

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, February 08, 2016  
**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Room WW55  
**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Nonini, Patrick, Souza, Den Hartog, Anthon, 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.

**Chairman Mortimer** called the Education Committee (Committee) to order and read the weekly poem by Edgar A. Guest, from the book *Heap o' Livin'*.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Buckner-Webb** moved to approve the Minutes of January 18, 2016. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**PRESENTATION:** **Kevin Kempf**, Director, Department of Correction (DOC), greeted the Committee and he thanked them for their time. He introduced Julie Johnson, Director of Education, DOC. **Ms. Johnson** gave an overview of national correctional education and where Idaho fits into the national comparison. She stated that inmates who participated in education programs had a lower instance of recidivism. **Ms. Johnson** elaborated on the types of degrees that inmates can receive in Idaho through the current DOC programs.

**Ms. Johnson** said the recession had an effect on educational programs nationally, with a reduction of classes and staff. In Idaho there was a 14 percent reduction in the correctional education budget. **Ms. Johnson** showed the Committee the variety of programs and partnerships in the different facilities across the state. She highlighted the horticulture program at the Cottonwood facility.

**Ms. Johnson** explained that the lack of education for inmates decreases their chance of success when released. There are two trends in correctional education being employed to raise the level of post-incarceration success for inmates. The first is that the IDOC offers Microsoft Office Specialist certification and Microsoft Digital Literacy completion. The second is the implementation of the 2014 General Education Diploma (GED) exam with trained teachers. She added that with the grant from Albertsons and help from Northwest Nazarene University, they have been able to offer the Khan Academy to students. She shared the completion numbers of the different programs.

**Ms. Johnson** touched on the different projects and partnerships the DOC has with institutions of higher education: "That's Life," a simulation with the University of Idaho; the Prison Debate Initiative with Boise State University; and with the Institute of Applied Ecology, the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Through Prisons.

**Ms. Johnson** updated the Committee on projects from last year. The first is a continuing project that will give inmates access to the internet to become comfortable with online career and employment training. The other topic is instructor salaries; **Ms. Johnson** noted that DOC instructors are being paid less per hour than Idaho public teachers, and the discrepancy will become greater in 2019.

**Ms. Johnson** concluded by talking about 2016 goals for the DOC. They will pursue Second Chance Pell Grant funding for students. The DOC plans to expand use of computers in the classroom. They also plan to review data reporting and be as efficient as possible with class and instructor scheduling. The DOC will go through accreditation through AdvancED, an external review (see attachment 1). **Ms. Johnson** thanked the Committee and opened the floor for questions.

**Senator Anthon** asked if the students received a Microsoft certification for participating in the program. **Ms. Johnson** confirmed that they do. **Senator Anthon** inquired as to who pays for the program and certification. **Ms. Johnson** said that Professional-Technical Education (PTE) provided funding. **Senator Buckner-Webb** asked if agriculture or electrical wiring courses are available at the women's facility in Pocatello. **Ms. Johnson** agreed that the offerings for vocational training are limited because they don't have the funding available. **Senator Buckner-Webb** asked if there would be a broader offering, aside from the Microsoft Office certification. **Ms. Johnson** stated that would be an excellent goal for the next accreditation period.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked what cost is incurred by families to pay for inmate classes, by how much the budget was reduced and how those relate. **Ms. Johnson** clarified that families pay for postsecondary classes. She noted that the reduction in budget was in grants received through the Department of Education (DOE) and PTE. All grants were reduced on a federal level. **Vice Chairman Thayn** inquired about the effect of changes relating to the GED. **Ms. Johnson** explained that the GED is now a computer-based test that's more difficult. She emphasized that the teachers have done an excellent job of transitioning to the new curriculum, the new medium and the test. It's had a positive effect and it helps students be more prepared.

**Senator Patrick** complimented the DOC on its training and asked if the DOC helps inmates address the fact that they were felons when they apply for jobs. **Ms. Johnson** admitted that moment is difficult in job applications, but they teach students to be honest, acknowledge their mistakes and explain they've learned from them and have moved on. **Senator Souza** wanted to know what the topic was for the debate event between the inmates and the "Talking Broncos." **Ms. Johnson** said the event hasn't occurred yet but it's open to attend and that they're very excited about it. **Chairman Mortimer** thanked Ms. Johnson for the presentation and asked that in next year's presentation the other members of the DOC also share their thoughts on the programs.

**PRESENTATION:** **Chairman Mortimer** invited Will Goodman, past president and current board member of the Idaho Education Technology Association (IETA) and the Technology Director for the Mountain Home School District, to present (see attachment 2). **Mr. Goodman** explained the IETA facilitates and sustains education technology. The IETA is a service organization that gives back in grants. **Mr. Goodman** was pleased to announce that there were 650 attendees at the recent annual IETA conference.

**Mr. Goodman** stated that technology experts in schools are important because school networks are quite complicated and there is a huge demand for user and website management. Current issues that the IETA is looking at are internet access for schools; the complexity of e-rate funding channeled to Idaho schools; the addition of technology funding to current bidding rules; flexible spending on devices; and lack of technical staff, time and resources at the local level.

**Mr. Goodman** explained that the IETA wants to prepare students for technology that will exist in the future by teaching them to be life-long technology learners. The IETA works towards this goal by helping teachers integrate technology into their lessons and become comfortable with that technology. **Mr. Goodman** emphasized that the IETA wants to keep Idaho abreast with the national level of classroom-technology integration. He thanked the Committee for their time and stood for questions.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** said there's currently \$18 million going towards technology in schools; he asked if it was enough and what it would be used for. **Mr. Goodman** replied that it was important that there's flexibility in spending for each district, because of different needs. **Chairman Mortimer** asked how much is spent on IT staff. **Mr. Goodman** estimated \$16 million. **Chairman Mortimer** thanked Mr. Goodman for his presentation.

**RS 24068** **Senator Nonini** presented **RS 24068**, STEM Education Fund, To Provide for Funding and Provisions. He stated that on line 14, a new section will be added and solely used for § 67823 of Idaho Code. This legislation will create a fund for STEM education.

**MOTION:** **Senator Souza** moved to send **RS 24068** to print. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**RS 23981C1** **Blake Youde**, Chief Communications and Legislative Affairs Officer, State Board of Education (SBE), presented **RS 23981C1**, Idaho Public Institutions of Higher Education and Residency Requirement. He explained that the legislation clarifies and simplifies residency requirements at four-year universities. It will make it easier for students to determine if they're eligible. **Mr. Youde** stated the RS extends the same residency requirements to specialized graduate programs.

**MOTION:** **Senator Nonini** moved that **RS 23981C1** be introduced for printing. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded that motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**Chairman Mortimer** explained why the Committee is seeing rules regarding seeds and plant certification. It has also been sent to the Agricultural Affairs Committee, but this Committee received it because it comes through the University of Idaho.

**DOCKET NO. 08-0501-1501** Tracie Bent, Chief Policy and Planning Officer, SBE, was invited to present **Docket No. 08-0501-1501**, regarding Rules Governing Seed and Plant Certification. **Ms. Bent** stated that the Agricultural Affairs Committee had reviewed these rules and standards and approved them.

**MOTION:** **Senator Patrick** moved to approve **Docket No. 08-0501-1501**. **Senator Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**DOCKET NO. 08-0203-1509** Tim Corder, Special Assistant to the Superintendent, DOE, was invited to introduce **Docket No. 08-0203-1509**, regarding Rules Governing Thoroughness: Review and Revision of Science Curriculum. **Mr. Corder** talked about the importance of process, but sometimes rules get in the way of process. He asked that the Committee reject these rules to protect the integrity of the process.

**MOTION:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to reject **Docket No. 08-0203-1509**. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**Senator Souza** asked that Mr. Corder explain a change in the process that will be more beneficial. **Mr. Corder** suggested the process includes that the Committee might travel around the state to take testimony.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 3:54 p.m.

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Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn Mohr  
Secretary

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Anna Roser  
Assistant