

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 24, 2015
TIME: 3:00 P.M.
PLACE: Room WW55
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Nonini, Patrick , Souza, Den Hartog, Buckner-Webb and Ward-Engelking
ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Keough arrived late.

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 3:00 p.m. and welcomed Sharon Harrigfeld to the podium for her presentation.

PRESENTATION: **Sharon Harrigfeld**, Director, Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections (IDJC), introduced herself and associates Debbie Seagall, Federal Program Manager, and Joe Webber, Education Program Manager in Nampa.

Ms. Harrigfeld presented an update on IDJC , underscoring that high-quality correctional education, training and treatment are the essential components to meaningful rehabilitation. She said these tools equip youth with the skills needed to successfully reenter their communities and either continue their education or join the workforce (see attachment 1).

Ms. Harrigfeld said unlike the traditional school system, Idaho's three accredited IDJC schools are funded through the General Fund, and the teachers are state employees who work 52 weeks of the year. She said the classroom settings differ from traditional classes in that 12 juveniles with diverse personal issues and abilities are taught in one room.

Ms. Harrigfeld called on Joe Webber, Education Program Manager at the Nampa facility. **Mr. Webber** discussed the facilities' challenges, including the widely divergent proficiency levels in reading, math and other subjects; the lack of substitute teachers; limited Internet access; the need for improvement of science lab offerings; and limited materials. He said in spite of the challenges there are many successes in meeting individual student needs.

Ms. Harrigfeld concluded by highlighting IDJC's successes. She said over 80 percent of IDJC's students have increased their math and reading scores. She also expressed pride in the achievement of two IDJC students, both of whom won awards through a national program developed and evaluated by professors from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She also highlighted the outdoor programs in camping, hiking, and skiing, which provides students with the often rare opportunity to enjoy outdoor fun.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if professional-technical classes are offered in the curriculum. **Ms. Harrigfeld** answered in the affirmative (Senator Keough arrived).

Chairman Mortimer asked about a crisis technique he had witnessed at the St. Anthony facility. **Ms. Harrigfeld** explained the procedure as a learning experience for all of the students involved, as well as helping the juvenile going through the crisis to better understand and cope.

S 1097 **Senator Nonini** presented **S 1097**, the purpose of which is to repeal Idaho Code § 33-1006A which states the State Department of Education (SDE) shall audit the transportation operations of any school district with more than 20 enrolled students per square mile that meets certain criteria: (a) the school district's reimbursable costs, based on a three-year rolling average of the district's reimbursable costs, exceed 103 percent of the statewide average reimbursable costs per student rider; and (b) the school district's costs, based on a three-year rolling average, are higher on a cost-per-student rider basis.

Senator Nonini said the repeal of this section of the Code would eliminate hardships now being imposed on districts. **Tim Corder**, Special Assistant to the Superintendent of Education, further explained the rationale for the repeal of this section.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **S 1097** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Nonini will carry **S 1097** on the floor.

H 110 **Representative Steven Harris** presented **H 110** which was developed by the Governor's Task Force and introduces the concept of mastery-based learning where students advance based upon content mastery rather than seat time requirements.

Representative Harris said the legislation authorizes the SDE to: 1) conduct a statewide awareness campaign, 2) establish a committee of educators to identify roadblocks, and 3) facilitate the development of an incubator program. He said the project could last six to nine months and includes a line item budget of \$400,000. He said the SDE would report to the State Board of Education, as well as the Senate and House Education Committees.

MOTION: **Senator Keough** moved to send **H 110** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Keough will carry **H 110** on the floor.

SCR 106 **Vice Chairman Thayn** presented **SCR 106** relating to testing. The resolution lists three different types of tests and establishes 1) the reasons for the testing, 2) those responsible for conducting each type of test, and 3) the purpose of each test. The resolution directs the SDE to find an alternative to the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) due to its length and cost. The SDE will report to the Legislature in 2016 concerning the feasibility of using a replacement. There may be a minimal cost not to exceed \$20,000 for research and personnel.

Vice Chairman Thayn said the resolution would allow the SDE to present suitable alternatives to the SBAC that could be used in the 2015 spring testing window, and the findings would be reported to the Legislature in January 15, 2016.

TESTIMONY: **Dr. Troy Rohn**, serving as a Trustee for the Boise School District, testified in support of **SCR 106**. He said the Boise School District does not support the SBAC in its current form because of the costs and time involved.

Penny Cyr, President of the Idaho Education Association (IEA), testified in support of **SCR 106**. She said the IEA feels that tests exist solely for the purpose of improving the quality of instruction and education for students. To that end, she said the IEA supports the use of alternative tests that will provide teachers with the data they need to modify instruction based on the students' needs.

Jackie Thomason, Director of Accountability and Assessment for the West Ada School District, testified in support of the parts of **SCR 106** that will allow reassessment to ensure the process is in balance and in alignment with the Idaho Core Standards.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **SCR 106** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Nonini** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Vice Chairman Thayn will carry **SCR 106** on the floor.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Senator Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn South
Secretary

Jeanne' Clayton
Assistant Secretary