

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, January 13, 2015
TIME: 3:00 P.M.
PLACE: Room WW55
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Nonini, Patrick, Souza, Den Hartog, Buckner-Webb, and Ward-Engelking
ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Keough (arrived after roll call).

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 Mortimer** called the Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:02 pm. He welcomed the audience and introduced new staff. He asked each member of the Committee to give a brief thought on the work of the Committee for 2015.

INTRODUCTION: Each member of the Committee introduced themselves and gave their thought on the coming session. A common theme was serving Idaho's children. Chairman Mortimer concluded with his belief that the Committee will do great work.

PRESENTATION: **Marilyn Whitney**, Senior Special Assistant for Education and Government Services to Governor Otter's office, stated that she is an Idaho native from Twin Falls Idaho and is a product of the public schools system. She is a former teacher and had been working at the State Board of Education for three years before she moved to the Governor's office. She reiterated that the Governor is committed to education and the implementation of the task force's recommendation for education. The Governor's vision for education is a balanced and strategic approach for long term improvements. She concluded her presentation by saying that the Governor's office sees this Session as a real opportunity for the State to carry out what's best for students and what's best for the education system.

PRESENTATION: **Karen Echeverria**, Executive Director for Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), introduced her colleagues: Jess Harrison, Governmental Affairs Director; Misty Swenson and Cristy Lamont. ISBA will introduce several small pieces of legislation and will focus on six major areas this year. They will also be working to make permanent the three pieces of labor legislation that contain sunset clauses. She highlighted some of the specifics of the three labor bills that will be before them. ISBA also offered its assistance in finding a permanent resolution for funding the Idaho Education Network (IEN). They also will be available for any resolution for the Career Ladder. Finally, they will advocate for and support any increase in operational funding (see the attachment 1) (Senator Keough entered the meeting and was acknowledged by the Chairman as present).

PRESENTATION: **Rob Winslow**, Executive Director Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA), handed out their legislative priorities list that stated the three main areas of interests: 1) The recommendations of the Governor's Task Force for Improving Education; 2) Improvements to Idaho's K - 12 education system; 3) Stable funding base for Idaho public education. He then introduced his colleagues, Phil Homer and Harold Ott. Each individual has extensive education and administrative experience (see attachment 2).

PRESENTATION: Robin Nettinga, Executive Director, Idaho Education Association (IEA) introduced her colleague Matt Compton, Director of Public Policy. The IEA has worked with all agencies to find common ground on education issues. They understand there are times when the organizations will have to agree to disagree on an issue and look to find a good middle ground. The IEA welcomes improvements to the public education system and their Executive Director and/or their President will be in attendance at each of the Committee meetings (see attachment 3).

PRESENTATION: Sherri Ybarra, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, introduced Tim Corder, Special Assistant to the Superintendent. She then highlighted her background as an educator and school administrator. **Superintendent Ybarra** declared that it is an exciting time in education and shared a new vision for the State Department of Education (Department): supporting and promoting students to achieve. That vision is the foundation of everything that the Department will do to help students. She then listed areas the Department will be working on: 1) Retaining and recruiting quality educators; 2) Moving ahead with common sense and transparent leadership; 3) Working on increasing operational funding; 4) Investing in innovation; 5) Being committed to higher standards; 6) Evaluating the current assessments; 7) Measuring growth to reflect the unique needs of students in Idaho; and 8) Developing strong defensive advocates for the schools and students of Idaho. **Superintendent Ybarra** said that she appreciated the opportunity to speak before the Committee and that it is an honor and privilege to serve as Superintendent. In conclusion, she said she will work to make sure the Department operates as a team with all stakeholders to improve education in Idaho.

PRESENTATION: Dr. Mike Rush, Executive Director, State Board of Education (Board), introduced his team members: Matt Freeman, Financial Specialist; Traci Bent, Chief Policy Officer; and Blake Youde, Communication Director. Mr. Youde came to the Board via St. Louis, Missouri. He brings to Idaho a great deal of experience and expertise. **Dr. Rush** emphasized the work the board is doing with the state institutions of higher education.

PRESENTATION: Dwight Johnson, Administrator, Professional-Technical Education outlined his experience; he has five months experience with his current position, over 20 years experience with the Department of Commerce and two years with the Department of Labor. He stated that his agency is focused on creating career pathways for youth and adults that will lead to high wage careers. To be successful they must continue to increase outreach and connection with employers. Engineering talent pipelines are critical in order for those participants to advance in their careers. He introduced the "1, 2, 7" critical work force ratio. **Mr. Johnson** emphasized the ratio, stating that for every one graduate degree, there are two bachelor degrees, and seven skilled technicians needed to make an industry succeed. While the advanced degrees are valued, it is the technical skills that are necessary to ensure continued success of an industry.

Mr. Johnson announced the legislative goals for this year are: 1) Using the 60 million State and Federal dollars towards PTE certifications and degrees; 2) Spending the 5 million additional dollars for workforce development training; 3) Exploring opportunities to create additional access to PTE in rural schools; and 4) Skill Stack, which provides a way for students to receive documented competencies and industry recognized credentials. It is a system that transfers PTE credits from secondary to post secondary systems.

PRESENTATION: **Terry Ryan**, CEO, Idaho Charter School Network, spoke about his background, which has a strong emphasis in education. He came to Idaho because of the work of the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation and the charter school community. He commented that Idaho has some very exciting opportunities for charter schools. He continued to describe the different school choice possibilities in Idaho. He then introduced his team: Mark Carrigan, CFO; Brett Lee, Building Hope; Blossom Johnston, J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation; and Emily McClure, McClure Policy (see the attachment 4).

Vice Chairman Thayn remarked that the first order of business for the Committee next week will be rules review.

Chairman Mortimer thanked those who presented and then asked the Committee if there was anything else that needed to be recognized before adjournment?

Senator Souza asked to speak. She observed that the word stakeholder means so much more than just those agencies in the room; it includes parents and citizens of the community. She addressed those agencies in the audience saying that she was surprised not to hear about the big issues that she hears about in her district; for example, data testing privacy and the changes in curriculum standards. **Senator Souza** said she believed all the points addressed by the agencies were relevant, but there is a need to address the concerns of parents.

Chairman Mortimer thanked Senator Souza for her thoughts and concluded that this was the last meeting of the week.

ADJOURN: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:02 p.m.

Senator Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn South
Secretary