

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, February 25, 2013  
**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Room WW55  
**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Vice Chairman Mortimer, Senators Pearce, Fulcher, Nonini, Thayn, Patrick, Durst and Buckner-Webb  
**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Chairman Goedde

**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:** **Vice Chairman Mortimer** convened the meeting at 3:10 p.m. and welcomed representatives from Battelle for Kids (BFK), Dr. Jim Mahoney, Executive Director; John Hussey, Chief Strategy Officer; and Nadja Young, MEd, National Board of Certified Teachers, from the SAS Institute.

**PRESENTATION:** **Mr. John Hussey** took the podium and introduced Dr. Jim Mahoney, Executive Director of Battelle for Kids (BFK). **Mr. Hussey** said that BFK has been bringing educators together since 2001 to realize the power of value-added analysis and formative instructional practices as drivers of student success, in combination with other measures and effective practices for school improvement. He said value-added analysis is a statistical method that measures the impact schools and teachers have on students' academic progress rates from year to year.

**Mr. Hussey** said BFK is a national leader in creating and sustaining collaborative networks of school districts focused on leading and learning together to improve college and career readiness. BFK proposes to partner with SAS Institute as the provider of value-added growth measures, projections and report hosting to support Idaho in this work. **Mr. Hussey** said building a coalition of those willing to learn from and support each other around the use of value-added data, rather than judgment, is the right strategy at the right time for Idaho.

**Mr. Hussey** introduced Nadja Young, Education Specialist, SAS EVAAS (Education Value-Added Assessment System) for K - 12. **Ms. Young** took the podium with a slide presentation explaining the SAS EVAAS program (see attachment 1). She said the system provides policy makers and educators with a powerful tool to ensure that all students have plentiful choices and increased opportunities for learning. **Ms. Young** said the SAS solution includes reporting on (1) value-added and growth models, which assess influence on student progress at the district, school and teacher levels, (2) diagnostic tools to determine teaching effectiveness with different types of students and (3) students' projections to future tests.

**Ms. Young** explained that EVAAS is used for continuous school improvement activities across 25 states and is proposed to be used in Idaho to leverage effective teaching, provide earlier interventions for students at risk for underachievement, identify and increase student enrollment in rigorous course work, track program effectiveness and facilitate parent-teacher conversations.

The committee asked questions concerning how the data findings were used, participation in the program, and costs. **Ms. Young** said the program works with districts or states using either a base year or an average. Each student is compared against himself; measuring against a student's expectations. Often the districts will provide data; testing vendors can also provide data. She said the state of Ohio pays SAS; the cost depends on the information. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** thanked the presenters for bringing this information to the committee.

**HCR 3**

**Vice Chairman Mortimer** called on Representative Linden Bateman to present **HCR 3**. **Representative Bateman** reviewed the concurrent resolution, which requests that the State Board of Education commence rulemaking to provide that cursive handwriting be taught in the public schools of Idaho. He said the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) program does not include cursive writing in its standards and **HCR 3** would make this a standard. He said cursive writing is languishing because of the increasing use of electronic technology. He also said the No Child Left Behind Act placed handwriting in grade schools on the back burner. **Representative Bateman** said response to HCR 3 has generally been very positive.

In answer to questions from the committee, **Representative Bateman** said cursive writing is still being taught in grade schools, but because the CCSS program has dropped it as a requirement he believes it will eventually become negated. He emphasized that **HCR 3** is simply a request to take leadership on the issue before the art form vanishes.

**TESTIMONY:**

**Dr. Peter Wollheim**, Professor Emeritus of Communications, Boise State University; **Tammie Odenbrett**, Zaner-Bloser; and **Ronalee Linsenmann**, private citizen, each testified in support of this legislation. They emphasized a continuing need for cursive writing in schools and said that research shows this form of writing enhances brain function related to memory, verbal and schematic thinking, and left-side brain conceptualization. They also expressed the belief that without the study of cursive writing, future researchers will be unable to read historical documents.

A question-and-answer period ensued relative to scholastic time constraints, optimum grade level for teaching this subject, additional costs, and research on brain development with respect to cursive writing. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** thanked the testifiers and called Representative Bateman to the podium to summarize his arguments.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Nonini** moved that **HCR 3** be sent to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Pearce** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senator Nonini** will carry the bill to the floor.

**UNANIMOUS  
CONSENT  
REQUEST FOR  
RS 22067**

**Senator Hagedorn** took the podium to outline **RS 22067** requirements for security and safety measures in K-12 schools and transportation systems. He explained that the provisions in this legislation are suggestions only with no requirements imposed on school districts. He said the objective is to have a law in place where a board of trustees can work with a county sheriff or designee to ensure the safety of students. He said the details for the process will be at the discretion of the board of trustees.

**Vice Chairman Mortimer** asked for unanimous consent to send **RS 22067** to the Judiciary and Rules Committee to be printed and returned to the Education Committee. There were no objections.

**UNANIMOUS  
CONSENT  
REQUEST RS  
22094**

**Vice Chairman Mortimer** recognized Senator Winder for presentation of **RS 22094**, which authorizes public postsecondary institutions to operate a public charter high schools. In answer to a question posed by Senator Durst, **Senator Winder** replied there are funding problems, solutions to which are currently being reviewed. He said these charter schools are currently designated as alternative schools.

**UNANIMOUS  
CONSENT  
REQUEST RS  
22095**

**Senator Winder** also presented **RS 22095**, which provides for the education of children at Northwest Children's Home. He said this legislation is specific and directs funding through the education funding process and the Health and Welfare Department. He said there is currently an effort underway that will cover funding for the coming year, but there is a need to solve the problem of permanent funding. Funding of \$690,000 has been approved by the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee.

**Vice Chairman Mortimer** asked for unanimous consent to send **RS 22094 and RS 22095** to the State Affairs Committee to be printed and returned to the Education Committee. There were no objections.

**ADJOURNED:** Having no further business before the committee, **Vice Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:36 p.m.

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Senator Goedde  
Chairman

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Elaine Leedy  
Secretary