

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 03, 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: **Vice Chairman Mortimer** called the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:04 p.m., and a silent roll was taken. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** noted that Chairman Goedde was presenting a bill in another committee and would join the Committee shortly.

PRESENTATION: **Jeanne Allen**, Senior Fellow and President-Emeritus, Center for Education Reform (Center), Washington, D.C., explained that the key to accelerating progress in achieving educational excellence for all students lies in creating a local economy of educational partnership, innovation and entrepreneurship in which organizations, and money, would willingly come to Idaho to participate. Indiana, for example has demonstrated that fusing all core pieces of educational innovation together in law and execution makes accelerated achievement possible.

The Center's Parent Power Index measures state's reform progress based on how well enacted reforms increase parental engagement, autonomy, variety of choice, quality teaching and transparency. In the Parent Power Index, Indiana is ranked No. 1; Idaho is No. 19. Restrictions persist in providing charter school options, and the Idaho Charter School Commission appears highly focused on process, procedures and in monitoring performance standards, all of which inhibit innovation. Virtual schools, which could support innovation, receive fewer dollars, and are measured by systems which ignore the disparities in starting point of the students that attend. Idaho must continue to invite new innovations in schooling, through chartering or traditional education. Indiana and other states have achieved great results by providing choice for students who have least excelled in traditional school. Transparency requires clear communication of data which the public can easily understand. With an above average charter school law, an increasingly strong charter school movement, seeds planted for better accountability and an appetite to revolutionize education, Idaho stands at the convergence of potential and reality.

Ms. Allen offered three suggestions to accelerate Idaho's progress: (1) Embrace choice fully and resist the temptation to overregulate. Ensure that money flows equitably across all schools and that money follows the student; encourage other education models; engage parents directly in the use of funds by allowing choice; and support state standards and accountability. (2) Reset the accountability system so that the 5-Star system truly measures the progress a school has made. (3) Create a new way to support the teaching and leadership professions, moving from discussion about pay and benefits to discussions about purpose and reward. The state's existing obligations for supporting and advancing the teaching profession could be more equitably met by maintaining minimum standards for the qualifications of teachers, and providing incentives for schools to pay teachers more for doing more and for doing well.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked where Massachusetts fell on the Parent Power Index. **Ms. Allen** said she would provide that information, and noted that the Center looks at how education reform is closing gaps. Massachusetts students more often come from higher income, higher educated families of influence. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** noted that the Center's graduation rate for Idaho looked very low and asked how it was calculated. **Ms. Allen** replied that she would look to see if the information has been updated.

S 1324

Senator Buckner-Webb said that the Community College Opportunity Act of 2014 ties in well with the recommendations of the Governors Education Task Force (Task Force). It supports action to ensure greater numbers of Idaho students are ready to achieve post secondary education and/or embark upon a career by creating and optimizing opportunities. The bill requires the collaboration of the State Board of Education (State Board), community colleges and key stakeholders to develop a strategic plan that would ensure every Idahoan has the opportunity to attend one of the State's community colleges, in person, or virtually. It is a collaborative approach that identifies gaps in opportunities and sets the course for the future collectively, instead of individually. The legislation calls for a strategic plan for the State's community colleges to provide reasonable and affordable curriculum readily available to students across the State. Requested completion of the plan is December 1, 2014 to be delivered to the germane communities.

Community Colleges have shared their support: Dr. Glandon, College of Western Idaho (CWI), Dr. Jeff Fox, College of Southern Idaho (CSI), Dr. Joe Dunlap, North Idaho College (NIC) and Dr. Steve Albiston, Eastern Idaho Technical College (EITC). The State Board indicates that the scope of this bill is in alignment with current processes for State Board and institution planning.

**PASSED THE
GAVEL:**

Vice Chairman Mortimer passed the gavel to Chairman Goedde.

Senator Fulcher asked why the bill was necessary. **Senator Buckner-Webb** replied that the bill required that the community colleges collaborate up front to look for gaps in access and affordability and together develop a strategic plan to address them. Each institution creates their own budget, and this bill would have them work together. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** noted that the bill singled out the community colleges but did not include professional technical education or EITC which is not a community college, and asked why EITC had not been included. **Senator Buckner-Webb** said that she had spoken to Dr. Steve Albiston at EITC who indicated his willingness to participate as a stakeholder. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** said he thought it appropriate that EITC be named because they do serve a role, and **Senator Buckner-Webb** agreed to add them.

TESTIMONY:

Dr. Bert Glandon, President, CWI stated that he, Dr. Fox and Dr. Dunlap meet on a regular basis. The past year, the chairman of the three local governing boards of the three community colleges and three presidents have also met regularly. The State Board is working on a statewide plan, but the community colleges would welcome any conversation on how to better serve and engage all parties and stakeholders to deliver educational opportunities to all Idahoans. Challenges exist in rural areas, but all three community college presidents and Dr. Albiston are very much in support of this conversation and moving forward in a formal fashion.

Senator Thayn asked Dr. Glandon how this bill encourages or facilitates the community colleges and State Board to work together. **President Glandon** replied that the community colleges are actively working together right now. CWI, for example, has 30 percent of its coursework online, and is working actively with CSI and NIC to expand access to rural areas. The State Board has worked actively to move the community colleges into more aggressive conversation on how to provide access to rural areas. **Dr. Glandon** noted that Idaho State University and Lewis-Clark State College have professional technical roles as well as EITC.

Senator Buckner-Webb said that an overarching strategic plan is very valuable when trying to look for a competitive edge.

MOTION:

Senator Ward-Engelking made a motion to send **S 1324** to the Senate Floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. **Senator Fulcher** stated that he did not have a conflict with the ideas in the bill, but felt it was a resolution, not a statute. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** agreed. **Chairman Goedde** said the language of the bill was creating a new section of code and would be a statutory change. **Senator Patrick** agreed that the bill was actually a resolution. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** stated that he would support the concept as a resolution with EITC as part of the solution, and noted that the end date for the strategic plan was December 2014.

**ROLL CALL
VOTE:**

Senators Thayn, Patrick and Buckner-Webb voted **aye**. **Senators Nonini, Fulcher, and Pearce, Vice Chairman Mortimer and Chairman Goedde** voted **nay**. The motion **failed**.

H 521

Representative Wendy Horman, District 30, Idaho Falls, explained that **H 521** creates legislation rising out of two of the Task Force recommendations: strategic planning and professional development for administrators and school boards. **Rep. Horman** said that she reviewed existing plans and spoke with those in the field about the work they already do in this area. She also spent time learning from state and national experts, and business community experts in the area of educational strategic planning and continuous improvement. **Rep. Horman** stated that she also has participated in strategic planning a number of times with different organizations. Even though the Task Force recommendations were unanimously supported, there was not consensus on implementation. **H 521** strikes a balance of competing opinions while still moving toward fulfilling the Task Force recommendations #7 and #18.

Recommendation #7: Annual Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Continuous Focus on Improvement lists seven elements:

1. The plan must be data driven, specifically in student outcomes, and outline current strengths and key areas for improvement, which is represented in the bill on lines 23-26.
2. The plan must set clear, measureable targets based on student outcomes, represented in line 27.
3. The plan must define focus areas for improvement, lines 23-26.
4. The plan must address specific local plans for technology, innovation, and collaboration. This requirement is not explicitly included in the bill because districts are already required by the State to have a technology strategic plan.
5. The plan must specify plans for professional development of staff, which again is covered by other strategic plans.
6. The plan must encourage community and parent engagement, lines 20-21.
7. The plan must describe high-level budget priorities. No recommendation is included in the legislation. Districts and charters are not prohibited from including budget information, but budgeting conversations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 are already occurring at the local district level.

H 521 is not a plan about operational items. It is a strategic plan about student learning, including targets for progress, and ways to get there.

The Task Force also recommended two accountability mechanisms for execution of the plan.

1. The Task Force wanted accountability included in the superintendent or administrator's evaluation, lines 36-37; and
2. A state reporting mechanism which is not included. At this time, no accountability mechanism exists between a local board or superintendent and the State Department of Education or the State Board.

H 521 requires that strategic plans be posted publicly to ensure transparency. It also includes strategic plan progress in an administrator's evaluation. Additional details may come forth from study committees who will examine all reporting aspects of districts and recommend consolidation or simplification of other strategic planning functions. That is the time to discuss the accountability function of a state-reporting mechanism.

Finally, Task Force recommendation #18 called for training and development of school administrators, superintendents and school boards. **H 521** provides up to \$2,000 to each district and charter school upon completion of the training.

Rep. Horman stated that this bill is supported by the education stakeholders, Idaho Business for Education, the State Department of Education and the State Board.

Senator Nonini referenced the bill's Statement of Purpose and asked whether districts now had strategic plans. **Rep. Horman** replied that they do, but those plans are compliance based. What the Task Force contemplated was not operational plans, but plans about student performance and student targets, and then tying a budget to those priorities. **Senator Nonini** asked if new Idaho code was needed. **Rep. Horman** replied that in order to fulfil the vision of the Task Force, the State needs to train their school boards.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked **Rep. Horman** about the role of educators and teachers in developing these strategic plans. **Rep. Horman** replied that the vision is set out in lines 17-21. Because this year was under a tight time line, the process was left to the local community. A good plan does that.

Vice Chairman Mortimer said that in his District No. 93, many board members are new, and asked how this bill would help them. **Rep. Horman** replied that under election consolidation, turnover has changed every four years, which speaks to the need for training. Task Force recommendation #18 calls for professional development for school boards, and the State needs to invest in that training.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Mortimer made a motion to send **H 521** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. **Senator Thayn** stated that he was supportive of the bill. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** noted how little time trustees have together, both in planning and education, yet they are held accountable. If the State wishes to hold them accountable, then the State needs to train them. **Senator Fulcher** asked whether the bill was to mandate planning that is not happening, or if it was more an appropriation vehicle for planning that already occurs. **Rep. Horman** replied that the planning is mandatory, the training is not. **Chairman Goedde** said that he served on school boards for many years and took what training he could. He added that the State passes decision-making authority to districts; it cannot mandate that they make good decisions, but it could provide training. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senator Pearce** voted **nay**. Chairman Goedde will carry the bill on the floor.

PASSED THE GAVEL:

Chairman Goedde passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Mortimer.

S 1377

Chairman Goedde explained that during the public discussion on Idaho Core Standards, it was pointed out that Idaho code was in conflict with practice as well as rule in regard to who is responsible for adoption of curriculum. **S 1377** clarifies that this responsibilities lies at the local school district trustee level. **Chairman Goedde** recommended that this bill move to the Senate Consent Calendar.

MOTION:

Senator Thayn made a motion to send **S 1377** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation and with the recommendation that it be placed on the Consent Calendar. **Senator Patrick** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**DISCUSSION:
S 1372 and
RS 23019**

Chairman Goedde explained that both **S 1372** and **RS 23019** deal with data security policies, and as such, both are on the agenda for discussion. If it is the will of the Committee to send **RS 23019** to print, then **Chairman Goedde** would agree to that action, however he stated that **RS 23019** had not been vetted by the State Department of Education or the State Board which caused him concern.

PASSED THE GAVEL:

Chairman Goedde passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Mortimer.

Vice Chairman Mortimer asked Senator Pearce for his recommendation since he is the sponsor of **RS 23019**. **Senator Pearce** said he would like to print the bill, discuss it and get input from the State Board. **Senator Fulcher** asked if the language of the two bills was in conflict. **Chairman Goedde** replied affirmatively. If one passes and then the other passes, the second one passed would become statute. **Senator Fulcher** replied that he would like to vet both of them, evaluate both approaches independently, and then select the one which the Committee feels is best. **Chairman Goedde** replied that the would agree to the Consent Request, but pointed out that the stakeholder vetting process could take months, with several revisions. With less than three weeks left in session, **Chairman Goedde** said he felt something needed pass. **Senator Nonini** said that he agreed with **Senator Fulcher** and would like to have deep conversation about both bills. **Senator Nonini** expressed concern that too much legislation was being passed. **Senator Ward-Engelking** said that it was important that data security be put in place this legislative year even if it needs to be revisited later. **Senator Thayn** said it was good to have both bills on the internet for comment, and would like to see the RS printed.

**UNANIMOUS
CONSENT
REQUEST TO
PRINT
RS 23019**

Vice Chairman Mortimer called for Unanimous Consent to Print **RS 23019** in a privileged committee, to be returned to the Committee for further action. **Chairman Goedde** said that he did not object, but asked Senator Fulcher, as a member of the Leadership Team, if he thought sufficient time existed to print, hear the bill and move it to the Senate Floor. **Senator Fulcher** agreed. **Chairman Goedde** said that he would expedite the bill's printing, and recommended that the sponsor transmit a copy to the State Department of Education and to the State Board for comment. **Vice Chairman Mortimer** ordered that **RS 23019** be sent to a priveleged committee for printing.

PASSED THE
GAVEL:

Vice Chairman Mortimer passed the gavel back to Chairman Goedde.

ADJOURNED:

Having no further business before the Committee, **Chairman Goedde** adjourned the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

Senator Goedde
Chair

Elaine Leedy
Secretary