

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 12, 2014

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Goedde, Vice Chairman Mortimer, Senators Pearce, Fulcher, Nonini, Thayn, Patrick, Rohn(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 Goedde called the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:08 p.m., and a silent roll was taken.

PRESENTATION: **Paul Headlee**, Budget and Policy Analysis, stated that he had researched answers to the Committee's previous budget questions of February 10, 2014. His tables are attached and incorporated by reference.

(1) The number and percentage of instructors that generate less than or equal to the minimum salary of \$31,000 is 4,303 instructors, or 27.8 percent of the total number of instructors in the current 2013-1014 school year.

(2) Table 2 details the recent history of major deposits or withdrawals from the Public Education Stabilization Fund (PESF), the end of year variances, and special transfers to and from the fund.

(3) Table 3 shows the actual and appropriated mid-term support units, including percentage change.

Addressing (3), the 182 support units for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-2014, **Vice Chairman Mortimer** asked how much had been estimated and its impact on PESF if no action is taken. **Mr. Headlee** replied that the actual was 64 units short, however other variables that may neutralize that shortfall. Referencing (1), **Chairman Goedde** asked how many teachers had reached their maximum on the Experience and Education Matrix. **Mr. Headlee** replied that 40.9 percent had reached the maximum. **Senator Ward-Engelking** clarified that those teachers would not get a raise unless an increase to the base is made. **Mr. Headlee** confirmed that a local district salary schedule could determine a raise, but those teachers do not generate funding from the Legislature unless the base is increased.

S 1317 **Karen Echeverria**, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), stated that last year when ISBA presented all of its labor bills, they had agreed to a sunset clause on three of those bills. The purpose of the sunsets was to allow time to collect data and bring that information back to the Legislature in order to make the laws permanent or to let the sunsets die. After collecting one year of data and working through the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force for Improving Education (Task Force), ISBA would like to extend the sunsets for one more year in order to collect more data and to determine what other legislative action might occur related to the Task Force recommendations. The Idaho Association of School Administrators and the Idaho Education Association agree to extending the three pieces of legislation for one more year.

S 1317 will extend the sunset on H 261 from last year. That legislation dealt with seniority and clarified that when imposing a reduction in force, the school district could not use seniority as the only determining criteria.

MOTION: **Senator Patrick** made a motion to send **S 1317** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Patrick will carry the bill on the floor.

S 1318 **Ms. Echeverria** stated that **S 1318** would extend the sunset on S 1147a from last year. That legislation dealt with the removal of evergreen clauses from master agreements. The legislation sets out that all master agreements are in effect from July 1 to June 30 of each year.

MOTION: **Senator Thayn** made a motion to send **S 1318** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Patrick** seconded the motion. **Senator Pearce** and **Chairman Goedde** clarified that the purpose was to extend for one more year and then either make the sunsets permanent or let them die. The ISBA will not ask for an extension next year. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senator Thayn** will carry the bill on the floor.

S 1319 **Ms. Echeverria** stated that **S 1319** will extend the sunset on S 1040a from last year. That legislation gave school districts the ability to reduce the salaries of certificated staff under certain conditions. This bill is slightly different from the first two because there are dates in the actual legislation that need to be amended as well as the date in the sunset clause. Those dates can be found on page 2, lines 4 and 9.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Mortimer** made a motion to send **S 1319** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Chairman Goedde** will carry the bill on the floor.

S 1275 **Senator Patrick** explained that **S 1275** creates a standards program for extending grants for the professional technical agricultural program. One part targets \$25,000 for new startups, limited to four per year. The second part provides \$10,000 per qualifying classroom per year. These year round programs, which include FFA and a summer program, teach practical skills, including business management, public speaking, and job application skills. Many Idaho employers look to students from these programs to fill their available positions. **Senator Patrick** assured the Committee that a ground swell of supports exists across the State.

Senator Nonini asked if money had already been pledged or collected. **Senator Patrick** replied that the program needs legislation in order to allow for donations. Until legislation is passed, Senator Patrick cannot approach donors.

TESTIMONY:

Shawn Dygert, Idaho Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association (IVATA) stated that **S 1275** would direct "the board of professional-technical education [to] adopt and implement Idaho quality program standards for agricultural and natural resource education programs." These programs would be delivered through a integrated model that incorporates classroom and laboratory instruction, experiential learning, student leadership and personal development through year-round instruction provided by competent and technically certified agriculture instructors. Mr. Dygert's presentation is attached. **Senator Pearce** asked if every Idaho high school offers FFA or resource management. **Mr. Dygert** replied that 90 percent do, and 25 percent of students participate in agricultural courses. Other high schools desire to have agricultural programs, however they are expensive to start.

Bret Wilder, State President of FFA, stressed the importance of start up grants because agricultural education includes fabrication, welding, mechanics, equipment, horticulture, botany, veterinary science. Classroom programs include record keeping, funds management, marketing and risk management.

Macy Hagler, Idaho FFA, told the Committee how her agricultural courses made her education relevant to life. Initially she thought soil was "just dirt", but through agronomy, she learned what can be grown in certain soils, how much fertilizer is needed, and how to help farmers solve problems with their soils. Through livestock management, she learned how to give vaccinations and helped vaccinate a large herd of cattle. Her education matters and she can use the skills that are important for her.

Teresa Fabricius, Superintendent of the Fruitland School District, said that she, herself, is a product of the program, and she uses those skills every day. In Fruitland, two-thirds of students study agricultural science and participate in FFA. In Science, Technology, English and Math (STEM) courses, they apply what they read. The skills they learn help them with college applications and scholarship applications. Agricultural education benefits all students across the State.

Rob Winslow, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administrators, and also speaking for the Idaho Rural School Association, said that their organizations were supportive of the concept and the program, but they are concerned about the funding source. They do not want to see funds taken from the general appropriation, but rather, would prefer a new appropriation.

Andy Beitia, Washington Trust Bank (bank), said that agribusiness represents 30 percent of the bank's portfolio, and is the backbone of Idaho. In considering prospective employees, the bank needs people with an agricultural background, whether in information technology or risk management. He seeks these students for the ability to communicate and make decisions that they learn through this program. **Senator Mortimer** asked if Washington Trust Bank would be a contributor to the program. **Mr. Beitia** replied that the bank already contributes at the local level.

Dan Sample said that he is a former member of FAA, a graduate of the University of Idaho, taught agricultural sciences and now is a credit officer with Intermountain Community Bank (ICB). Because of his background, he believes that agricultural programs are important because 20 percent of Idaho's economy comes from agriculture; 12 percent of all jobs are agricultural related, and because a shortage exists of qualified candidates, as well as teachers, in agricultural fields. Startup costs are overwhelming, and professional technical funding has gone to postsecondary, not to secondary schools where many companies now are recruiting. **Senator Patrick** asked if ICB would be a contributor to the program. **Mr. Sample** replied that many local branches help.

Pratt Mark, FFA alumni and high school agriculture teacher said "the pendulum swings." Finance has been good, but it was not good in the 30 years prior. He believes the center of the world will not be finance; it will be the producers of real goods. He distributed a report entitled, "What If We Could," which is attached.

Shane Stevenson, a high school teacher in Meridian, said that their FFA program students utilize the Agricultural Experience Tracker (AET) system to document participation in experiential learning activities, FFA and community service. He believes agricultural education creates financial wealth and sustains natural resources. His report is attached.

Clara Lee Evans, a parent, FFA alumni, FFA officer and professional technical teacher has travelled extensively meeting with agricultural educators. She described the "glimmer" in students' eyes when they are motivated because they see a purpose outside the classroom. She came to Idaho from Alabama because she wanted to be among people who were dedicated to agriculture. She is extremely supportive of FFA programs.

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Goedde** asked the Committee to continue its discussion of education budget recommendations for his presentation before the Joint Finance and Appropriation Committee (JFAC). A lengthy discussion ensued concerning restoration of discretionary funding, agricultural and professional technical education, teacher salaries and health insurance costs, annual strategic planning, the Idaho Education Network (IEN), technology pilot programs, leadership awards, charter school funding, SchoolNet, and gifted students.

The Committee's final report to JFAC is attached and incorporated by reference.

ADJOURNED: Having no further business before the Committee, **Chairman Goedde** adjourned the meeting at 5:23 p.m.

Senator Goedde
Chair

Elaine Leedy
Secretary