

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 04, 2015

**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Keough, Nonini, Patrick, Souza, Den Hartog, 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 meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

**PRESENTATION:** **Dr. Mary Barinaga**, Assistant Dean, Regional Affairs Idaho WWAMI Medical Education Program University of Washington School of Medicine, presented the WWAMI update. She explained the process of medical school and the pipeline to become a physician. She highlighted the history and why the program was developed. She explained where students do their training. UW has the best medical school in the country and this is great for Idaho students. She continued the presentation explaining all the merits of the WWAMI program (see attachment 1). **Senator Patrick** said the Committee should be thanking her for this program. The State benefits from the TRUST program. **Dr. Barinaga** explained how it worked for her and that her debt was paid.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked if there is a time limit for the TRUST. **Dr. Barinaga** replied it is four years and paid in chunks of \$50,000 a year. The State is experiencing students going to other states because those states offer more money a year to pay off their student loans.

**Senator Nonini** asked if there was discussion about Washington State University starting a medical school. **Dr. Barinaga** said she heard they were in the process of studying the starting of a medical school. This is more of an issue between the two in-state universities. The implementation of another school actually would help Idaho students by opening up more practicing spots in northern Idaho.

**PRESENTATION:** **Dr. Mike Rush**, Executive Director, State Board of Education (SBE), presented an overview of the State Board of Education. He explained the responsibilities and make-up of the SBE. He explained where in the state the SBE sites are located and the work that they are doing. He spoke about the successes and struggles of the institutions. He highlighted the areas where money is being spent. He spent a great deal of time talking about Complete College Idaho. He mentioned that the State is losing STEM graduates to other states because of Idaho's economy and urged Legislators to work to remedy the situation. He was very thorough in the explanation of the work of SBE. **Dr. Rush** explained in great detail the high security of the longitudinal data system. He outlined the line item expenses that were presented to JFAC. He concluded his presentation by reviewing the pieces of legislation that have affected SBE (see attachment 2).

**Senator Patrick** stated he believed in higher education and there are no jobs in Idaho, so those that are highly educated leave the State. He continued by wondering if putting more into education would guarantee that jobs will come to the state. He asked if the oversight committee is necessary and if they are responsive to the needs of the charter schools. **Dr. Rush** replied the legislation was passed two years ago and specifically outlined the parameters around what data needed to be collected and the reasoning for the Public Charter School Commission.

**Dr. Rush** then responded to Senator Patrick's first comment stating there are sections of the U.S., which once experience economic struggles due to industry losses that have changed that trend in their community. He gave examples of states who invested significantly in education and lured industries thereby making them the resource corridor for the U.S. He believes that a state can turn things around with education.

**Senator Keough** asked what would he do to further the efforts to reduce the competition between the higher education institutions. **Dr. Rush** stated it is something the SBE deals with on a daily basis. They are interested in making sure the institutions get what they need. He explained how an institution of higher learning would begin new programs. **Matt Freeman**, Deputy Director and CFO, SBE, stated in starting a program, the SBE does a prioritization effort. As the SBE reviews academic program offerings, new or existing, it takes all factors into consideration in trying to strike a balance in that competitive market.

**PRESENTATION: Tim Hill**, Associate Deputy Superintendent for Public School Finance, State Department of Education (SDE) presented the data on support units. He explained SDE has a healthy relationship with the Governor's office and Legislative Services and because finding the correct number for support units is very difficult, he didn't want the Committee to think one report was more correct than another report. He explained what support units are and how they are calculated. He highlighted the best 28 weeks and what that entailed. He explained the necessity of the calculation for preparing the estimated fiscal budget. The history for funding support units is wait and see (see attachment 3).

**Senator Thayn** asked what the current support unit variance is and if this will be an issue for 2015-16. **Mr. Hill** gave the number stating it was higher than the current year's appropriation.

**Chairman Mortimer** explained Mr. Hill has done an excellent job of presenting this information to the Committee. He indicated when the Committee starts to talk about the education budget one of the decisions that will need to be made will be what number the Committee will use to determine the budget. The support unit number is so important to the Committee when setting the budget.

**PRESENTATION: Nate Clayville**, Economist, Division of Financial Management (Division), presented Forecast Model for Public School Enrollment Growth. He stated that this presentation is actually based on mid-term support unit growth. He explained that this is the economic model their office uses to predict enrollment to get to the support units. He showed the Committee the results that their office has determined using the model. He also demonstrated to the Committee the process to find those numbers. He compared actual support units over the last 10-12 years verses to appropriation, the three year rolling average growth model, and the new forecast. He explained this approach is a forecasting model very similar to what is used in other state departments and is proving to be more accurate than other forecasting models (see attachment 4).

**Senator Ward-Engleking** suggested if the Division used numbers from first and second grade classes maybe there wouldn't be the skew in the trend lines. **Mr. Clayville** stated that certainly is a possibility. Because of the skews, the kindergarten is not specifically forecasted, rather they forecast the 5-9 age group.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked based on the Division's model would the estimation have been the same as what the SDE determined using their formula. **Mr. Clayville** stated the Division was within 20 support units of the SDE which was closer to actual number than SDE's.

**Mr. Hill** concluded the presentation. He recounted that public school financing is difficult because of so many variables. He explained some of the problems that make determining support units difficult.

**Senator Patrick** stated it will never be 100 percent; having a little reserve is helpful.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:51 p.m.

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Senator Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn South  
Secretary