

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 09, 2015

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Keough, Nonini, Patrick, Souza, Den Hartog, 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 Mortimer** called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

PRESENTATION: **Dr. Patti Mortensen**, Idaho State University (ISU), presented the report on the teacher shortage in Idaho. She stated this information has been a part of her research which she began in 2013. She outlined her career and the current position she holds at ISU. She explained the study was to quantify teacher shortages. She shared the data of her research with the Committee. She stated that her assumption was correct; Idaho does have a teacher shortage.

Dr. Mortensen explained which school districts participated in the survey, what the results were, and how they worked to accommodate the educational requirements without contracted certified teachers or specialists. Idaho lists shortages in 14 of the 19 subject areas, with math and science being the most prevalent. Idaho ranks 4th in the nation for having a shortage of teachers. **Dr. Mortensen** concluded by noting that teacher shortages are not a uniform pervasive nationwide problem. Supply and demand mismatches are more localized. The appropriate responses need to address specific needs such as: attracting and retaining teachers. Idaho educators and policymakers must recognize and address this problem as a urgent statewide economic issue (see attachment 1).

Senator Patrick stated working in schools there are almost qualified teachers who have mentors that are helping them. He asked if she saw much of that in her research. **Dr. Mortensen** said yes, districts do have mentor programs and first year teachers are mentored. She explained the problems and processes in rural districts.

Senator Ward-Engelking stated that this report reaffirms what she thought was occurring out in the schools and teaching profession of Idaho.

Senator Den Hartog asked why so many teachers in Idaho are not qualified to teach. **Dr. Mortensen** replied the voids are in the specialties, math, science and special education and those are the positions that are not qualified.

Chairman Mortimer asked if she knew if the rural schools looked to online courses to fill the voids. **Dr. Mortensen** stated that option was not in the survey. However, she had personally worked with IDLA and knows that the rural schools do use that service.

PRESENTATION: Susan Perkins, President, Idaho Counseling Association (ICA); introduced her colleagues. She presented an overview of the merits of counseling and the different areas of counseling: career, school, mental health, marriage and family. She illustrated the differences between psychology and counseling, and emphasized the many hours of training they undertake.

Sean Nixon, Licensed counselor, Vice President of ICA, presented more specific information of school counseling. He indicated that school counseling is a partially funded mandate: 9th through 12th grade is funded, the lower grades are not. He explained what tasks school counselors perform and the reasons why their services are needed in career counseling. **Mr. Nixon** referred to the different pieces of legislation that are helping to address some situations that affect children in schools and stated that **H 233** puts into statute the definition of a school counselor. He disclosed the Idaho counselor to student ratio and defined the industry norm. He concluded by noting that school counselors help the whole school: students, teachers, and staff.

Senator Patrick asked if he was in support of **H 233** which will spell out the role of counselors. **Mr. Nixon** answered in the affirmative.

PRESENTATION: Heather Davis, Idaho Regional Director, Strive for College – Near Peer Mentoring, introduced her colleagues from Strive for College: David Eastwood, National Director of Programs, Strive for College and Kasey Smart, Idaho Assistant Regional Director, Strive for College.

Mr. Eastwood introduced the program Strive for College – Near Peer Mentoring. He explained this is a new program which began in a dorm room as students helping students navigate through the myriad of concerns associated with college enrollment. He stated this near peer mentoring program has been operating for three semesters and is growing exponentially. He explained how this program works and then showed a video clip to illustrate the process

Mr. Eastwood explained the Idaho programs have been funded by the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation (Foundation). He emphasized that the work to engage students with their peers has proven to be successful, as well as it fills the career counselor gap, especially in rural schools. He explained how the E-mentoring called UStrive was developed and how it has launched the program into reaching more students. He explained the process of mining data of underserved students. He referred the Committee to the fact sheet and explained the statistics. **Mr. Eastwood** concluded the presentation and outlined the next ideas that they are working to accomplish.

Senator Souza asked when students go to the school that is their best fit is that an Idaho school. **Mr. Eastwood** replied it is all about the best fit for the student.

Senator Patrick asked if the Foundation is the only source of funding and how much have they contributed. **Mr. Eastwood** replied that Strive is almost halfway through a three year agreement with the Foundation. They have granted \$300,000 a year for the Idaho portion. Nationally, Strive operates off of grants and private donations.

Vice Chairman Thayn stated this program is exciting on many levels. He asked what the growth projections are for the next few years. **Mr. Eastwood** stated much will be determined on sustained funding. If the funding is acquired, growth will happen.

Senator Buckner-Webb inquired as to how mentors or students can become involved in the program. **Mr. Eastwood** replied that anyone can use this service. If they find Strive, they will be served. **Senator Buckner-Webb** asked if there was a parent component in UStrive. **Mr. Eastwood** explained that most of the mentoring is done in the evening thereby allowing them into the homes of students. That is where parents become more involved. **Senator Buckner-Webb** asked how they work with the cultural components that can hinder college enrollment. **Mr. Eastwood** stated they have specialized resources that address all circumstances, and mentors have been trained to identify those issues.

Vice Chairman Thayne asked what the cost of the mentoring program would be with 3,000 students. **Mr. Eastwood** stated the early projections are under \$100 per student. Once the infrastructure is set up the price per-student will most likely go down.

H 169:

Karen Echeverria, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISAB0, presented **H 169** regarding one year master agreements, also known as the removal of evergreen clauses. She explained the original legislation that was put into place in 2013 with S 1147 it required that salaries and benefits in a master agreement can only be in effect for one year, all other nonfinancial matters may have a length of two years. **Ms. Echeverria** concluded that ISAB is in support of the bill

Senator Ward-Engelking asked how many pages on average are in master contracts. **Ms. Echeverria** stated about 20-40 pages. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if salaries and benefits and direct or indirect costs be negotiated every year. **Ms. Echeverria** answered in the affirmative. **Senator Ward-Engelking** inquired how much time is necessary for negotiations. **Ms. Echeverria** replied 85 percent of the districts finished negotiations in less than 10 hours.

MOTION:

Senator Nonini move to send **H 169** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion.

Senator Ward-Engelking stated that she would not support this bill because it puts a tremendous time burden on teachers that are doing the negotiating.

The motion passed by **voice vote**. **Senators Buckner-Webb** and **Ward-Engelking** voted nay. Senator Nonini will carry **H 169** on the floor.

ADJOURNED:

There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:31 p.m.

Senator Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn South
Secretary