

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 19, 2014
TIME: 3:00 P.M.
PLACE: Room WW55
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Goedde, Vice Chairman Mortimer, Senators Pearce, Johnson(Fulcher), Nonini, Thayn, Patrick, Buckner-Webb and Ward-Engelking
ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

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 3:03 p.m., and a silent roll was taken.

PRESENTATION: **Rex Fairfield**, Director, North Idaho College (NIC) Adult Basic Education (ABE) and GED, explained that ABE is an important part of NIC's mission: student success, educational excellence and community engagement. ABE is a federally funded program that provides basic skills instruction to adults who fall below a 12th grade level in reading, writing, or math. It also provides instruction in English as a Second Language. Because of their funding, they can offer their classes free of charge to the students. The last few years has seen a shift of emphasis from primarily GED preparation to college/career readiness and retention in order to assist populations who are underserved and/or need remedial coursework. In 2013, NIC's ABE program served 7,398 students statewide. ABE is funded under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1999. Each of the five regional ABE programs throughout Idaho follow the same reporting and data collection processes.

The ABE program is now located on the main campus at NIC. This has helped the students to embrace the culture at NIC, diminish the stigma associated with ABE and acts as a catalyst for the students to go beyond GED completion.

NIC's ABE program is currently involved with pilot projects and collaborative efforts. Some of those are with Idaho Department of Labor, and the ABE staff members provide basic instruction related to career paths. Math boot camps provide basic math remediation to prepare for college level math. School district instructors provide ABE instruction at the Kootenai County Juvenile Detention Center.

Community colleges face challenges to increase graduation rates and to improve the success of students in their remedial education programs. It is imperative that students have the skill sets necessary to ensure completion of courses on their first attempt to eliminate wasted time on repeated efforts. ABE programs provide students with alternatives for remediation. The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) in Washington, D.C. has implemented new Common Core standards, entitled "College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education." Their directives include standards to accelerate progress for low-skilled students and improve retention and achievement rates and/or reduce time to completion. For adult students, ABE educators and community college faculty must work more closely to better identify pathways to college success. Colleges that develop a plan addressing the unique needs of lower-level learners find that investing in these

students reaps rewards in many aspects of their own personal lives as well as adding to the quality of life in the communities in which they live.

Senator Thayne asked **Mr. Fairfield** to describe some of the innovative instructional models that he had referenced. **Mr. Fairfield** replied that ABE helps to remediate math at no additional cost through grants for co-teaching in professional technical education (PTE), **Chairman Goedde** asked about the Math Boot Camp. **Mr. Fairfield** said that Math Boot Camp was designed for students who were not college ready. These students typically scored less than 44 on the ACT Compass test or had participated in developmental math and failed. Math Boot Camp is a five week intensive course. Last year 18 students participated, and 16 now are in program-appropriate math.

PRESENTATION: **Jason Kreizenbeck**, Partner, Lobby Idaho, LLC said that the Committee would hear about an exciting information technology (IT) program, and hoped that the Idaho would fund a statewide pilot project. He introduced Adrian Wilson, from Microsoft Corporation.

Mr. Wilson, Director of Public Sector Strategic Initiatives at Microsoft Corporation (Microsoft), explained that the landscape of employability has shifted greatly in the past few years. Fifty percent of jobs today require some level of technology skills and that number is expected to increase to at least 77 percent in the next decade. Currently, there are more than 700 open, advertised jobs available that prefer or require Microsoft skills and/or Microsoft certifications. These jobs require basic to advanced skills in Microsoft technology. The future demand for technical workers across Idaho is expected to grow. Economists have estimated that STEM jobs in Idaho will expand by 12 percent by the year 2018.

In order to prepare students for these challenging demands, Microsoft recommends that Idaho consider leveraging the Microsoft IT Academy as a pilot program statewide. The Microsoft IT Academy is a college and career-ready education program designed to provide students with the technology skills necessary to be competitive in today's workplace. IT Academy offers more than 250 courses for students to develop proficiency with commonly used Microsoft products. It is the world's most popular IT certification program, and is both rigorous and flexible. The IT Academy provides opportunities for adult learners which helps to address unemployment and career changes within the larger community. Previous experience in other states has shown that the IT Academy benefits all students regardless of circumstance or demographics. In the 3.5 years since North Carolina implemented the program, over 100,000 high school students have received certifications. Microsoft admits that statewide implementation of its IT Academy program will not completely satisfy Idaho's needs for career-ready graduates, but it is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Kreizenbeck said that in preliminary discussions with Jodie Mills, Director of Curriculum in Caldwell, it was estimated that \$850,000 would fund 160 high schools and campuses in the State, one per district, and would also include the four-year institutions and community colleges. Microsoft would assign a program manager to provide counseling so that students are encouraged to participate in the program.

Vice Chairman Mortimer asked several questions about how the program is implemented. **Mr. Wilson** responded that the program is implemented as an online/teacher-supported program. Thirteen states have already implemented it. The program coordinator creates and maintains user IDs and ensures that parents and students are aware of the program. Different states have implemented the program in various ways. North Carolina has implemented it as part of curriculum, and the demand is very high. The program counts as part of science and math graduation requirements. Washington has used the program for 1.5 years, and will award 20,000 certifications this year. In Arkansas, students participate in the program on their own.

Chairman Goedde asked about the lead time to implement the program. Mr. Adrian replied that it generally takes 60 to 90 days to train staff through Skype. Microsoft IT staff also would come to Idaho to work regionally on a train-the-trainer model. Students can start as early as age 14. It is a mastery and competency based process that builds to higher level skills.

Chairman Goedde asked if legislation would need to be drafted. **Mr. Kreizenbeck** replied that through a pilot project, intent language could be adequate. The program could be set up on a fee per site at a rate of \$850,000 for 160 sites. Utah started with 150 sites; Washington has over 700. The program also benefits teachers in professional development. **Chairman Goedde** suggested that a site should be offered at the Department of Labor offices so that the unemployed could obtain certification.

H 429

Marilyn Whitney, Chief Communications and Legislative Officer, State Board of Education (Board), explained that two sections of Idaho Code deal with residency requirements for tuition. Idaho Code § 33-3717b specifies the residency requirements for 4-year public institutions of higher education, and Idaho Code § 33-2110b specifies the residency requirements for community colleges. While the two sections are different in some respects, there are areas where the two sections should be aligned.

H 429 seeks to bring the two sections back into alignment for those sections that are applicable to all public higher education institutions. In the community college section, the bill clarifies that the definition of domicile shall be the one used in this section of code. It also clarifies that members of the military who are residents of a community college district retain their residency even if they are stationed outside the community college district on military orders.

Additionally, a change is proposed to § 33-3717b, to remove the list of tribes whose "traditional and customary boundaries" were within the state of Idaho and thus whose members are considered residents for tuition purposes. The change would remove the list of the individual tribes, but retain the requirement. A requirement has been added stipulating that the State Board of Education maintain a list of tribes that meet the requirements. The requirement remains, but this change will eliminate the need to bring legislation to amend the code each time a new tribe is identified. A final change amends the states participating in the veterinary medicine program.

Senator Nonini clarified that the definitions in this section are for tuition purposes. **Ms. Whitney** answered affirmatively.

MOTION:

Senator Ward-Engelking made a motion to send **H 429** to the Senate loor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Johnson** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Ward-Engelking will carry the bill on the floor.

S 1326 **Senator Ward-Engelking** explained that **S 1326** would develop an accurate database which accounts for the actual student-teacher ratio in every Idaho school district. It defines how class size is determined, requires the Board to gather data in a uniform manner, and requires a report generated for every classroom. It would provide parents and teachers with data to determine actual class size. **Senator Ward-Engelking** said that the current method takes the number of students in a given school, and divide by the number of certificated personnel. But that does not accurately measure the classroom because it includes counselors, school nurses and some principals. This bill tries to match the actual classroom size with the teacher at the front of the room.

Vice Chairman Mortimer questioned some of the definitions in the bill to ensure that no loopholes exist. **Senators Patrick** and **Thayn** asked about the available data. **Senator Ward-Engelking** replied that the data exists now because attendance is taken in every class period. This bill would report that data differently. **Jason Hancock**, Deputy Chief of Staff, State Department of Education (Department), stated that he could not accurately project classroom size based on the reporting system currently in place. If the bill passes, the Department would work with Joyce Popp to review the data elements.

MOTION: **Senator Buckner-Webb** made a motion to send **S 1326** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Ward-Engelking will carry the bill on the floor.

S 1287 **Marilyn Whitney** explained that **S 1287** would amend Idaho Code § 33-102 to change in the timing of Board member appointments from March 1 to July 1, and would allow Board members to continue to serve after their terms have expired until a successor has been appointed. Language also has been added to allow Board members to assume their duties upon appointment, with such appointments subject to Senate confirmation at the next regular legislative session. The Board believes these changes and the new timing will avoid the breaks in service of Board members who are reappointed and will help avoid prolonged vacancies.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Mortimer** made a motion to send **S 1287** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Johnson will carry the bill on the floor.

S 1323 **Jason Hancock** explained that **S 1323** simply reduces the number of times that the Department send payments to districts from five to four. The State Treasurer has confirmed that the change would have negligible impact on interest earning. By this change, 70 percent of a district's payments would be received in the first half of the fiscal year instead of 80 percent. Because payments have been based on previous year's data, the Department was concerned that the five-payment formula could over distribute money to a district, leaving the Department in a position of asking for the money back. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** queried effects on interest rates, and **Mr. Hancock** repeated that the State Treasurer had confirmed that the impact was negligible.

MOTION: **Senator Nonini** made a motion to send **S 1323** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Nonini will carry the bill on the floor.

ADJOURNED: Having no further business before the Committee, **Chairman Goedde** adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Senator Goedde
Chair

Elaine Leedy
Secretary