

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 05, 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.

**H 205**

**Jason Hancock**, State Department of Education, explained that **H 205** deals with the freezing of movement on the salary reimbursement grid for education credits earned by certificated administrators and instruction staff in public schools. By way of history, **Mr. Hancock** stated that all movement on the grid, both down for experience and across for education, was frozen by the Idaho 2010 Legislature in fiscal year (FY) 2011 in order to make the budget work for public schools. No additional money flowed through the grid for those who were moving across. This freeze affected those who had earned credits in FY 2010, and normally would have had them credited in FY 2011.

Under S 1184, the third bill in Students Come First, the freeze was repealed for movement on the education credits grid. The November 2012 propositions repealed S 1184, which then re-froze the education credit movement going forward. Technically speaking, **H 205** would re-unfreeze the education credit movement on the grid. Since this bill has already passed the House of Representatives, the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC) had already approved \$4 million of full funding of salary-based apportionment dollars for college credits earned for FY 2014. If **H 205** passes the Senate, that \$4 million will remain in place for FY 2014 and into the future.

Under Senate Rule 33, **Senator Durst** disclosed that his wife is a school teacher which creates a potential conflict of interest, since she had been affected by the freeze and would gain monetarily by passage of the bill. **Chairman Goedde** thanked him for his disclosure.

**MOTION:** **Senator Thayn** made a motion to send **H 205** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Durst** seconded the motion. A discussion ensued.

**Chairman Goedde** asked Mr. Hancock what percentage of educators would benefit from passage of **H 205**. **Mr. Hancock** said that he had not run numbers recently, but suggested it would probably be under 20 percent. **Chairman Goedde** requested those numbers before the bill went to the floor.

**Vice Chairman Mortimer** asked several probing questions concerning \$4 million's fate if **H 205** were not passed. He expressed concern that already not enough flexibility exists in the JFAC education budget for lights, utilities and insurance. The districts will continue to struggle. **Mr. Hancock** replied that utilities and insurance are paid from the state's discretionary funds. If the grid stays frozen, the \$4 million would go to the Public Education Stabilization Fund (PESF), absent any additional action by JFAC. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** continued that, while he does not wish to deny money to teachers who have worked so hard, he is concerned that small school districts cannot get a levy or bond to raise money for increased insurance, utilities and deferred maintenance – the basics. In the budget just passed by JFAC, the majority of education funds were allocated to salaries and benefits, and only \$300 per support unit was allocated to discretionary funds. In 2009, school districts received \$25,000; now they receive only \$20,000. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** acknowledged that keeping the lights on and paying education professionals created a difficult position for JFAC and the Education Committee. He hoped to find a "comfort spot" so that charter and small schools can have a higher degree of flexibility. He asked, hypothetically, if intent language could be written to put the money in discretionary funds if this step-over were to continue for one more year. **Mr. Hancock** replied that JFAC could rewrite that aspect of the school budget, remove the \$4 million from administration and teachers and shift it to operations; however, he believes another bill would be necessary.

**SUBSTITUTE  
MOTION:**

**Vice Chairman Mortimer** moved to hold **H 205** for one day. **Senator Fulcher** seconded the motion. The substitute motion carried by **voice vote**.

**Chairman Goedde** asked Mr. Hancock to provide the number of teachers affected, and to provide opportunities for this money to be moved to discretionary funds. **Mr. Hancock** said he would try, but believed the answer would require further action by JFAC.

**S 1133**

**Senator Hagedorn** introduced **S 1133** which creates a framework around school security efforts which could be utilized statewide. Some school districts already have developed plans with local law enforcement, but other districts still need assistance. This bill puts school board trustees together with local law enforcement to build a plan for their district. The bill outlines some requirements, such as creating response training for teachers and students, ensuring that threat assessment tools are for office use only, and excluding reports from the Freedom of Information Act, so as not to "do homework for the bad guys." Each plan devised under this framework might be different for every school district due to differing resources and threat environments; it allows flexibility for schools and law enforcement to build a plan which is appropriate in their situation. **Senator Hagedorn** stated that some proposed amendments have already been written, and he requested that the committee send **S 1133** to the 14th Order for amendment.

**Senator Durst** expressed concern over exclusion from the Freedom of Information Act, and thought that the teachers association would want to have involvement. **Senator Hagedorn** replied that one amendment allows executive sessions to include teachers. **Senator Durst** asked additional questions concerning the right of parents to know which schools are most safe; and questioned how these plans would incorporate transportation contractors who were outside the district realm. For both instances, **Senator Hagedorn** emphasized that he envisions the plan as a living document; the plan encourages flexibility within the districts..

**TESTIMONY:** **Matt McCarter**, State Department of Education, testified in support of **S 1133**. **Mr. McCarter** said that he had assembled a task force comprised of administrators and trustees to determine the current security state of affairs. Their survey concluded that readiness to respond varies widely throughout the state, and that a "clear and present need" exists. The task force identified a threat assessment tool in used in Texas, based on school climate, best practices, and positive relationship reinforcement. **S 1133** utilizes the Texas model in its plan.

**Karen Echeverria**, Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), testified that the ISBA is waiting to state its position because questions remain concerning "executive sessions", as well as definitions of safety and crisis training.

**Senator Durst** suggested that the Idaho Education Association (IEA) be part of the original team; **Chairman Goedde** suggested their participation be considered in an amendment. **Senator Hagedorn** agreed that teachers should have input, but that the legislation should include fewer early participants – board members and law enforcement. Each district could then decide for itself who else might participate and their level of involvement.

**MOTION:** **Vice Chairman Mortimer** made a motion to send **S 1133** to the 14th Order for amendment. **Senator Patrick** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**ADJOURNED:** Having no further business before the committee, **Chairman Goedde** adjourned the meeting at 4:54 p.m.

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Senator Goedde  
Chairman

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Elaine Leedy  
Secretary