton Marcucci, Mountain Home, Idaho, and invited him to the podium to introduce himself and share his interests and future aspirations.

S 1293 **Relating to Education; Amend and Establish Provisions Regarding Limited Contracts for Certain Employees. Karen Echeverria**, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA) presented **S 1293**. She said there is a teacher shortage in Idaho. In an effort to fill this shortage, interim certificates can be obtained by candidates if they are enrolled in an alternate route of certification. She stated there are instances where teachers are unable to complete their alternate route in the required three-year timeframe. She said each year a teacher is on an alternate route to certification they receive a contract; there is a difference between a contract and certification.

Ms. Echeverria said the legislation proposes to add a new section of code which would allow a school district or charter school to provide to any teacher on an alternate route to certification a Category 1 contract. She explained the contracting procedures that occur until the teacher is certified. **Ms. Echeverria** asked for **S 1293** to be sent to the floor with a do pass recommendation.

TESTIMONY: **Steve Smylie**, Board Member, West Ada School District, spoke in favor of **S 1293**. He explained the difficulty in finding late-hire staff with full certification. Often the school district will hire a temporary alternative placement if the teacher is working on certification. The districts depend on the State Department of Education (SDE) to inform them on the teacher's certification. By the time they determine the certification progress, the teacher has a signed contract which is difficult to terminate.

Paul Stark, General Counsel, Idaho Education Association (IEA), spoke in opposition of **S 1293**. He explained the certification information may not be provided by the SDE to school districts until October, yet teacher contracts for the subsequent school year must be offered in July. He stated there are other routes available to school districts to teacher contracting.

Chairman Mortimer asked if the school board trustees can exercise the option of employing certified personnel on a one-year, limited contract. **Mr. Stark** replied in the affirmative. He said the discretionary language would allow them to offer a Category 1, 2, or 3 contract.

Dave Roberts, Chief Human Resources Officer, West Ada School District, spoke in favor of **S 1293**. He said teachers own their certificate and it is not the district's responsibility to determine if they are certified. If a teacher is not earning their certificate, their contract is not void; instead the teacher is not in compliance with their contract. This creates a compliance issue that school districts must address. Passing the proposed legislation would alleviate that issue.

Ms. Echeverria said should this legislation pass, school districts will work with the SDE, who is responsible for the personnel contracts, to ensure everyone uses the same contract as issued by the Superintendent of Public Instruction

MOTION: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **S 1293** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: "Day on the Hill." Funding and Accountability: A View from School Board Members. **Jim Stoor**, President of the Idaho School Board Association (ISBA), introduced the ISBA officers and presented on behalf of the ISBA. He said the presentation will discuss funding and accountability. He explained how the Career Ladder has increased teachers' salaries; making it easier to recruit and retain teachers. The additional operation funding has helped with student achievement (Attachment 1).

Mr. Stoor stated increased funding creates an increase in accountability; this means there is more reporting to the SDE. He expressed concerns with the requirements. He said local governance is important to school districts. They appreciate the ability to choose programming that is specific to the needs of their students. They are optimistic flexibility will increase as per the recommendation of the Governor's Task Force on Public Education.

Supplemental levies are becoming a reality for many school districts. **Mr. Stoor** said they are needed for day-to-day operations. School districts are often only one defeated levy vote away from deep cuts to district programs. He stated there is an expectation this trend will continue. He addressed various proposed legislations that could have an impact on school funding.

Mr. Stoor explained the role of a school board trustee. They are accountable to those taxpayers in their communities. Often the choices they make may not coincide with others' opinions and expectations. He said trustees are elected by their local districts and serve with no financial compensation. The decisions they make are thoughtful and intentional. He thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Den Hartog** said there are State standards for teacher contracts. She asked how school board members accomplish contract negotiations for the best of their districts while complying with the State's standards. **Mr. Stoor** replied teachers unions, ISBA staff, and Idaho schools understand they are all serving student achievement. He emphasized the fiscal responsibilities that elected school board members have to their district.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Guthrie** expressed concern regarding the lack of respect for school board trustees. He asked if there are too many special programs for schools to deliver. **Mr. Stoor** replied the ISBA has taken the position of "no more" line items for funding. School districts appreciate discretionary funding. They are able to operate their district to best meet demands.

Chairman Mortimer said the K-12 budget was set at \$100 million in the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC); a 5.9% budget increase. **Chairman Mortimer** asked if an accountability measure should be developed to measure school district performance. **Mr. Stoor** replied in the affirmative. He said school districts would prefer to report those measurements at the school calendar's mid-year and end year, which better demonstrate student achievement.

Michelle Lippert, ISBA, Region 1 Vice Chairman, addressed the importance of using graduation rates and grades as measures of accountability.

Brian Pyper, School Board Vice Chairman, Madison School District, Rexburg, Idaho, voiced his support for creditable accreditation standards. It is important to supply teachers with new information. **Senator Thayn** asked if the school districts are accountable to the school system, the school district and the principals, the administration, or teachers. **Mr. Pyper** replied they are accountable to all of those entities.

Nancy Gregory, Board President, Boise School District, said the motivation behind strategic planning is continuous improvement and the focal point of continuous improvement for school districts is student achievement. **Ms. Gregory** commended the Legislature for funding that allows high school students to sit for the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). The test includes an itemized analysis for teachers to understand how their instruction affected student performance and outcomes.

Chairman Mortimer asked if the evaluations are used for English Language Learners (ELL) and special education students. **Ms. Gregory** replied there are individualized assessments for such students.

Chairman Mortimer asked if they have developed safety measures addressing school assaults. **Ms. Gregory** replied after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, the Boise School District engaged multiple safety agencies to advise and develop actions for students and parents.

Chairman Mortimer thanked the officers from ISBA for answering the Committee's questions. He asked if they had questions for the Committee.

Mr. Stoor asked how the State is addressing the increase in health insurance premiums and how the increase might affect operational funds. **Senator Ward-Engelking** replied after reviewing the consumer price index, JFAC allocated additional money in the discretionary funds for health insurance costs.

Mr. Stoor stated supplemental levies addressed the gap from State funding. Districts would like to quit asking their communities to pass a levy. He asked if the Legislature would eventually be able to fund districts adequately so they would no longer have to hold supplemental levies. **Senator Thayn** remarked the extra revenue is being used to pay health insurance premiums.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** said the Legislature is required by the Constitution of Idaho to fund a thorough and adequate education for all children. She expressed her concern regarding the lack of funding; she views the lack of funding reflected in districts who must cut programming and only have four-day weeks.

Chairman Mortimer said the Public School Funding Formula Committee has been formed to address differences. The hope is that levies will no longer be a norm for some school districts.

Marg Chipman, Immediate Past President, ISBA, asked what the next steps are for the Public School Funding Formula Committee. **Chairman Mortimer** replied a large component of the funding formula is being analyzed with the focus being student centered.

Each Committee member thanked the ISBA for presenting and speaking candidly about the needs of their school districts.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary

Samuel Griffin
Assistant Secretary