

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 06, 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** called the Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:07 p.m., and a silent roll was taken.

HCR 16 **Representative Donna Pence**, introduced **HCR 16**, which would recognize and declare support for the "Invent Idaho" program and to declare an "Invent Idaho Day" to celebrate Idaho's young inventors. After giving a brief history of the program, **Representative Pence** outlined several benefits of the program: It addresses Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) goals; focuses on communication, critical thinking and creativity; meets state standards; develops real-world problem solving skills; and meets a national demand for innovation, enabling Idaho students to compete in a global economy. Representative Pence's complete remarks are attached and incorporated by reference.

MOTION: **Senator Thayn** made a motion to send **HCR 16** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Patrick** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Chairman Goedde will carry the bill on the floor.

H 205 **Chairman Goedde** stated that additional information was needed for discussion of **H 205**, dealing with state funding for college credits.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Mortimer** made a motion to hold **H 205** until March 11, 2013. **Senator Nonini** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: **Dr. Cheryl Charlton**, CEO, Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA), explained that the IDLA is a state-sponsored, accredited, online school created to provide students with greater access to a wide variety of courses taught by highly qualified faculty. It's goal is to provide choice, accessibility, flexibility, quality, and equity in curricular offerings for students in Idaho. She introduced the IDLA staff, and a student, who would each talk about their involvement in IDLA.

Mike Caldwell, Director of Program Development, IDLA, said that 11 years ago, the IDLA was formed with a goal of providing opportunity, access, choice and equity to high school students in order to better prepare them for college and careers. Since then, the IDLA has enrolled 90,000 students. It is projected to serve over 19,000 enrollments in 2012-2013 for the 228 unique semester-long courses that IDLA offers. Its teachers are highly qualified, Idaho Certified and supervised by Idaho Administrators. Students enroll for a variety of reasons, but the largest two are because courses are not offered locally, or present schedule conflicts. IDLA focuses on college preparation and career readiness. Dual credit courses and Pathways to Success, which both teach study skills, communication skills and

stress management, prepare students to transition to college. **Mr. Caldwell** then introduced one of IDLA's star students to describe his experience at IDLA.

Deban Ramalingam, a Junior at Centennial High School, student of IDLA and Web Applications Programming Intern at IDLA, became involved as a sophomore. He desired to take upper level Advanced Placement (AP) courses, but could not because of scheduling. Then he learned about IDLA, and enrolled in AP courses that were not offered in his school. He found that the teachers were very helpful, and the Blackboard interactive posts allowed him to interact with other students. Overall, he found the system mentally stimulating. Next he was recruited to become a Web Applications Programming Intern, where he developed a web application tool that complements the Blackboard Learning System Software. That tool is currently being tested by other high schools in Idaho. He plans to attend a top engineering university, and believes his experience and internship with IDLA will fortify his college applications. Mr. Ramalingam's notes are attached and incorporated by reference.

Ryan Gravette, Director of Technology, IDLA, explained that IDLA partnerships, both nationally and internationally, are critical in strengthening the education pipeline. By creating partnerships, IDLA creates cost efficiencies and leverages each partner's individual strengths to benefit students and taxpayers across the state. In Georgia, for example, IDLA is sharing its nationally known student systems with the state, and they are sharing the content. This year IDLA will have new science and math courses free of charge through this partnership. IDLA is also recognized internationally. After reviewing online programs across the nation, a seventeen member delegation from Australia chose IDLA as the best model to replicate. IDLA also partners with the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) through the Idaho Science and Aerospace Scholars program. Students start with an online course where they learn how science and math are tied to aerospace, they learn to program robots, and they get to listen to astronaut guest lectures, all online. Then in the summer they have a chance to go to the Space Center in California get some time for hands-on studies.

IDLA's best partnerships, however, are with Idaho's school districts, postsecondary institutions, and teachers to combine knowledge, to research data analysis, to provide dual credit courses, and to prepare for classroom technology. Innovative projects include work on: EduCloud which allows computers, cell phones, and iPads to connect to IDLA's servers for applications such as Word, Excel and Photoshop; investigation of new models of delivery in partnership with the Idaho Education Network (IEN); iDigLearning, which provides technology and digital content to teachers in a customized professional development program; and IDLA's Cloud Object Repository which provides the starting point for transition to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Additional IDLA project information can be found in Mr. Gravette's speaker notes, which are attached and incorporated by reference.

**JFAC
DISCUSSION:**

Chairman Goedde next called for continued discussion of the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee's (JFAC) education budget, specifically the intent language in Sections 25 and 26, on which sections JFAC has requested the Committee's input.

Addressing Section 26, **Vice Chairman Mortimer** expressed concern that subsection (1) allows \$8 million for classroom technology that "assists teachers in...effective...delivery of instruction." He felt that the language should be modified to include "students" as well.

The Committee raised several questions concerning subsection (2) dealing with \$2.25 million for the installation, repair, replacement and support of wireless technology infrastructure and capacity. The major question dealt with how those funds might be distributed, given that some larger school districts already had wireless technology in place, while other smaller districts did not. **Chairman Goedde** noted that in Andy Smarick's recent presentation to the Committee, Mr. Smarick had said that the state's responsibility was to provide wireless capacity and broadband capacity; other equipment is the responsibility of the district. **Chairman Goedde** concluded that subsection (2) was consistent with that recommendation.

Subsection (3) dealing with \$3 million available to school districts for technology pilot projects, brought considerable debate. **Senator Thayne** and **Chairman Goedde** raised concerns that this section is not supported by past or present legislation. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** replied that language existed in a 1995 code that could apply, "if you stretch it." **Senator Durst** preferred that the \$3 million be placed in subsection (1) which allowed for direct distribution of \$8 million to the school districts for classroom technology and allowed the districts flexibility to determine best use. **Chairman Goedde** said he understood how technology pilot projects could be useful in ensuring that projects are viable before investing technology state-wide.

In subsection (4), the Committee raised questions concerning the State Department of Education's (SDE) development of an online portal, versus utilizing IDLA's portal. **Chairman Goedde** stated that the SDE has already spent over \$100,000 in development of a portal, and could not turn back the clock.

TESTIMONY:

Dr. Gloria Totoricagüena, a political scientist, lobbyist, and educator of 25 years, testified that she favors pilot projects because they promote data-driven decision making. Pilot projects can have objectives, controlled variables, quantifiable results, and are relevant to the authorizing district. By allowing a competitive grant process, districts can determine for themselves what they need. Dr. Totoricagüena's complete remarks are attached and incorporated by reference.

Ryan Kerby, Superintendent New Plymouth Schools, said that Section 25 came forth after extensive meetings between superintendents, stakeholder groups, executive directors, the SDE and legislators. Subsection 3, "Leadership" was left out of the sentence, "40% of the fund for professional development, leadership (word inserted), and other resources..." **Vice Chairman Mortimer** asked why subsection 3 was limited to CCSS if a need exists for more than just CCSS, such a technical professional development. **Mr. Kerby** replied that none of the superintendents he had talked to would oppose changing that language. **Mr. Kerby** also stated that since this was one-time money, he believed it should be kept in compensation; a lot of discussion had occurred, but lacked participation from principals and teachers. He would like to see more discussion next year in order to develop a better product and create ownership. **Senator Pearce** expressed concern that "award of excellence" is just another way of saying "pay for performance," yet the Committee has not seen a report on how well pay for performance worked.

Bert Marley, representing the Idaho Education Association (IEA), testified that with minimal language changes, the IEA could support Section 25. The IEA has always favored alternative compensation models. Mr. Marley's complete remarks are attached and incorporated by reference.

Karen Echeverria, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), testified that the ISBA was appreciative of the Committee's work, and hoped that in the future, more apportionment would be allocated to the discretionary fund.

Chairman Goedde, noting the late hour, suggested that this discussion be continued to the following day.

ADJOURNED: Having no further business before the Committee, **Chairman Goedde** adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

Senator Goedde
Chairman

Elaine Leedy
Secretary