

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020

**TIME:** 2:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, and Ward-Engelking

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Buckner-Webb

**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 2:31 p.m.

**H 599** **Representative Marshall** presented **H 599** and told the Committee about the review of teacher preparation programs. He explained that in his experience with teacher education, creating a program that meets the requirements for a teacher education program is restrictive and cumbersome. He further noted that **H 599** allows non-public teacher education programs to operate with more flexibility. **Representative Marshall** said that creating non-traditional teacher education programs is nearly impossible and that **H 599** would allow more flexibility in the creation of teacher education programs while ensuring the quality of the programs. He told the Committee that **H 599** requires the State Board of Education (Board) to award teacher certifications to individuals with a bachelor's degree, a passed criminal background check, substantive content training, and substantive pedagogue training. He went on that the bill will not damage the quality of teacher education, but allows greater flexibility and creativity in the creation of teacher education programs.

**Representative Marshall** responded to Committee questions that new non-traditional teacher education programs and teacher programs in non-public secondary education institutions would be covered under the requirements of **H 599**. In addition, he said that new teachers would be required to complete a year of teaching with mentoring if their programs did not require a student teaching experience.

**MOTION:** **Senator Lent** moved to send **H 599** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Crabtree will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**H 555** **Representative DeMordaunt** presented **H 555** and told the Committee that it addresses accountability, efficacy, and parental involvement in regards to kindergarten through third grade literacy. She told the Committee that the bill seeks to help increase parental involvement for students struggling to read fluently. She went on that the bill required an annual review by a third party independent evaluator on adaptive reading programs. **Representative DeMordaunt** noted that because the money is already being allocated, there is no fiscal impact and that the bill has the support of the Board.

**DISCUSSION:** **Representative DeMordaunt** responded to Committee questions by identifying the process for the requirement that adaptive reading programs involve the student's parents. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if the programs would require an internet connection. **Representative DeMordaunt** pointed out that the only requirement was that the tool is available to be used outside the classroom. She responded to further questions that the Board would be responsible for procuring an evaluator and that the bill intends for the evaluator to be paid for from the Board's existing budget. She clarified that the provider of the intervention program must not be the independent evaluator.

**Lucie Willits**, Associate Vice President for Curriculum Associates, responded to Committee questions that adaptive testing changes the content of questions based on a student's selected answer.

**Representative DeMordaunt** responded to further Committee questions that while curriculum decisions ought to be made at the district level, **H 555** would provide actionable data to districts about which adaptive learning programs had the best results as well as involve parents at a higher level.

**Chairman Mortimer** commented that the budget set for the Board did not allow the money to be distributed other than what was specifically stated in the existing budget. **Representative DeMordaunt** responded that her understanding was that there is a line item for independent reviews and that the review would be paid for from that line item. **Tracie Bent**, Chief Planning and Policy Officer for the Board, told the Committee that the line item for independent reviews is already used for existing reviews, and that there is no room in that line item for additional independent reviews.

**TESTIMONY:** **Ms. Willits** testified in favor of **H 555** and told the Committee about the similar practices of other states that are outlined in the bill and the purposes of each.

**Representative DeMordaunt** closed by expounding on the importance of parent involvement in reading intervention programs and the importance of knowing which programs work and which do not.

**MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **H 555** to floor with a **do pass** recommendation, with potential changes to the fiscal note. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Den Hartog will carry the bill on the floor.

**H 576** **Representative Raymond** told the Committee that **H 576** has been through several iterations since the summer of 2019. He went on that Idaho has appropriated large amounts of money for online education and told the Committee that **H 576** creates a digital content curriculum fund and allows districts to access curriculum from multiple vendors. He said that roughly six or seven of the 176 Idaho schools using funding for online education use nearly a third of the state's funding for digital online curriculums. He continued that the bill allows any school district to apply for up to \$50,000 of funding from the digital content curriculum fund. He detailed the information required to be included in the application. **Representative Raymond** told the Committee that the bill makes funding truly meaningful for practical use in school districts.

**DISCUSSION:** **Representative Raymond** responded to Committee questions that the initial purchase of the licenses for digital content is more expensive than the annual renewal of these licenses.

**TESTIMONY:** **Kate Haas**, Kestrel West, testified in favor of the bill and told the Committee that the current distribution model for digital content funding is not working for many schools. She went on that the bill is meant to allow districts to fund those programs that continually work and that none of the stakeholders involved in the drafting of the bill had opposed it. **Ms. Haas** agreed with Committee concerns that some school districts would take a hit for their digital content funding, but clarified that those school districts had already been required to supplement their digital content funding from the remainder of their budget. She responded to Committee questions that she couldn't predict how many districts would or would not apply, but noted that the districts would not need to hire grant writers to apply for the funding. She noted that there are full competitive grant programs for funding embedded in other line items that were more complex than the proposed application program for digital content funding. **Ms. Haas** responded to Committee questions that the bill provides greater funding opportunities for those districts which do not receive meaningful amounts of funding for digital content under the current system.

**Representative Raymond** closed by reminding the Committee that the bill has gone through multiple iterations to reach a point that was acceptable to all of the stakeholders. He went on that the bill seeks to ensure that more school districts are able to implement digital content in a meaningful way.

**MOTION:** **Vice Chairman Thayn** moved to send **H 576** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Lent** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**, with **Senators Woodward** and **Ward-Engelking** requesting they be recorded as voting nay.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Winder** moved to approve the Minutes of February 24, 2020. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**Senator Woodward** moved to approve the Minutes of February 26, 2020. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 3:57 p.m.

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Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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Morgan Howard  
Secretary