

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 02, 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 to the meeting during the discussion of **SCR 105**.

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 to order at 3:07 p.m. He announced a change in the agenda.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Chairman Mortimer passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Thayn.

DOCKET NO. 08-0203-1403: **Dr. Christina Nava**, Coordinator Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Department, State Department of Education (SDE), presented **Docket No. 08-0203-1403**, section 04.c, outlines the type of testing to be used for LEP students. It also specifies any accommodations that will be allowed.

Chairman Mortimer asked which ISAT test do the students take. **Dr. Nava** replied the rule is the assessment that was created by the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC).

Angela Hemingway, Assessment and Accountability Director, SDE, presented **Docket No. 08-0203-1403** section 111.04.l and .n. Subsection .l pertains to the applicability for ISAT testing in grade 11. Subsection .n clarifies that the SDE is no longer calling the tests the grade 10 science ISATs; instead they will be called end of course assessments.

Chairman Mortimer asked which assessment is used for the science exam. **Ms. Hemingway** stated the assessments have been developed by the state. **Chairman Mortimer** asked which grades would the ISAT II effect. **Ms. Hemingway** explained which grades would be affected. **Chairman Mortimer** asked if that fits within the waiver requirement. **Ms. Hemingway** answered in the affirmative.

MOTION: **Chairman Mortimer** moved to accept **Docket No. 08-0203-1403** with the exception of subsections .04.c and .06.l. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion.

Chairman Mortimer asked Ms. Hemingway to help him understand what impact the exceptions have on testing. **Ms. Hemingway** indicated that by choosing to reject subsection .04.c, students who have the LEP accommodations will still have those and there will be no oversight committee. **Chairman Mortimer** stated that those students would still be able to take the ISAT SBAC rather than the new test. **Ms. Hemingway** answered in the affirmative. **Chairman Mortimer** asked what grades are required by the federal waiver to take the test. **Ms. Hemingway** replied grades three through eight and once in high school.

Senator Patrick asked do the rejections help or hurt college remediation and the go on rate. There often needs to be testing to improve and get a baseline. **Chairman Mortimer** said there will still be an assessment in the 11th grade, and he explained the waiver requirements.

The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Vice Chairman Thayn returned the gavel to Chairman Mortimer.

PRESENTATION: **Christine Stoll**, Executive Director, Idaho College Savings Program (IDeal), presented "Helping Idaho Families Make Postsecondary Education an Affordable Reality!" She explained the barriers to people obtaining postsecondary education are: access, academic readiness, and affordability. IDeal is Idaho's 529 college savings plan. This program helps make postsecondary education affordable. The program is a state entity and housed in the State Treasurer's office.

Ms. Stoll said the entire purpose of IDeal is to help families save for college in a tax-advantaged way: it is a deduction not a credit, similar to a 401k account. She illustrated the tax savings and the growth of money over 18 years. She then highlighted how to contribute to the fund, the fees, and the maximum balance to be contributed. Within the program there are different savings options and the flexibility. **Ms. Stoll** concluded her presentation by explaining how and in what area the money saved can be spent without incurring any tax ramifications (see attachment 1).

Senator Nonini asked what company originally managed the funds. **Ms. Stoll** stated TIAA – CREF Financial Service Company was the original vendor/broker. She explained the process they used to secure another management firm and the fees that will be incurred.

SCR 105

Vice Chairman Thayn, District 8, presented **SCR 105** regarding educational standards. He explained that about every five years, education standards are reviewed by SDE and SBE periodically. He stated that it has been about five years since the Common Core standards in math and English were adopted. The implementation was done through rules with little discussion. This has created a public perception problem. This resolution is for the math and English language standards to be reviewed in 2015. **Vice Chairman Thayn** outlined each statement of action in the resolution.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked weren't those standards reviewed last year in a committee made up of 27 individuals representing many stakeholders. **Vice Chairman Thayn** said he was unaware of that committee.

Senator Patrick asked what the fiscal impact would be to review the Common Core standards. **Vice Chairman Thayn** said he was not aware of additional costs because standards review is done on a rotating basis.

Vice Chairman Thayn added this resolution challenges some of the things in the Common Core standards but does not ask for their repeal.

TESTIMONY:

Rod Gramer, President Idaho Business for Education (IBE) and Idahoans for Excellence in Education (IEE), outlined the number of members he was representing. He said each group supports the Idaho Core Standards. He stated core standards are essential for setting up students for success in school. He explained why they are against the legislation. **Mr. Gramer** said this bill is premature and may create unintended consequences which could lead to a weakening of core standards. He asked the Committee to please hold this legislation (see attachment 2).

Senator Patrick asked if it would be acceptable to his groups if the resolution were to be amended to take effect next year. **Mr. Gramer** stated that the IBE and IEE do believe a review of the core standards should take place. There needs to be more time to see if they work before the State starts a study.

Chairman Mortimer asked if IBE and IEE would be in favor of the bill if it could take one to two years to change and implement new standards. **Mr. Gramer** said they believe the current standards should be given a chance to work

Senator Keough asked if the language to convert the core standards was removed, would that make the resolution more palatable. **Mr. Gramer** replied that would make it palatable; however, to start the review now is premature as the teachers have just started to teach them. The IBE and IEE believe the standards should be reviewed.

Senator Souza asked if the IBE or IEE membership has had any concerns about the federal oversight of the standards. **Mr. Gramer** said they have not heard that concern. He explained that he has been across the state and has spoken to teachers who expressed he they were seeing progress with their students in the classroom.

Senator Souza asked if the IBE and IEE were aware that the State doesn't have control over the standards. **Mr. Gramer** replied the State can repeal the standards at anytime. He explained the local districts still control the curriculum and the State sets the standards.

Ray Stark, Boise Chamber of Commerce (BCC), spoke against **SCR 105**. He said the BCC believes the standards are an elevated set of standards that focus on the building blocks of learning; math and English. He stated that as a global world, common standards of measurement are necessary for economic growth (see attachment 3).

Robin Nettinga, Executive Director, Idaho Education Association (IEA), spoke against **SCR 105**. She said the IEA is a strong supporter of the Common Core standards. She stated that the SDE normally reviews the standards and set the timeline, and wondered why this resolution is necessary (see attachment 4).

Karen Echeverria, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), stated they overwhelmingly passed a resolution in 2014 which supported Idaho Core Standards. The task and timeline of reviewing is with the SDE, please trust that process. She asked that **SCR 105** be held in Committee (see attachment 5).

Senator Keough asked if the members of ISBA felt that they had input in the rule and Idaho Core Standards writing processes. **Ms. Echeverria** said the ISBA did not have direct input into the standards but the teachers they employed did. **Senator Keough** asked if the individual member felt they had access to the standards development process as it had been in prior year. **Ms. Echeverria** said the membership supported the standards by over a 90 percent margin.

Vice Chairman Thayn said he appreciated the testimony and the concerns expressed. He then explained that he brought this resolution forth to address concerns from parents and others who felt left out of the original standard making process. He explained the relationship between teachers, school districts and the State.

Senator Den Hartog asked what would happen if this resolution was not passed. **Vice Chairman Thayn** replied he wasn't sure. **Senator Den Hartog** said she understands the problem is with the standards process and not the standards. This resolution does not address that.

Vice Chairman Thayn explained by having the resolution there is a state process in place for public input. He concluded by stating that she was correct, he has not directly addressed the standards issue.

Senator Buckner-Webb stated she would not be supporting **SCR 105**. She believes what was put in place operate as the best practices and best opportunity for Idaho students; she said will be supporting Common Core

Senator Ward-Engelking commented that she was in opposition to the resolution. She believed the review should happen by the process used by SBE.

Senator Keough said she had the record showing standards process that had taken place across the State. She indicated that the rule process allows for any Legislator to bring forward a rule through the process for consideration. She asked **Vice Chairman Thayn** if had explored bringing back for review, the rules where this issue is concerned. **Vice Chairman Thayn** answered in the negative.

Senator Patrick said that timing is an issue; it may be too soon to review. He specified he'd like to see the performance data and thought that waiting one more year before the review would be best. **Vice Chairman Thayn** said the reason he thought this year was appropriate was there was public concern and a very vocal minority that would like this issue addressed.

MOTION: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to hold **SCR 105** in committee. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion.

Senator Den Hartog stated she shares a lot of the concerns about the Common Core standards and the State's input. She has heard from many constituents and doesn't believe this resolution addresses those concerns. There is a heightened awareness of the impact of adopting new standards. When these standards were adopted it was not presented as major paradigm shift. That has proven to be a fallacy

Chairman Mortimer said he is concerned about getting all the stakeholders to a consensus and to date that has not been the case. The process of rule review through the SBE can be trusted. He stated he has been a supporter of Common Core standards, which are a higher standard: those high standards must be maintained in Idaho. He believed that when the standards were adopted many parents and stakeholders were excluded. When implementing major change in schools, the parents and public needs to be involved. They were invited to the process but many didn't attend because they didn't understand the proceedings. He specified his desire to trust in the Idaho process, and this could be a process that would bring everyone together.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Senator Souza** moved to send **SCR 105** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion.

Senator Souza requested a roll call vote. **Senators Mortimer, Thayn, Patrick and Souza** vote aye. **Senators Keough, Nonini, Den Hartog, Buckner-Webb and Ward-Engelking** voted nay. The substitute motion failed.

ORIGINAL MOTION: **Chairman Mortimer** requested a roll call vote on the motion to hold **SCR 105** in committee. **Senators Keough, Nonini, Patrick, Den Hartog, Buckner-Webb and Ward-Engelking** voted aye. **Senators Mortimer, Thayn and Souza** voted nay. The motion passed.

S 1072

Senator Souza, District 4, presented **S 1072**, a sunshine bill requiring school board trustees to reveal their donors just as other elected officials are to do. She revealed to the Committee the elected state officials that are in favor of the bill. She received endorsements from the Coeur d'Alene Press and the Spokesman Review as well as a personal endorsement from Coeur d'Alene School Board Trustee Tom Hamilton (see attachment 6).

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if she had considered the impact this legislation would have on small school districts that have a difficult time finding people to run for the office. **Senator Souza** stated that she has heard that was a possible concern. She stated this is filed with the county clerk rather than city clerks. The forms are very easy to fill out and submit.

Chairman Mortimer said that there is no fiscal impact to the General Fund; wouldn't there be some impact in the counties budget. **Senator Souza** said she has spoken with some county clerks and they said it could increase staff time slightly. None would quantify the time or amount involved.

TESTIMONY:

Karen Echeverria, Executive Director, ISBA, said they support the concept of this legislation and the openness of campaign funding reporting. They have concerns regarding the small school districts where it is difficult to get anyone to run. It is just one more thing they have to do. They would like to see some consideration for small school districts.

Senator Nonini asked how many districts in Idaho have less than 250 students. **Ms. Echeverria** said a little less than 45 districts.

Senator Souza thanked the Committee. She reiterated the simplicity of filling out the reporting forms and stated that transparency is good for everyone.

MOTION:

Senator Den Hartog move to send **S 1072** to the floor with **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Senator Nonini moved to send **S 1072** to the 14th Order for possible amendment. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion.

Senator Nonini said he understood and appreciated the desire to move forward with transparency. His big concern is for small school districts that have difficulties finding people to run for the school board. He offered an amendment to exempt districts that have less than 250 students.

Senator Patrick stated that in his district there are small school districts, and he would not support the Amending Order.

The motion failed by **voice vote**.

ORIGINAL MOTION:

The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Souza will carry **S 1072** on the floor.

ADJOURNED:

There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 5:01 p.m.

Senator Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn South
Secretary