

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 09, 2022

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Thayn, Vice Chairman Lent, Senators Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Blair (Johnson), Cook, Ward-Engelking, and Nelson

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 Thayn** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:01 p.m.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Chairman Thayn passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Lent. **Vice Chairman Lent** said there were some minutes that needed to be approved.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Chairman Thayn** moved to approve the Minutes of March 7, 2022. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

S 1373 **Relating to Education.** **Chairman Thayn** announced that no additional testimony will be heard and only voting would take place on **S 1373**. This legislation has the flexibility to offer full day kindergarten and gave districts the option to use state literacy intervention funds. At the previous meeting, two motions were on the table. The original motion was to send it to the amending order and the substitute motion was to send it to the floor with a do pass recommendation. (See Attachment 1)

MOTION: **Chairman Thayn** moved to send **S 1373** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Vice Chairman Lent passed the gavel to Chairman Thayn.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: Dr. Leon Dean Fisher (Dean) was appointed to the Public Charter School Commission to serve a term commencing February 24, 2022 and expiring May 12, 2023. Mr. Fisher is presently President of the College of Southern Idaho and had been involved in higher education over 35 years.

Mr. Fisher received his education at the following institutions:

- A.A. - Rose State College
- B.A. - University of Central Oklahoma
- M.A. - University of Central Oklahoma
- Ed.D. - Gwynedd Mercy University and University of Oklahoma

He has served at Rose State College in various positions and SUNY Corning Community College. Mr. Fisher was also Chief of Staff for two years for Congressman Steve Russell, U.S. House of Representatives. When asked how he viewed the Charter School Commission, **Dr. Fisher** replied that charter schools were one more way that the Commission served students and parents with educational opportunities.

Chairman Thayn thanked Dr. Fisher for his dedication to education and for appearing before the Committee and said voting would take place at the next meeting.

S 1374

Relating to Education. Vice Chairman Lent stated this legislation added to the existing law to provide for career exploration courses for 8th grade students to assist them in identifying potential interests and resulting career paths. The objective was that they graduate from high school with some direction versus just a diploma.

Speaking in favor of **S 1374** were Jonathan Hartford, Dale Lane, Paul Stark, and Tracie Bent.

MOTION:

Senator Cook moved to send **S 1374** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Blair** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 684

Relating to Protecting Campus Free Speech In Higher Education Act.

Representative Barbara Ehardt presented **H 684** and said this bill protects the First Amendment rights to free speech and also defines the following: key campus terms; protected, lawful activities; outdoor areas that are publicly accessible; free expressive activity; public institutions of higher education; reporting to the Governor and the Legislature; and remedies with injunctive relief, compensatory damages, reasonable court costs, and attorney fees.

Representative John McCrostie, cosponsor of **H 684**, said his involvement in free speech for higher education came about in 2018. His involvement was to no avail. He said **H 684** reminds our public higher education institutions that policies and behavior concerning free speech on campus should always follow the First Amendment. One of the changes made from previous legislation was describing the publicly accessible outdoor areas of campus.

After much discussion, there was some concern regarding compensatory damages. It was suggested it be taken out or limited.

MOTION:

Senator Woodward moved that **H 684** be referred to the 14th Order for possible amendment. **Senator Nelson** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 685

Relating to Education. Tracie Bent, Chief Planning Policy Officer, State Board of Education, presented **H 685** and said this proposed legislation would remove the restriction that the required matching industry or business scholarship include an academic merit requirement. It also would prohibit parents who own a business from awarding the scholarship to a relative.

MOTION:

Senator Den Hartog moved to send **H 685** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ward-Engleking** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 723

Relating to Public School Funding. Representative Lance Clow, cosponsor of **H 723**, presented this legislation and stated it codifies the requirement for the next two years that the State Board and the State follow an enrollment model for attendance by a formula, rather than attendance. Previous interim committees had suggested to switching over to enrollment, rather than average daily attendance, on a permanent basis. This legislation estimates the cost of an interim committee will be \$100,000 and making a change of funding was estimated to be \$23.5 million dollars.

Speaking in favor of **H 723** were Blake Ude, Caitin Waskow, Brady Dickinson, and Sean Tigs.

MOTION: **Senator Nelson** moved to send **H 723** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 650 **Relating to School District Trustees.** **Senator Julie VanOrden** said **H 650** provides for the board of trustees of each school district to appoint a curricular materials adoption committee to advise the board on selection of curricular materials for use within the schools of the district. The committee shall consist of 12 members: 3 teachers, 1 school board member, 1 district administrator, 1 community member, and 6 parents of children attending schools within the district. **Senator VanOrden** said there were a number of small schools that said the required number of committee members would not work for them. After talking with Representative Judy Boyle, originator of the legislation, it was agreed to change that number. The amendment would read as follows: Such a committee shall contain a membership of at least one-half (1/2) of which is persons who are not public educators or school trustees, and shall include parents of a child or children attending a school/schools within the district. (See Attachment 1)

Speaking in favor of **H 650** was **Quinn Perry**

MOTION: **Senator Den Hartog** moved that **H 650** be referred to the 14th Order for possible amendment. **Senator Blair** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Senator Thayn
Chair

Katy Morden
Secretary

Juanita Budell
Majority Staff Assistant