

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 16, 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.

**CONVENED:** **Chairman Mortimer** called the Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.

**GUBERNATORIAL CONFIRMATION HEARING:** **Emma Atchley:** Reappoint to the State Board of Education (SBE), term commencing March 1, 2015, and to expire July 1, 2020. She explained that she has been serving on the SBE for the last 6 years. She outlined her life as an Idaho native and explained her educational background and career as an English teacher. She concluded by stating that she believes in giving back to her community; by being on the SBE she looks forward to helping shape education for future generations.

**Senator Patrick** stated that he supports her reappointment, and likes that she is from Ashton because she understands rural educational issues.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked what are some of the unfinished goals of the SBE that she would like to continue to work on. **Ms. Atchley** said the SBE has more initiatives now than ever before. She explained each of the initiatives, the priorities and the progression. Improving the education of the workforce is the best economic development investment the State can make.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked if the State Department of Education is aligned with the goals of the SBE. **Ms. Atchley** explained the State Superintendent's role and duties as a board member and an executive of SBE. The agencies work together for the best outcome for Idaho's students.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked how the State can establish an outcome-based education. **Ms. Atchley** said first the outcome needs to be defined; then they need to determine how it can be effectively measured.

**Chairman Mortimer** thanked Ms. Atchley for her service, and explained the vote will be held in a few days.

**S 1279**

**Senator Nonini**, District 3, presented **S 1279**, Relating to the STEM Education Fund: To Provide for the STEM Education Fund and Related Provisions, explaining this legislation creates a funding bucket to accompany § 67-823 Idaho code, which established the STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) Action Center (Center) in 2015. The Governor has requested \$10 million be appropriated for the Center and this would be the bucket where those funds would be placed. He explained this legislation represents to businesses and industries the Center's creditability and State's intent for STEM commitment and growth. He outlined the work of the STEM Caucus and emphasized the elements that states must have in place in order for the private sector to consider any type of partnership.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked how the funding might be used. **Senator Nonini** stated there is one bill regarding computer science that would use some of the funds.

**TESTIMONY:**

**Angela Hemingway** Executive Director, STEM Action Center, explained this is a critical component for the Center. It demonstrates that the State is committed to STEM education. She explained the flow of the funding and the spending cycles. She asked that **S 1279** be supported.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked what would prompt companies to donate to this fund and what might they receive. **Ms. Hemingway** said there are companies that need STEM-educated employees. Companies currently doing business in Idaho have to recruit employees from out-of-state. This is necessary to demonstrate that Idaho has top-notch employees and an education system where potential employees would want to enroll their children.

**Senator Patrick** asked if there is someone involved with the Center who will be soliciting funds. **Ms. Hemingway** replied in the affirmative and explained the process.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked how much money has been raised and from how many companies. **Ms. Hemingway** said they have raised \$28,000 and detailed which companies have donated to specific projects. She stated she is confident they will be able raise \$100,000 in 2016.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked how the Center will provide equity within the various schools and school districts. **Ms. Hemingway** replied that will be addressed in a current piece of legislation; the computer science initiative. She explained the grant process will look at location and districts' ability to share resources.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked if the fund would help create STEM schools. **Ms. Hemingway** replied that is for future discussion with the SBE.

**Donna Looze**, STEM Chairwoman, American Association of University Women, strongly supports **S 1279**. She explained that STEM is important to the country, specifically to the future of Idaho. The STEM education fund is necessary in order to reinforce other legislation regarding STEM education. She ask that the Committee please support **S 1279**.

**Jason Ronk**, State Government Affairs Officer, Micron Technology, Inc., testified in support of **S 1279**. He reminded the Committee that the Executive Director of the Micron Foundation serves on the Center's board. STEM education is an integral part of today's world. By creating this fund, it will ensure that today's students will be prepared to work.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked if Mr. Ronk knew of companies in the State that would partner with Idaho because of this fund. **Mr. Ronk** replied he thinks the impact will be significant. Skills in computer science are important to education and employment.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked if anyone has asked Micron for funds. **Mr. Ronk** replied many industries across the state are watching legislation to see Idaho's commitment to the fund. **Chairman Mortimer** affirmed that the State has made the commitment with the office of the Center. The Center is waiting for industry to step up in a significantly greater measure.

**Rod Gramer**, President, Idaho Business for Education, said they endorse **S 1279**. He said STEM is not just about high tech it is about every industry in Idaho, including fishing, timber and farming. He gave examples of how companies have stepped in to help educate the Idaho's students.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked if the business community has a desired outcome from the Center. **Mr. Gramer** replied there is not a specific goal but they know there are not enough people in the education pipeline to fill the current and future employment needs of companies in Idaho.

**Senator Buckner-Webb** stated there is a high degree of interest from area businesses to invest in STEM education. She asked if he would address that statement. **Mr. Gramer** said STEM is a good example of a private and State partnership with good faith efforts on both sides to invest in STEM. Education is a benefit not just to the person but to the State as well—a benefit to the common good.

**Senator Nonini** said as the Center develops there will be more specifics. He reiterated there are three things necessary to make the fund work 1.) State Legislature that is engaged; 2.) a foundation that is ready to seek innovation; and 3.) people in place who know what to do. He stated that Idaho has addressed those all sufficiently.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Buckner-Webb** moved to send **S 1279** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion.

**Senator Den Hartog** said that she is in support of the **S 1279**. She said she has many questions as to how the funds will be directed, so she will be paying attention to how they will be allocated.

The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Nonini will carry **S 1279** on the floor.

**S 1290**

**Senator Patrick** presented **S 1290**: Relating to Teachers: College and Career Advisors. He explained this legislation clarifies the terminology used to describe the advisors and adds sideboards in place regarding how districts would apply for the funds. He explained the SDE will approve the plan of the local districts before funds are administered. This program has been long anticipated by local districts.

**Senator Souza** asked if in 2015 the SDE asked for funding for career counseling. **Senator Patrick** said the 2015 legislation was so late in the session there were no appropriations allocated. **Senator Souza** asked if charter schools were part of last year's legislation. **Senator Patrick** noted the legislation said all schools but felt that clarification was needed; he asked to add the words "public charter schools" and to define what the local districts are to accomplish.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if this is to be done in both middle and high school. **Senator Patrick** replied in the affirmative and explained the necessity of early career counseling.

**TESTIMONY:**

**Keelie Campbell**, Principal, Jerome High School (JHS), is in support of **S 1290**. She presented to the Committee an overview of a pilot career counseling program that is being conducted at JHS through a grant from the SBE. She explained the requirements of the grant, the process to administer and the positive student outcomes (see attachment 1).

**Chairman Mortimer** asked the specifics of the grant they received from the SBE. **Blake Youde**, Chief Communications and Legislative Affairs Officer, SBE, explained the funds were from the College Access Grant allocated by U.S. Department of Education. The intent of the grant is to encourage high school students to "go-on" to postsecondary school. There are 11 near peer programs in Idaho that have been funded by the grant.

**Chairman Mortimer** stated the recommended allocation for **S 1290** from the General Fund is \$5 million. He asked what the cost per district would be and are there any more grant funds that would carry over into the next fiscal year. **Mr. Youde** replied the grant money expires in fall of 2016. He explained the funding formula that would be used to distribute the \$5 million.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if the ratio for counselor to student is 1 per 250 students. **Ms. Campbell** replied in the affirmative. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if this legislation would benefit JHS. **Ms. Campbell** replied because the work requirements put on counselors has gotten larger, it is important to see an increase in counselors per school.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked how much money JHS received from the grant. **Byron Yankey**, College Access Challenge Grant Project Manager, SBE, explained the salary schedule and other program spending. **Vice Chairman Thayn** asked if the grant for JHS was more or less than \$20,000. **Mr. Yankey** said it was more than \$20,000.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** said the success of this program depends on the quality of the counselor in the "near peer" program. He asked what the degree of difficulty is in getting a quality near peer counselor. **Ms. Campbell** replied there were several applicants who were high quality counselors. **Mr. Youde** said the other schools in the grant program had the same results in the college application rate.

**Wil Overgaard**, Superintendent, Weiser School District, spoke in support of **S 1290**. He explained the "near peer" counseling success at Weiser High School (WHS). He said if this were to pass, districts in his area would work together to continue this program. It is benefiting students and changing the attitude about going on to attain postsecondary education.

**Rod Gramer**, President, IBE, said Idaho has one of the lowest go-on rates in the U.S. If more young people are not going on to postsecondary education it will be difficult to build a workforce for the future. He stated the McClure Center for Public Policy Research report is showing that too many of Idaho's young people do not believe that going on to postsecondary will be an economic or personal asset. He explained the importance of the "near peer" and career counseling programs. He stated the Governor's recommended allocation is an extremely important investment in Idaho's future. The IBE is in support of **S 1290**.

**Senator Patrick** said this legislation will help to meet the Governor's education goal that 60 percent of Idaho adults ages 25 to 34 attain a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2020. He urged support of **S 1290**.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **S 1290** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Nonini** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Patrick will carry **S 1290** to the floor.

**S 1280**

**Blake Youde**, Chief Communications and Legislative Affairs Officer, SBE, presented **S 1280**: Relating to Idaho Public Institutions of Higher Education: Residency Requirements. He explained this legislation clarifies and simplifies residency for the four-year institutions of higher learning, not community colleges. He explained the changes and detailed the residency requirements. These residency requirements have been extended to the specialty programs such as WWAMI and dental schools.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked if the bill states the students are to be U.S. citizens. **Mr. Youde** said this bill has been in the works for two years. The intent was to move students through the education pipeline. In crafting this legislation, that criteria was inadvertently omitted. **Senator Den Hartog** asked if U.S. citizenship has always been a requirement of this legislation. **Mr. Youde** replied in the affirmative.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked if the SBE is recommending sending this to the 14th Order for amendment. **Mr. Youde** replied in the affirmative. He explained the SBE has a sentence to fix the oversight.

**Senator Patrick** asked if the citizenship requirement will hinder Idaho residents from attending institutions of higher learning. **Mr. Youde** explained this legislation addresses how students could move through the Idaho's educational pipeline. It does not make any citizenship determinations.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **S 1280** to the 14th Order for amendment. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Den Hartog will carry **S 1280** on the floor.

**H 391**

**Mr. Youde** presented **H 391**, Relating to Assessment Ratios. He explained this will remove the requirement for the State Tax Commission to submit to the SBE reports computing assessment ratios and adjusted market-value for property in specially charter school districts regarding charter schools. He clarified that since 2007 the SBE has no longer needed the reports.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Nonini** moved to send **H 391** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Ward-Engelking will carry **H 391** on the floor.

**Mr. Youde** presented **H 392**, Relating to the Youth Education Fund. He explained this is to repeal the Youth Education Fund established in 1992. This fund was never established in the State treasury. The original purpose of the bill was to purchase advertising to dissuade children from using alcohol, tobacco and drugs. He stated that this fund as it is no longer relevant.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Nonini** moved to send **H 392** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Nonini will carry **H 392** on the floor.

**PRESENTATION:**

**Chairman Mortimer** presented to the Committee the important issues regarding the education budget. He led the review and discussion of the Committee's budget priorities prior to his presentation to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee.

After a thorough discussion, **Chairman Mortimer** summarized the agreed-upon priorities as : 1.) continuation of the career ladder, 2.) restoration of discretionary spending, bringing it to the 2009 level per support unit, 3.) college and career counseling, 4.) classroom technology and 5.) literacy proficiency and professional development.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:57 p.m.

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Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn Mohr  
Secretary