

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

- DATE:** Thursday, January 24, 2013
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Goedde, Vice Chairman Mortimer, Senators Pearce, Fulcher, Nonini, Thayn, Patrick, Durst and Buckner-Webb
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:**
- 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** convened the meeting at 3:00 p.m.
- PRESENTATION:** **Chairman Goedde** called upon Mr. Tom Luna, Superintendent of Education, who presented an update on education in Idaho. **Superintendent Luna** commented that he had presented his report to the Joint Finance and Appropriation Committee (JFAC) earlier in the day. He reviewed the progress made in the education system and made recommendations for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Superintendent Luna** said that while many changes were brought about last year in education, many things have not changed. Sixty percent of Idaho's schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) last year; 58 percent were rated as Four-Star or Five-Star schools; and when measured against other states, Idaho students do well. Students in only eight states outperform Idaho eighth graders in reading, and students in just 11 states outperform Idaho eighth graders in math.
- Superintendent Luna** expressed concern about the low number of students graduating from high school who will not go on to higher education. He said that for every 25 high school students, 23 will graduate, but only 12 will go on to some form of postsecondary education, and of those 12 students, 41 percent will need remediation. Statistically, only eight students of the 25 will complete higher education.
- For Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, this legislature appropriated more than \$1.2 billion, a 4.6 percent increase in General Funds to Idaho's public schools. The budget included a 5 percent increase in total compensation for teachers, which included \$13.6 million in funding for classroom technology and professional development; \$4.85 million for more math and science teachers; and \$842,400 in dual credit for high school students.
- Superintendent Luna** also addressed FY 2014, stating he had requested a three percent increase in General Funds, which includes \$5.8 million in funding for growth.
- Superintendent Luna** praised the Dual Credit Program for high school students who have met certain benchmarks, citing the first student to participate, who earned 26 credits through this program, cut his postsecondary education in half. **Superintendent Luna** also gave credit to Senators Thayn and Durst for their contributions in advanced student opportunities.
- Superintendent Luna** spoke about the importance of technology, including Schoolnet. The J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation provided a \$21 million grant to deploy Schoolnet to every classroom in Idaho and \$4.9 million has been requested to provide funding for that program, along with maintenance, updates, technical support, and a robust digital content from Discovery Education.

**Superintendent Luna** said one of the biggest improvements in Idaho's education system is the increased academic standards in mathematics and English language arts. He discussed compensation for Idaho's teachers and said he has requested an increase in minimum salary to \$31,000. There will also be a focus on school safety this year in light of the recent tragedy in Connecticut. **Superintendent Luna** closed by emphasizing the need for using 21st century tools to ensure Idaho's students are prepared for the future.

A question-and-answer period ensued with questions posed by **Chairman Goedde** and **Senators Thayn, Nonini, Mortimer, Durst, and Pearce** on issues relating to professional development, Schoolnet, Common Core State Standards, and mental illness. **Chairman Goedde** thanked Superintendent Luna for his presentation.

**PRESENTATION:** **Chairman Goedde** called on Mr. Rakesh Mohan, Director of the Office of Performance Evaluations, to present recent findings on Workforce Issues Affecting Public School Teachers. **Mr. Mohan** gave a brief outline of the study and introduced Mr. Lance McCleve, Office of Performance Evaluations, who presented the findings compiled from the study. **Mr. McCleve** outlined the study's approach, which included an overview of teachers and classrooms; teacher workforce; average class size; class size concerns and considerations; teacher preparedness and programs; applicant pool size and quality; recruitment challenges; and retention, turnover and future workforce needs. Key considerations were: class size, compensation, and what was perceived to be an undercurrent of despair among teachers. **Mr. McCleve** said that turnover was not as extreme as previously reported, and that a mass exodus has not occurred but could happen in the future. He cited the loss of support staff and subsequent teacher overload, as one factor causing low morale among teachers.

**Senators Patrick, Pearce and Durst** asked questions about the study's overall approach and the process involved in the collection of data. **Mr. Mohan** emphasized that while they did not intend to generalize, responses from approximately 2500 teachers were factored into the study. **Chairman Goedde** thanked Mr. Mohan and Mr. McCleve for their presentations.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

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Senator Goedde  
Chairman

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Elaine Leedy  
Secretary

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Jeanne' Clayton  
Senate Majority Staff