

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Monday, February 16, 2015
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Lincoln Auditorium WW02
- 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 3:04 p.m. He welcomed the Idaho School Board Association (ISBA) members to the meeting. He expressed an appreciation for all the work they do in their districts.
- RS 23640C1:** **Senator Den Hartog** presented **RS 23640C1**, Parental Rights, an act relating to parental rights in education. She explained parental involvement is critical in students' education. This act affirms the primary role of parents and guardians in the education of their children and will codify those rights in education.
- MOTION:** **Vice Chairman Thayn** moved to print **RS 23640C1**. **Senator Nonini** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- RS 23645:** **Senator Nonini** presented **RS 23645**, which repeals Idaho Code § 33-1006A. In 2009, he presented this legislation to remedy a compliance issue. After reviewing audits, he realized this legislation creates a lot of work and cost for districts. **Senator Nonini** stated the school district that prompted this legislation has made the necessary changes, therefore the legislation is no longer necessary.
- MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to print **RS 23645**. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- RS 23600C1:** **Vice Chairman Thayn** presented **RS 23600C1**, regarding the State Department of Education (SDE) to review the state language arts and math standards in 2015. He stated it has been five years since it was last reviewed. These are the Common Core standards, and this resolution asks the SDE to review the standards. He explained for the people who have concerns about the curriculum this would be the time to make those concerns known.
- Senator Patrick** asked about the history of the review process. **Vice Chairman Thayn** explained the standards are reviewed about every five or six years on a rotating basis. This has been an ongoing practice.
- MOTION:** **Senator Buckner Webb** moved to print **RS 23600C1**. **Senator Nonini** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- RS 23597C1:** **Vice Chairman Thayn** presented **RS 23597C1**, regarding testing. He explained this resolution opens the discussion on testing and the purpose of testing. He explained there are three major reasons to test: to formulate instruction, to assess current student achievement and accountability, and to compare education systems. This mostly impacts the SDE to find an alternative to the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test. It doesn't assert that the State has to change to a different test. This calls for the SDE to find alternatives so during the next Session there can be more discussion regarding standardized tests.

MOTION: **Senator Souza** moved to print **RS23597C1**. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. **Senator Patrick** stated that he supports this resolution. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Chairman Mortimer welcomed Karen Echeverria, Executive Director, ISBA, and asked her to introduce the presenters.

PRESENTATION: **Ms. Echeverria** stated that today is ISBA Day on the Hill, and the Committee will be hearing presentations on many different issues that districts are addressing.

Todd Wells, ISBA President, Castleford School District #714, introduced the officers of ISBA and asked the ISBA board members present to stand and be recognized. **Mr. Wells** presented the work of the ISBA. He explained the policy work regarding legislation with sunset clauses. He thanked the State for the \$2,000 that was given to each district for professional staff training. **Mr. Wells** continued the report by reviewing the following issues: a demographic survey, a negotiations survey, a training update, a legislative update for 2015, the ISBA bylaw changes, an advocacy update and the association update. He spoke about an advocacy campaign called "Stand-up for Idaho". **Mr. Wells** explained each topic in detail and included fiscal implications (see attachment 1).

PRESENTATION: **Tom Hearn**, Trustee, Coeur d'Alene School District (District), Region One ISBA Chair, presented the negotiation process that took place in the Coeur d'Alene School District. **Mr. Hearn** explained the problems were over wages and benefits due to the funding issues of the past. He stated the District is also having problems retaining and recruiting qualified teachers. He expressed the need for legislation to set negotiation end dates as well as increasing the discretionary fund. He concluded the presentation stating teachers are not greedy, they just want livable wages and benefits (see attachment 2).

Senator Souza asked if during the long negotiation process, did the teachers' union come forward with ideas as to how to deal with the increased healthcare costs. **Mr. Hearn** said the union is frustrated with the increase in healthcare costs as is the District. The concern is who is going to pay the increased costs. This is the big area of contention. He stated it would be helpful if the State could help districts with healthcare costs.

Senator Ward-Engleking stated to her it seems there is a lack of State support for schools during negotiations. She asked if the District was in deficit. **Mr. Hearn** answered in the affirmative. **Senator Ward-Engleking** said negotiations are time consuming. Performing them in April and May creates hardship on teachers. She suggested they consider moving the practice to after the school year is completed.

Senator Patrick stated healthcare costs are extreme. He asked if the preference of the employees is more wages or healthcare benefits. It is difficult for the State to do both. **Mr. Hearn** stated they need both. The teachers feel they are behind on both. They need an increase in wages and to fight hard to keep their benefits.

PRESENTATION: **John Menter**, Troy School District #287, ISBA President Elect presented the negotiation sessions of the Troy School District (District). He highlighted the demographics of the District. **Mr. Menter** explained the negotiation sessions with the local union and outlined what each party addressed. He stated the union stifled the process by asking questions that were not in accordance with the procedures. He commented that the negotiations for this school year are still not closed. He said a piece of legislation that has been most helpful to District is the Evergreen Clauses (see attachment 3).

Senator Nonini stated the large urban school districts have very rich benefits whereas the rural school districts have very large deductibles. He has advocated for a number of years to get all the school districts in the State together into an insurance pool in which all could benefit. **Mr. Menter** explained the District's health insurance program

PRESENTATION: **Jim Stoor**, Trustee and Board Chair of Soda Springs School District #150, Executive Board for ISBA Region 5, presented the leadership plan that was implemented in the Soda Springs District (District). He explained the Leadership Premium program's effect on the District and its implementation. **Mr. Stoor** highlighted the partnership with the College of Southern Idaho and how teachers are working together for the betterment of teaching children (see attachment 4).

Vice Chairman Thayn asked how the leadership premiums improved student achievement. **Mr. Stoor** replied the principal has witnessed a collaborative effort in aligning the core standards. The district is seeing the achievement in that area.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked what the advanced opportunity coordinator does in the District. **Mr. Stoor** replied there are four in the District, one in each building. They go into each classroom making sure the curriculum is in alignment. They have attended a variety of trainings.

PRESENTATION: **Barbara Dixon**, School Board Chairman, Meadows Valley School District 11, New Meadows, Chair of Region 8, ISBA Board, presented professional development. She spoke about how much teaching has changed in the 20 years since she first entered the profession. **Ms. Dixon** said the changes have come rapidly, technology is a major necessity and federal mandates determine the strategy. She emphasized the three important key mechanisms for improving classroom instruction: 1) enhance teachers' knowledge and skills, 2) better knowledge and skills improve classroom instruction, and 3) improved instruction raises student achievement. She spoke about how that is accomplished through educational opportunities. Yet there is a cost associated with those courses, and teachers are limited in their ability to afford such instructional programs. Some districts offer financial help, but many districts only have a small amount to help teachers with development and additional certification (see attachment 5).

Senator Souza asked if there is technology to use for teacher development. **Ms. Dixon** replied for the New Meadows schools it is very difficult, they don't have resources. She said it is very important for teachers to have technology training. **Senator Souza** asked how is technology used to advance teacher training in order to save on travel costs. She wondered if any of the training can be done online to save money. **Ms. Dixon** replied their district works with webinars. Some districts work with IDLA for professional development.

Senator Ward-Engleking asked if the educational cut backs resulted in the loss of funding for professional development. **Ms. Dixon** said their district didn't feel the cut backs. She didn't know the impact to other districts. **Senator Ward-Engleking** commented she knows the importance of professional development and hopes that the State can continue to help with funding.

Senator Den Hartog asked what role is there for instructional coaches, and is that viable for small districts. **Ms. Dixon** said they used the leadership money to do a small sampling of coaching. To do that takes money, which is limited.

Chairman Mortimer asked in regards to professional development funding, which do districts need most: Time or classes. **Ms. Dixon** said if there is funding the districts can find the time. If they have time, the districts could be more creative with how many teachers can attend.

PRESENTATION: Marg Chipman, ISBA Vice President, Trustee Weiser School District (District), presented Technology and Idaho Education Network (IEN). She explained to the Committee the importance of the IEN in Weiser. She outlined the statistics of usage of IEN and the positive effects to rural students. She explained the necessity of broadband internet for the operation of schools and outlined how the loss would interrupt the work of students, teachers, and administrators (see attachment 6).

Chairman Mortimer asked if the District has gone out to secure other broadband service. **Ms. Chipman** said the superintendent stated that Weiser will continue to use the current Internet provider. **Senator Keough** asked if the District has spoken with the current provider to continue the Internet service. **Ms. Chipman** replied in the affirmative. **Senator Keough** said the legislature is very concerned that schools will be able to have the Internet and serve student with as little disruption as possible.

PRESENTATION: Ann Ritter, Vice Chair, Trustee, West Ada School District (District), Past President of ISBA, presented the issue of testing. She summarized the testing process in the District. She explained the time elements and processes the district used to test students. **Ms. Ritter** emphasized that the District highly supports the administration of the SBAC testing because it gives the District information it needs to measure effectiveness. She relayed to the Committee the areas of improvement their testing department suggested. She concluded her presentation stating that testing is necessary to gauge the health of the educational system and make decisions for improvement (see attachment 7).

Senator Souza asked if the District plans to continue to administer the MAP test. **Ms. Ritter** replied in the affirmative and stated the growth measures in the MAP test are not ascertainable in the ISAT.

Chairman Mortimer thanked the ISBA for their reports. Educating the Committee about the work around the State in schools is very enlightening.

Chairman Mortimer invited Senator Hill, Senate Pro Tempore; Senator Cameron, JFAC Chairman; and Will Goodman, State Department of Education (SDE), to present an IEN update from an administrative point of view.

PRESENTATION: Senator Hill explained the contractual, legal and functional dilemma of IEN.

Senator Cameron said that JFAC will be taking up the IEN issue. The goal is to protect students and school districts ensuring that they can continue to successfully function. He explained that there will be an appropriation to provide enough resources and funds to continue to provide internet service in the schools.

Will Goodman, SDE, told the specific dates that judgments were made regarding the predicament of IEN. He then outlined the deadline dates and apprised the districts members in the audience, the steps they should consider as Internet service termination approaches (see attachment 8).

Chairman Mortimer explained that having the ISBA members in the audience offered a good time to present the IEN problem.

ADJOURNED: There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:53 p.m.

Senator Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn South
Secretary