

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

- DATE:** Thursday, February 19, 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
- 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 meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.
- PRESENTATION:** **Ken Burgess**, Veritas Advisors, introduced Robin Gilbert, Director of Instruction and Student Achievement for the Middleton School District; Lisa Romero, School Improvement Network; and Jason Hoopes, Regional Vice President, School Improvement Network.
- Ms. Gilbert** summarized her 35-year background as an educator in Idaho schools and emphasized the importance of developing teachers to their highest level for a lasting impact on students. She said student achievement lies in the quality of the teacher in the classroom.
- Ms. Gilbert** reviewed Idaho's initiatives to encourage, measure and reward exceptional performance in teachers. She said these initiatives do encourage and support teacher quality, but do not provide the necessary training to move teachers toward targeted improvement to reach master teacher levels. She discussed a tool developed by the Staff Development for Educators (SDE) that provides teachers access to a personal trainer and offers individualized training when needed. She said the key to improved learning for all students is improved learning for all teachers (see attachment 1).
- Lisa Romero**, School Improvement Network (SIN), summarized, with PowerPoint slides, the origins and efficacy of the SIN program. She described the positive impact of university graduates on the economy and referenced studies that found improvement of teachers' effectiveness can raise graduate rates by 90 percent (see attachment 2).
- Jason Hoopes**, Regional Vice President, SIN, with Ms. Gilbert and Ms. Romero, provided clarification to Committee members' questions concerning teacher development, evaluation, and costs.
- S 1070:** **Vice Chairman Thayn** presented **S 1070** relating to graduation requirements. The legislation amends Idaho Code Section § 33-119 to provide for an alternate route to qualify for graduation from an accredited secondary school. **Vice Chairman Thayn** said \$62 million of Title I money may be at stake, but he stressed the importance of giving parents a voice in their children's scholastic progress.
- TESTIMONY:** **Stacey Knudsen**, mother of five children, testified in support of **S 1070**. She said the legislation provides another way for children to reach academic achievement goals when testing isn't their forte.

**Stephanie Zimmerman**, mother of eight, testified in favor of **S 1070**. She said research shows that other states have not lost federal funding after creating similar alternate assessment paths.

**Karen Echeverria**, Executive Director, Idaho School Board Association (ISB) on behalf of the ISB and the Idaho Education Association, testified in opposition to **S 1070**. She expressed concern the legislation could cause Idaho to lose federal funding.

**Dr. Charlie Silva**, Special Education Director, State of Idaho, advised caution, because of potential unintended consequences, such as jeopardizing federal funds. She discussed alternate assessments for students with special needs, which is designed for about 1 percent to 3 percent of the special education population.

**Representative Steven Harris**, co-sponsor of **S 1070**, provided testing clarification relative to the legislation, which he said applies only to the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and those students who would be required to take that test.

- MOTION:** **Senator Souza** moved to send **S 1070** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senators Ward-Engelking** and **Buckner-Webb** requested their votes be recorded as nay. Vice Chairman **Thayn** will carry the bill on the floor.
- MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Buckner-Webb** moved to approve the Minutes of February 3, 2015. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Souza** moved to approve the Minutes of February 4, 2015. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Patrick** moved to approve the Minutes of February 5, 2015. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to approve the Minutes of February 9, 2015. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Vice Chairman Thayn** moved to approve the Minutes of February 10, 2015. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- PAGE FAREWELL:** **Chairman Mortimer** asked the Committee's outgoing page, Brook Chick, to share her plans for the future, after which he introduced Kayla Christensen, the Committee's page for the remaining weeks of the Legislative Session.
- ADJOURNED:** There being no further business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:56 p.m.

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Senator Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn South  
Secretary

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Jeanne' Clayton  
Assistant