

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 20, 2014  
**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Room EW 42  
**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Goedde, Vice Chairman Mortimer, Senators Pearce, Johnson(Fulcher), Nonini, Thayn, Buckner-Webb and Ward-Engelking  
**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Patrick  
**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 Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:08 p.m., and a silent roll was taken.

**PRESENTATION:** **Zach Wesley**, Legislative Vice President, Idaho Parent Teachers Association (PTA), explained that the goal of the annual PTA Day on the Hill was to educate members on the legislative process and the issues being discussed. Several members and board members have come from Pocatello to participate.

The PTA is the only parents organization that is both state and nation wide. The Idaho PTA is growing, with participating member organizations in 124 elementary and middle schools. Members participate in classrooms working with teachers and principals to advocate for their children and to help realize the PTA goal of enhancing each child's potential. The PTA is involved in fundraising as well as advocacy.

The PTA's top legislative priority for the 2014 Legislative Session is for increased educational funding for all choices for traditional, charter and virtual charter schools. The PTA favors increased educational standards, but wants to ensure that parents are involved at the state and local levels. The PTA also supports early childhood education as long as the program is independently and adequately funded and does not take away from existing K-12 programs. The PTA advocates for bills which support parental rights for involvement, and that stress childhood safety.

**Senator Pearce** asked about Mr. Wesley's statement of educational support from birth to age 5. **Mr. Wesley** replied that his statement was meant in a broad context, that parents should be engaged with their children throughout their lives and prepare their children with basic fundamentals. **Chairman Goedde** queried about parental involvement in setting standards, since the Common Core Standards had been adopted by 45 states and endorsed by the national PTA. **Mr. Wesley** responded that implementation occurs on the local level, and parents should be informed about expectations, testing requirements and opportunities to voice any concerns they may have.

**S 1321** **Jason Hancock**, Deputy Chief of Staff, State Department of Education (Department), explained that **S 1321** modifies a date by which the Department needs staffing information to fund salary based apportionment. The bill provides flexibility on the current October 15 date and districts would not be assessed a penalty under "use it or lose it" provisions.

**MOTION:** **Senator Thayne** made a motion to send **S 1321** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Thayne will carry the bill on the floor.

**S 1322** **Mr. Hancock** explained the history of instructional hours for alternative schools. In 1991, legislation was passed that increased instructional hours for high schools from 900 to 990. The Department had a form for approving alternative schools that required at least 900 hours based on the State Board of Education's (Board) previous rule. That form should have been changed to 990 hours at that time, but inadvertently was not. In 1996, the Board revised, rewrote and reenacted the rule to remove the 900 hour provision that was in conflict. The Department did not notice this change either and did not change their form from 900 to 990 hours. Thus, since prior to 1991, the Department has used a form to approve alternative schools which requires them to provide a minimum of 900 hours of instruction. **S 1322** would carve out a separate category for alternative schools to require a minimum of 900 hours. If not passed, the Department will notify districts that henceforth, alternative schools would only be approved at 990 hours, as provided by law since 1991.

**Senator Nonini** questioned the fiscal impact. **Mr. Hancock** said that some programs are operating on a 900 hour standard which will require 990 hours if **S 1322** is not passed. That could mean a schedule change or longer days which would carry associated costs. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if the stakeholders had been informed. **Mr. Hancock** replied affirmatively.

**MOTION:** **Senator Nonini** made a motion to send **S 1322** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Pearce** seconded the motion. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** requested testimony from the stakeholders. He questioned whether or not alternative high schools need more hours.

**TESTIMONY:** **Rob Winslow**, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA), said that the IASA had sought input. The 900 hours gives flexibility to districts. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** asked if the State was paying for 180 days for high schools and 163 days for alternative high schools. **Mr. Hancock** replied that funding was based on hours, not days. Districts can choose how to structure days as long as the hours requirement is met.

**Robin Nettinga**, Executive Director, Idaho Education Association, said that her organization had been informed and were aware that the statute provides for 990 hours of instruction. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** asked **Ms. Nettinga** if she had any information back from teachers on whether alternative schools should be doing more hours. **Mr. Hancock** replied that the question was difficult to answer because the programs are diverse. At some alternative high schools, students may flow in and out of the program; in others, they main remain until they graduate.

**Jessica Harrison**, Policy and Government Affairs Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), stated that the ISBA did not find a clear consensus and so remains neutral.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Thayn** commented that alternative schools are paid more on the number of hours which is different than traditional high schools. **Mr. Hancock** replied that the Department does look at number of hours as a basis of ADA. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** again questioned the benefit of 900 versus 990 in the alternative school setting. **Chairman Goedde** noted that changing to 990 hours would add 17 days to the school year in an alternative setting. **Senator Nonini** expressed concern that alternative high school students might become discouraged and dropout with increased hours. **Senator Ward-Engelking** commented that districts can provide more than 900 hours, and **S 1322** would allow flexibility to the districts. **Senator Thayn** agreed with Senator Nonini. **Senator Johnson** noted that alternative high school students had been suspended from traditional high schools and so had lower hours, smaller classroom sizes and more individualized instruction. **Mr. Hancock** clarified that the hour requirements refers to what the district must provide, not whether or not a student attends.

**ALTERNATIVE MOTION:** **Vice Chairman Mortimer** made an alternative motion to hold **S 1322** pending further discussion. The motion failed for lack of a second.

**VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION:** The motion carried by **voice vote**. Chairman Goedde will carry the bill on the floor.

**ADJOURNED:** Having no further business before the committee, **Chairman Goedde** adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

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Senator Goedde  
Chair

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Elaine Leedy  
Secretary