

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 25, 2015

**TIME:** 2:00 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** convened the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) at 2:01 p.m. and welcomed Marilyn Whitney, Senior Special Assistant, Education and Government Services, Office of the Governor, for presentation of **H 296**.

**H 296** **Marilyn Whitney** presented **H 296**, which she said seeks to establish a career ladder to provide a framework to recruit and retain highly effective teachers in Idaho.

**Ms. Whitney** said the 2013 Governor's Task Force for improving education presented its initial recommendations for public comment and made changes based on that feedback. Since that time, those ideas have been further refined based on input from Legislators and stakeholders.

**Ms. Whitney** said the legislation addresses fiscal instability and places Idaho on a trajectory to increase teachers' salaries and provide districts with a more stable source of salary funding. **Ms. Whitney** referred to handouts which speak to teacher recruitment and retention, including average and starting salaries compared to neighboring states (see attachment 1). She referred to statistics which show the number of students in Idaho has increased by 5 percent while the number of teachers has dropped by 7 percent. She said there has been a 27 percent decrease in Idahoans applying to receive a teaching certificate in Idaho. The number of teachers from outside Idaho who are applying to obtain an Idaho teaching certificate has decreased from 898 teachers in 2007 to just 68 teachers in 2013.

**Ms. Whitney** described typical salaries for professionals in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) professions and said the Task Force seeks to establish salaries for STEM teachers that are more in line with those professions.

**Ms. Whitney** reviewed costs related to the career ladder and General Fund growth revenue and emphasized the Governor has built the model into his budget request. While the legislation increases teacher salaries, the focus is on student outcome, which is the ultimate goal.

**Ms. Whitney** reviewed a provision in the bill that ensures teachers are evaluated fairly and that administrators receive the training and incentives necessary to perform those evaluations fairly and consistently.

**Ms. Whitney** reviewed the definitions portion of the bill which describes administrators, instruction staff, and people service staff. She said only the salaries of instructional staff are affected. It is expected that salaries of people service staff will be addressed by another committee. **Ms. Whitney** said student measurements and growth are not mandated and will be made at the local level. She said the provisions in the legislation will run from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2019.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked Ms. Whitney to explain more fully the criteria for salary increases during the first four years. She reviewed the salary structure and ladder for beginning and current teachers and described how those teachers move to the professional rung.

**Ms. Whitney** said administrators will be thoroughly trained to properly evaluate teacher performance and referred the Committee to a sample evaluation written into the legislation.

**Senator Thayne** asked for clarification on the \$2,000 and \$3,500 teacher premiums. **Ms. Whitney** said the \$2,000 is for a bachelor's certification, and the \$3,500 is for a master's certification. The premiums are awarded separately and not collectively.

Additional questions by the Committee concerned salary calculations, apportionment for people service staff, and master teacher premiums. Regarding master teacher premiums, **Ms. Whitney** reviewed the criteria, which she emphasized is set at a high bar. She also described the parameters by which districts can award leadership premiums and detailed the budget increases set forth in the fiscal note.

**Senator Keough** asked for clarification on the mentoring program. **Ms. Whitney** described how new teachers will receive intensive mentoring from experienced teacher mentors.

**Senator Souza** asked if renewable contracts are renewed on a year-to-year basis. **Ms. Whitney** answered affirmatively.

**MOTION:** **Senator Nonini** moved to send **H 296** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Chairman Mortimer will carry the bill on the floor.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

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Senator Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn South  
Secretary

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Jeanne' Clayton  
Assistant Secretary