

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 05, 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 of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:01 p.m. He welcomed Superintendent Sherri Ybarra, Department of Education (Department) for the budget presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** **Superintendent Ybarra** presented the Department's budget and general focus for 2015. She outlined the Department's vision, which is helping students to achieve. She reviewed projected goals which included (1) retaining and recruiting quality educators, (2) moving ahead with common sense leadership and transparency, (3) addressing adequate funding for schools, (4) addressing the unique needs and challenges of each district, (5) investing in innovation and technology that makes sense, and (6) committing to higher standards.

**Superintendent Ybarra** said the Department would be driven by the needs of the districts from the bottom up, not the top down. She expressed the belief that the local districts have the best understanding of their problems.

**Superintendent Ybarra** addressed class size, teacher retention, technology, and the implementation of a career ladder pilot project. She has asked the Joint Finance Appropriations Committee (JFAC) for an increase in discretionary technology products for districts. She has also asked JFAC for money to be moved from mandated, nondiscretionary budget lines to the operational category of the budget without restriction. This will allow local authorities the option of deciding where to allocate their resources.

**Superintendent Ybarra** also discussed modifications to the former No Child Left Behind Act to resolve issues concerning burdensome federal mandates. She said the Department is working under a federal waiver, which must be observed for the remainder of 2015.

**Superintendent Ybarra** thanked the Committee and stood for questions.

The Committee's questions centered primarily on topics concerning: (1) the budget for decreased class size, (2) district accountability, (3) teacher accountability, (4) the pilot program and process, and (5) retaining and recruiting teachers.

**Chairman Mortimer** thanked Superintendent Ybarra for her informative presentation.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Vice Chairman Thayn** moved to approve the Minutes from January 20, 2015. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Keough** moved to approve the Minutes from January 21, 2015. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**PASSED THE  
GAVEL:**

Chairman Mortimer passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Thayn for rules review.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** said that while there would not be a vote at this time on **Docket No. 08-0203-0401**, Tracie Bent would present an overview for the Committee.

**DOCKET NO.  
08-0203-1401**

**Tracie Bent**, Chief Policy Officer, State Board of Education (Board), addressed **Docket No. 08-0203-1401**, Rules Governing Thoroughness - High School Graduation Requirements. **Ms. Bent** said part of the changes require that high school students show proficiency at a certain level in order to graduate. She said the changes are basically a cleanup of unintended consequences from the high school graduation reform of several years ago.

**Ms. Bent** reviewed the rules which included (1) high school graduation credit requirements, (2) an exemption in grade 11 from the college entrance exam requirement, and (2) increases to the ISAT math and English proficiency levels required for high school graduation.

**Chairman Mortimer** expressed concern with the wording "pass with proficiency", which he said is too vague. He asked about the outcome if a student does not pass the test. **Ms. Bent** said if a student does not pass before they enter the 12th grade, each school district has an alternate graduation plan in place to ensure the student has learned the minimum standards for graduation. Regarding proficiency, she said the levels are called cut scores and are spelled out in the rules.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** asked about students who are not good test takers but are nonetheless high achievers. **Ms. Bent** discussed the assessment for college entrance and said the Board ultimately determined the process to be a balanced approach.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked if anyone in the audience would like to testify on **Docket No. 08-0203-1401**.

**TESTIMONY:**

**Robin Nettinger**, Executive Director, Idaho Education Association, testified in opposition to **Docket No. 08-0203-1401**. She said concerns about the graduation requirements were raised during public comment.

**TESTIMONY:**

**Don Coberly**, Superintendent, Boise School District, testified in opposition to the docket. He said imposing a new and very different high school graduation requirement could be problematic.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** again reminded the Committee there would not be a vote on the docket at this time.

**DOCKET NO.  
08-0203-1403**

**Ms. Bent** addressed **Docket No. 08-0203-1403**, Rules Governing Thoroughness - Assessment in the Public Schools. She said the rule changes relate to the State's assessment system and includes (1) the addition of language regarding accountability provisions for students who are limited English proficient students, (2) clarification on who is, and who is not, required to take the standard Idaho English Language Learner Assessment (IELA), and (3) addition of the end-of-course language for science.

The Committee posed questions that centered mostly on the ISAT requirements. **Ms. Bent** answered the general questions and called on Dr. Christina Nave, IELA Coordinator, Department of Education, to address questions specific to IELA. **Dr. Nave** answered questions and said the changes would level the playing field linguistically for English learners.

**Ms. Angela Hemingway**, Assessment and Accountability Director for the Department of Education, took the podium to explain the standards to the Idaho Alternative Assessment, which is geared toward the 1 percent population with severe cognitive disabilities.

**MOTION:** **Chairman Mortimer** moved to hold **Docket No. 08-0203-1403** in Committee. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PASSED THE GAVEL:** Vice Chairman Thayn passed the gavel back to Chairman Mortimer.

**Chairman Mortimer** recognized Marilyn Whitney, Office of the Governor, for presentation of the next agenda item.

**RS 23262C3** **Marilyn Whitney**, Office of the Governor, presented **RS 23262C3**, Advanced Opportunities Legislation. She said the proposed legislation was based on recommendations by the Governor's Task Force for improving education. The proposed amendments would consolidate the separate sections of Idaho Code pertaining to advanced opportunities for secondary students into a single chapter. She discussed additional changes, which included removing the 75 percent cap for cost reimbursement for juniors and seniors receiving funds for dual credit courses.

**Ms. Whitney** thanked Senator Ward-Engelking and Vice Chairman Thayn for their contribution to the Task Force and asked the Committee to print **RS 23262C3**.

**MOTION:** **Vice Chairman Thayn** moved to print **RS 23262C3**. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**Senator Keough** asked Ms. Whitney if the Committee would receive the changes line-by-line when **RS 23262C3** was presented as a bill. **Ms. Whitney** affirmed that a red-lined version of the proposed legislation would be available at that time.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

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Senator Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn South  
Secretary

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Jeanne' Clayton  
Assistant