

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 27, 2014
TIME: 3:00 P.M.
PLACE: Room WW55
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Goedde, Vice Chairman Mortimer, Senators Pearce, 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 Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:16 p.m., and a silent roll was taken.

PRESENTATION: **Brian Darcy**, Administrator, Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind ("IESDB"), explained that IESDB was established in 2009 to assist school districts in providing accessibility, quality and equity to students in the state with sensory impairments. Service and placement options are determined by the child's individual educational need, not by level of hearing or vision loss. Those needs are generally served through either the "Outreach" or "Campus" departments. IESDB currently supports 1,663 students. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 budget was \$7,983,000 and the Governor has recommended \$8,772,400 for FY 2015.

The Outreach Department serves the entire state through 7 different regional "Education Centers." The Outreach Educational Specialists serving these areas are certified teachers who perform a variety of duties in identification and service delivery throughout the entire state. As the number of students grow, so do the teacher's caseloads. Through Outreach, IESDB also runs periodic "short term programs" which target specific age groups and skill development areas. The Media/Library Services assists with materials and technology for districts throughout the state. If a blind child is assigned a printed text book as part of his/her curriculum, the book is reproduced in Braille at their media center at no cost to the district.

The physical campus is located on 40 acres in Gooding, ID and serves 87 students from pre-school through 12th grade. Technology plays a large part of their student's lives and the curriculum is based on Idaho Core standards. At IESDB, the students get a "normal" high school experience including student government, track, volleyball, prom, basketball, hunter safety and driver's training. IESDB continues to receive high ratings.

IESDB has five strategic goals to help them continue to grow and progress. They include, (1) understanding needs, (2) delivering the best educational services, (3) expand access, (4) promote entity services, and (5) grow revenue. Recruitment and teacher retention are two barriers they see as challenges. Mr. Darcy's complete presentation is attached.

PRESENTATION: **Claudia Miner**, Vice Present of development and UPSTART Program Director, Waterford Institute, Sandy, UT, explained that the UPSTART Program (UPSTART) was established as a pilot program by the Utah Legislature as a five-year pilot to address Utah's kindergarten preparedness problem. The Waterford Institute was selected to administer UPSTART, working through the Utah Legislature and Utah State Office of Education.

UPSTART is an in-home school readiness program using Waterford Institute's award-winning software. Preschool age children receive an individualized reading, math, and science curriculum with an emphasis on reading. Computers and internet are provided if the home does not have them. UPSTART'S dual-language support organization maintains frequent proactive contact with parents to ensure that children get the most from the program's learning opportunities.

After four years, the average child in UPSTART entered kindergarten reading at the Kindergarten Advanced level, and gained even more s/he were from a lower economic status and/or not attending other preschool. Overall gains were not significantly different regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status, parent education level, or geographic locale, indicating that all children benefited from the program. Parent surveys showed that close to 99 percent said that participating in UPSTART was beneficial and that the children enjoyed the software.

External evaluation of the program was equally positive. In November, the U.S. Department of Education announced the results of the Investing in Innovation (i3) competition. Waterford's UPSTART grant of \$11.5 million was announced as one of the highest-rated applicants.

Annual cost per child in Utah averages \$1,300 per year, which includes providing up to 30 percent of homes with computers and internet. In contrast, the Head Start Bureau estimates an annual cost of \$7,222 per child, and Pre-K school education is estimated at \$8,700 per child.

In summary, **Ms. Miner** said the four things to remember about UPSTART are: (1) children like the program and use it, (2) UPSTART as shown by external evaluation, (3) parents give UPSTART the highest marks, and (4) UPSTART is uniquely cost effective. Ms. Miner's complete presentation is attached.

DOCKET NO.
08-0203-1301

Dennis Stevenson, Administrative Rules Coordinator, Department of Administration, explained that when the legislative rule package was assembled for the Committee, the final version of **Docket 08-0203-1301** inadvertently was not included. An earlier version was included in error, which was presented to and passed by the Committee.

WRITTEN
TESTIMONY:

Traci L. Bent, Policy Planning, State Board of Education (Board), submitted a written memo stating that the difference in the final version lies in the metrics used for establishing which schools are the top performing schools. The earlier version included an additional metric that is not included in the Star Rating system. The final version of the Pending Rule aligns the metrics for Star Rating with those used for determining distinguished schools. Ms. Bent's written testimony is attached.

Chairman Goedde explained that the rule had come about because the Board had gone out to present a distinguished school award, and found that the school was not a five star school. He further confirmed that the new version is the rule currently in use.

MOTION: **Senator Thayn** made a motion to adopt **Docket No. 08-0203-1301** with the current language. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** seconded the motion. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** asked for clarification that no school would be penalized by adopting these changes. **Mr. Stevenson** stated that the current language was adopted as a temporary rule and has been published since December 2013. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: Appointment of Richard D. Westerberg appointment to the State Board of Education to serve a term commencing March 1, 2014 and expiring March 1, 2019.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Mortimer** made a motion to approve the appointment of Richard D. Westerberg. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Tippetts will carry the bill on the floor.

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Goedde** referred the Committee to a letter addressed to the Office of Performance Evaluation (OPE) requesting that the OPE research how the Idaho System for Educational Excellence and Idaho's statewide instructional improvement system, currently SchoolNet, can be made to work effectively without additional pressure on local school district staff. **Senator Patrick** stated that he supported the research request. Hearing no objections, Chairman Goedde said that he would deliver the request letter to OPE.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: **Senator Pearce** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 13, 2014. **Senator Fulcher** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Nonini made a motion to approve the minutes of February 17, 2014. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Vice Chairman Mortimer made a motion to approve the minutes of February 18, 2014. **Senator Fulcher** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Buckner-Webb made a motion to approve the minutes of February 19, 2014. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Senator Thayn made a motion to approve the minutes of February 20, 2014. **Senator Fulcher** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

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

Senator Goedde
Chair

Elaine Leedy
Secretary