

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, January 19, 2016

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Nonini, Patrick, Souza, Den Hartog, Anthon and Ward-Engelking

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Buckner-Webb

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) meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. He welcomed the audience and shared some anecdotes regarding things he has learned in life.

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

Sherri Ybarra, Superintendent of Public Instruction introduced Tim Corder, Special Assistant to the Superintendent, State Department of Education (SDE) to present the rules.

DOCKET NOS. 08-0203-1503, 08-0203-1506 AND 08-0203-1511 **Mr. Corder**, presented **Docket Nos. 08-0203-1503, 08-0203-1506 and 08-0203-1511**. He asked the committee to reject the dockets because they were not written as the rules were intended. He stated the dockets will return next year in better form.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to reject **Docket Nos. 08-0203-1503, 08-0203-1506 and 08-0203-1511**. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion. Motion passed by **voice vote**.

DOCKET NO. 08-0202-1501: **Tracie Bent**, Chief Planning and Policy Officer, State Board of Education (Board) presented **Docket No. 08-0202-1501**, Rules Governing Uniformity. She stated this section is in regard to the entire section of Teacher Certification. She explained the proposed amendments would 1.) make technical corrections, 2.) add clarifying language to existing requirements and 3.) restructure the sections pertaining to certification by moving existing language into a logical order by grouping the certificates together, the endorsements together and by reordering sections according to the order processes typically taken for obtaining certification.

Ms. Bent said the additional changes would amend the alternate route to certification for the content specialist. She explained the approved alternate authorization programs must be in alignment with the Idaho Standards for Initial Certification in Idaho Code. She emphasized the rules for these sections were negotiated with stakeholder groups. They came to consensus on all the language except for one section: the alternate routes for certification. She stated the final rule decision for alternate-route certification was determined by the Board.

Chairman Mortimer asked if it had been discussed to add the word "public" before charter school. **Ms. Bent** replied it had been discussed, but the Board decided against adding it because Idaho Code defines charter schools as public schools.

Chairman Mortimer asked how the basic engineering endorsement had changed. **Ms. Bent** said the whole engineering endorsement is new. She explained the work that was done to determine the requirements necessary for certification in that new discipline. **Chairman Mortimer** asked if this new rule will exclude those that are currently teaching this subject. **Ms. Bent** replied in the negative.

Senator Souza asked if the alternate-route rules will have any direct impact on charter schools. **Ms. Bent** replied charter schools are under the same regulations as all other schools. She explained the alternate-route was designed for individuals with a high technical knowledge but lacking pedagogical training. She said that the prompting for this change came at the request of school districts who have trouble filling teaching positions. **Ms. Bent** emphasized the Board's reluctance to change these requirements.

Senator Souza asked if the changes will make it easier or more difficult for these individuals to enter the classroom to teach. **Ms. Bent** said that it will be easier for individuals to work in the classroom. She explained how the rule lets individuals be in the classroom before acquiring any pedagogical training. The rule also adds clearer language to ensure that candidates are making significant progress in the pedagogy phase.

Senator Patrick asked if other states have an alternate path for certification. **Ms. Bent** replied in the affirmative. She explained that it is common for other states to have alternate programs.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked if the Board has a current emergency route in place to hire someone to be in a classroom. **Ms. Bent** replied in the affirmative. She explained the Board is authorized by statute to fill vacant teaching positions in the case of extreme emergencies.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked if this proposal will make it easier for someone with skills in a content area but no teacher preparation training to be in the classroom. **Ms. Bent** replied in the affirmative but asserted there are requirements. She explained the new required alternate-route certification process that school districts and individuals must follow.

Senator Ward-Engelking stated that she worked on the Governor's Task Force for Improving Education determining recommendations for vacant positions and the definition for a highly skilled teacher. She argued that this rule contradicts all of those distinctions and wondered if this rule will open school districts up to any liabilities. **Ms. Bent** replied there is still a requirement that individuals must pass the assessment for certification in a timely manner or they will not be able to continue to be in the classroom. She emphasized that this rule is designed to meet real needs in Idaho school districts.

Senator Ward-Engelking said that it seems this rule is for more than just emergency placement. It appears the rule will allow anyone the opportunity to be in a classroom without the pedagogy training. She remarked that she will be voting to reject this section of the rule.

Senator Den Hartog asked if there is a distinction between elementary and secondary grade level teachers. **Ms. Bent** replied the alternate route the individual enrolls in will determine the grade level they are certified to teach in. **Senator Den Hartog** asked if the members of the consortium are defined. **Ms. Bent** referred her to section of the rule with the definition.

Chairman Mortimer asked if Ms. Bent knew how many individuals were currently in the program. **Ms. Bent** replied the Board has that information and she will send it to the Chairman. **Chairman Mortimer** asked if the pool of candidates would be smaller by changing the rule. **Ms. Bent** replied there is no data but believes it will be a smaller number because there are fewer provisional certificates.

TESTIMONY: **Matt Compton**, Director of Public Policy, Idaho Education Association (IEA), testified against the rule. He explained the process that IEA went through to negotiate this rule and he indicated that there are some improvements to this rule and the IEA wants teachers in the classroom. **Mr. Compton** deemed that by accepting this subsection to the rule, teachers in the classroom may not be qualified. He asked the Committee to reject this section of the rule. For the full text of the testimony please see attachment 1.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to accept **Docket No. 08-0202-1501** except for section 042.02. The motion **failed** for a lack of a second.

MOTION: **Senator Souza** moved to accept **Docket No. 08-0202-1501**. **Senator Anthon** seconded the motion.

Senator Patrick stated teacher shortages are a national issue. If this alternative route is not available, classes will become too large for learning. He is for the motion.

Chairman Mortimer stated he supports the motion. He emphasized that the rule for certification is being tightened up. He said he recognizes that although the individuals are not taking the pedagogy courses in advance of being in the classroom, the changes are from a three-year review plan to a one-year review plan that will make for better and more qualified teachers in the classrooms.

Senator Ward-Engelking said that with this rule change, no high school graduate would go to college to get a degree in education when they could just walk into a classroom to teach. She said this change lowers the bar for teachers.

Vice Chairman Thayne stated he is from a rural school district; and he discussed how his district has used the alternate route to certification to find a consumer science instructor. He stated in his experience this process is working. He also emphasized that school boards and districts know who they put in the classroom and they should be allowed to make the final decision.

Senator Souza stated this gives the opportunity for more local control. She remarked that the state must trust principals and local districts to place the correct people in the classroom. Those leaders know their schools best.

Motion passed by a **voice vote**. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked to be recorded as having voted **nay**.

DOCKET NO. 08-0203-1507: **Ms. Bent** presented **Docket No. 08-203-1507**, rules regarding high school graduation. She explained there are three separate issues addressed in this docket: 1.) the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) graduation proficiency requirements for students graduating in 2017; 2.) transcription of middle school level credits to a student's high school transcript; and 3.) alternate paths to graduation for those students not meeting the proficiency requirements to graduate.

Ms. Bent explained that the COMPASS test is no longer being published, and this rule allows for those students who have taken the exam to be grandfathered in. She described the process of transferring required graduation credits from middle school to high school transcripts.

Ms. Bent explained the graduation proficiency requirement and alternate routes that students can take if not proficient. She explained that there is a waiver for 2017 graduating students and additional clarifying language for alternate routes for graduation. She stated these changes were prompted by recommendations made by the Senate Education Committee last year.

Senator Ward-Engelking said these are great changes and she applauds the work of the Board. She asked if the ISAT is the state's Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). **Ms. Bent** replied in the affirmative. She said in a different section of rule, the Idaho achievement tests are defined for English and math; and the SBAC test is what is used. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if there is any consideration of deleting SBAC. **Ms. Bent** replied the Board is in discussion about that but at this time not prepared to make that decision.

Senator Patrick asked if alternate route degree is a high school degree. **Ms. Bent** replied that there is a single high school degree. The documentation does not specify if a student used an alternate route or the traditional route.

Chairman Mortimer asked if there is another type of test for the student that cannot take the ACT now that the COMPASS test has been discontinued. **Ms. Bent** said at this time there are no provisions for that type of student. The Board had recommended that this category of students take the COMPASS test so they would recognize their potential for advanced learning.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to accept **Docket No. 08-0203-1507**. **Senator Patrick** seconded the motion. Motion passed by **voice vote**.

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

ADJOURNED: There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:14 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary