

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 03, 2020

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, Mathias (Buckner-Webb), and Ward-Engelking

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

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 Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m. He opened with a reading from the book *A Heap O' Living Along Life's Highway* by Edgar A. Guest, the poem entitled, "Those Duty Calls."

**GUBERNATORIAL
APPOINTMENT:** **Debbie Critchfield**, President of the State Board of Education (Board), introduced Kurt Liebich, appointed to the Idaho State Board of Education. **Mr. Liebich** explained to the Committee his work history in the lumber industry, and how this career allowed him to see what high school students need to be capable of upon graduation. He continued with a summary of his work on education task forces. In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Liebich** stated that his main focus area moving forward would be K-3 literacy. He went on that the affordability of higher education is another major issue and that, while progress has been made, there is still much to be done. He stated that parents serve the most important role in education, and that increasing parental engagement would offer great improvement in K-3 performance. He told the Committee that he believed his ability to look at budgets analytically would allow him to serve the Board by asking the right questions to best serve the state.

PRESENTATION: **Stephanie Bailey-White**, State Librarian at the Idaho Commission for Libraries, introduced the Commission staff accompanying her. She began her presentation by sharing that Idaho ranks number one in the nation for children's library attendance and number two for circulation of children's materials. She shared the accomplishments of Idaho's libraries over the past year, as well as listing several services that Idaho libraries offer to their patrons. **Ms. Bailey-White** highlighted some of the grants that Idaho libraries received and the programs they supported. She shared how Idaho libraries provide reliable internet access to their communities, and how many libraries in Idaho are increasing their broadband. She shared the importance of internet access to students and continued that libraries offer mobile hot spots to be brought into the home. **Ms. Bailey-White** continued that the Commission is committed to workforce development and shared their activities to that end.

Ms. Bailey-White responded to questions that H 194 (2019), relating to content filtering requirements, was causing issues to filtering adult material in their mobile hot spots. Due to the costs involved, many libraries were struggling to update their mobile hot spots to be able to filter adult material. She continued that a postponement of filtering requirements for mobile hot spots would allow libraries to find funding to support content filtering. She responded to Committee questions that E-Rate filtering funding could not be used for mobile hot spot filtering requirements.

PRESENTATION:

Tim Hill, Associate Deputy Superintendent of the Idaho State Department of Education (Department), explained the current funding for Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind, as well as the current funding for public schools and the funding request for public schools from Superintendent Sherri Ybarra for the coming year. He detailed the changes in the requests from specific state dedicated funds. He went on to detail the uses to which the increased funding requests would be put. **Mr. Hill** continued with an explanation of how funds were utilized in fiscal year (FY) 2019 and an itemized estimate of the Department's funding needs in order to meet statutory requirements for FY 2021. This was followed with estimates for the Department's upcoming itemized funding requests.

Mr. Hill responded to a question about the past withdrawal from the public education stabilization fund by stating that increased enrollment had caused expenditures to be higher than expected.

PRESENTATION:

Dr. Cheryl Charlton, Superintendent of Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA), introduced her staff and began her presentation with a brief history of IDLA.

Jeff Simmons, Director of Supervision and Instruction for IDLA, shared that middle school enrollment in IDLA has increased 183 percent since 2015. He shared that 87 percent of students pass their IDLA courses, and 90 percent of students who take the course with a teacher in the room during a designated hour pass the course. He continued that one in five rural students took IDLA courses last year, while one in ten urban students took an IDLA course. Nearly three-quarters of IDLA advanced placement (AP), and dual credit enrollments are from rural schools, while nearly a third of urban students taking IDLA courses were doing so to advance their post-secondary careers.

Ryan Gravette, Technology Director for IDLA, shared some of the additional resources that IDLA offers to students, including tutoring, a parent engagement portal, personalized math learning, and SLP (services for language pathology). **Mr. Gravette** shared IDLA's advances in cyber security. He continued with a discussion of the many different organizations that IDLA partners with. He concluded with a look forward to the upcoming programs in IDLA.

In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Simmons** noted that IDLA offers many resources for professional development for its instructors and for instructors in school districts across the state.

RS 27533

Senator Lent explained to the Committee that the RS seeks to promote proper preparation of school board members.

MOTION:

Senator Den Hartog moved to send **RS 27533** to print. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to approve the Minutes of January 16, 2020, **Senator Woodward** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:31 pm.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

Morgan Howard
Secretary

Bethany Johnson
Assistant Secretary