

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 17, 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 3:04 p.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** **Chairman Mortimer** welcomed Evan Frazier, Century High School, Pocatello Idaho, and the CHS government class to the Committee and asked that two students report about the likes and dislikes of high school. **Brooke Colgan** and **Shelby Aldeus**, Seniors, CHS, addressed the question. They stated there is a need to reduce fees for some courses and they would like to have more hands-on coursework offered. They said that high school was fun and their experience was very positive.

**PRESENTATION:** **Angela Hemingway**, Executive Director, STEM Action Center (Center), introduced Erica Compton, the Center's Program Manager, and briefed the Committee about the Center's board of directors; they are a mix of government and industry. She explained the purposes of the Center as dictated in § 67-823, Idaho Code. She emphasized the need for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education in Idaho because job growth in those occupations is outpacing other fields and will create higher paying jobs.

**Ms. Hemingway** said the Center has been operating for five months. She spoke about the impact the Center has made in reaching students and teachers and the grants the Center has received and given. She explained that Idaho Code states the Center is to have measurable outcomes and she detailed how they have executed those matrixes. Because this is the first year of implementation, the data is light but is a good baseline.

**Ms. Hemingway** pointed out the future goals for the Center as well as the Governor's recommendations for programs and funding. She illustrated how the funding cycle will work and expressed her appreciation for the support of S 1279 (see attachment 1).

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked her to name the three most important things the Center plans to accomplish this year. **Ms. Hemingway** replied they are the following: 1.) meet goals for educator professional development, 2.) computer science initiative, 3.) workforce development for people looking for new careers.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** asked how the Center would incorporate art into STEM. **Ms. Hemingway** replied that 3D design and fabrication is incredibly artful. There are competitions on the Center's website that include the arts. She stated they will continue to be a strong advocate of the arts and gave examples of how science and art are working together.

**PRESENTATION:** **Christy Stoll**, Executive Director, IDeal, Idaho's 529 College Savings Program, presented a general update of the program. She stated that 51 percent of Idaho parents believe their children will chose to continue their education in a postsecondary institution and that financial aid is readily available. Unfortunately, the financial aid is not what they expected. She explained the entire purpose of IDeal is to help families save for college in a tax-advantaged way. She illustrated the tax savings and the growth of money over 18 years. She discussed how to contribute to the fund, the fees and the maximum contribution allowed by law. The program is a State entity and is housed in the State Treasurer's Office. **Ms. Stoll** concluded by saying the number of participants is small and they are working to increase the enrollment. The overall mission of IDeal is to make postsecondary education accessible to all children in Idaho.

**Senator Patrick** asked what efforts are being made to get the general public to know about this benefit. **Ms. Stoll** explained they have hired a field representative to meet with different agencies and business entities across the State to raise awareness of the program. She also said they are working with the State Board of Education and Department of Education. There are also plans for "529 Day" to raise awareness across the State.

**H 428** **Ms. Stoll** presented **H 428**, Relating to the College Savings Program: To Revise the Treatment of Unclaimed College Savings Program Accounts. She explained that this legislation is for a change in the unclaimed property code that would allow the College Savings Board to retain jurisdiction five years after the beneficiaries' eighteenth birthday. She explained the liquidation process under the current law and emphasized if the funds are liquidated as the current law requires, there would be tax consequences for the account owner. The changes allow for an exemption where the College Savings Board would retain jurisdiction and the account would not be liquidated but still listed with the Unclaimed Property Bureau. IDeal would still work diligently with the Unclaimed Property Bureau to find the owner of the account.

**Senator Nonini** asked if there has been any unclaimed property since the beginning of the program in 2007. **Ms. Stoll** replied in the negative.

**MOTION:** **Senator Nonini** moved to send **H 428** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Nonini will carry **H 428** on the floor.

**HCR 31** **Representative John McCrostie**, District 16, presented **HCR 31**, Recognizing the Importance of music education in Idaho Schools and Recognizing Music in our School Month. He explained the concurrent resolution is to recognize March 2016 as Music Month. He explained his experience as a music teacher and reported that his students had a feeling of accomplishment and empowerment with music. He reported that the majority of medical students have a musical background and those with some musical education have a higher level of career achievement. In fact the U.S. Department of Education's Every Student Succeeds Act states that a well-rounded education should include music. Music Month has been celebrated nationally since 1985.

**TESTIMONY:** **David Burton**, Choir Director, Boise High School, spoke in favor of **HCR 31**. He explained he has witnessed the value of music. To overlook music would be detrimental. He emphasized a well-rounded education includes music.

**Jeff Davis**, Idaho Music Educators Association, spoke in favor of **HCR 31**. He emphasized the importance of music. He said even those students who don't see themselves as musicians have a sense of accomplishment when performing music.

**Representative McCrostie** explained that the best part of sponsoring this legislation has been the ability to speak with colleagues in the Senate and the House about the impact of music in their lives. He urged support of **HCR 31**.

**Senator Nonini** shared he had no musical talents but his wife was a classically trained violinist and that discipline helped her pass the Certified Public Accountant exam. He emphasized "A" (Art) must be remembered in teaching STEM.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Buckner-Webb** moved to send **HCR 31** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion.

**Senator Den Hartog** said as the parent of a child in band, there is a special place in her heart for music teachers. They play an important role in the lives our children. She is in support of **HCR 31**.

The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Buckner-Webb will carry HCR 31 on the floor.

**S 1266**

**Jeff Church**, Chief Communications Officer, State Department of Education (SDE) presented **S 1266**, Relating to Leadership Premiums. He said the purpose of this legislation is to further highlight and recognize the teachers in the State for their role in leadership and mentoring. The intent is to increase the premium payment to those teachers from \$850 to \$900. He explained the fiscal impact is \$1.5 million, which is accounted for in the Superintendents budget request.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked what prompted the increase. **Mr. Church** replied they wanted to reward, recognize and incentivize the great teachers who are already in the leadership program.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked if this premium will increase over time or is there a special level the SDE is trying to achieve. **Mr. Church** said he is not aware of any intent to get to a specific level in the future. He said he is only speaking to this piece of legislation. **Vice Chairman Thayn** inquired who asked for the increase in premiums. **Mr. Church** said he didn't know.

**Senator Anthon** asked if the original \$850 was established in 2014. **Mr. Church** said the premiums were established in 2014 and revised with the career ladder in 2015. **Senator Anthon** asked if this is the first increase in two years. **Mr. Church** replied in the affirmative.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked how much money was allocated in 2015 and what was actually paid out. **Mr. Church** said he was not sure how much was spent on leadership premiums, but 52 percent of the teachers who qualified, took the premiums.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** said this program is very valuable and has been used very well throughout the districts. He is hesitant because the increase is \$1 million, and based on earlier discussions regarding the education budget priorities, he wondered if this expenditure is a Committee priority.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** said this premium is an item that was put in place to recruit and retain teachers. In the career ladder it is part of the mentoring program. These premiums are being used to reward the teachers who are exceptional in their schools. She is hopeful that it will be funded.

**Senator Den Hartog** said she has budget concerns. She explained that the education funding is being distributed in many different line items. It doesn't seem as though funding is being focused on the needs and desired outcomes. Premiums are important, but not sure if \$50 will make a significant difference; whereas \$1.5 million, as a whole, would make more of a considerable impact.

**Senator Buckner-Webb** said the Superintendent has this in her budget, which is less than the Governor's, and this allocation is included. She trusts the Superintendent's recommendation and will be in support of the legislation.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked if this premium increase was recommended in both the Superintendent's and Governor's budget recommendations. **Mr. Church** replied in the affirmative.

**Chairman Mortimer** said that he has watched the premium discussion since its inception. He believes this money accomplishes the intent of the career ladder. This money allows the school districts the flexibility to move forward in the improvement of education. The legislation requires reporting of the leadership premiums. He is in support of this bill.

**Senator Nonini** said he appreciates the attention called to the section of the bill that emphasizes payment for teacher mentoring.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Nonini** moved to send **S 1266** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion.

**Senator Anthon** said he is in support of **S 1266**. He likes this particular component of teacher pay because of what it incentivizes. He said in reviewing the education budget, this has been accounted for. The increase of pay, over time, is not a big increase.

The motion passed by **voice vote**. **Senator Den Hartog** asked to be recorded as voting nay. Senator Mortimer will carry **S 1266** on the floor.

**S 1267**

**Mr. Church** presented **S 1267**, Relating to Mastery-Based Education. He explained this is straightforward and cleans up the language from H 110 passed in the 2015 Legislative Session. That legislation stated the SDE was required to pilot mastery-based education classrooms in 20 schools. This legislation is to add the words "up to" in reference to the 20 schools. He explained that SDE would have more flexibility to select quality participants in the program. He explained the funding component of the legislation is to allow the SDE to send money to the districts with the pilot programs.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** explained that ideas on how to implement mastery-based education are to come from the districts and should be more organic - something that teachers and principals will want to initiate not forced.

**MOTION:**

**Vice Chairman Thayn** moved to send **S 1267** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Nonini** seconded the motion.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** stated she is in support of this legislation. She asked if there is a standardized assessment piece to this program. **Mr. Church** replied they are in the early stage of the process and the assessments have not been determined.

The motion passed by **voice vote**. Vice Chairman Thayn will carry **S 1267** on the floor.

**ADJOURNED:**

There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

---

Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

---

LeAnn Mohr  
Secretary