

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 18, 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 3:01 p.m.

PAGE FAREWELL: **Chairman Mortimer** asked Mallory DeFord, Skyview High School, Nampa, Idaho, Committee Page to the podium to bid her farewell. She said that she enjoyed her time as a Senate page. **Ms. DeFord** said she liked being assigned to this Committee because the topics are relevant to her life and she could understand their application.

Chairman Mortimer thanked her for her service and presented her with a gift and two letters of recommendation. He then asked the new page to introduce herself.

Nellie Christensen, Declo High School, said she is a senior and is currently serving as the Student Body Secretary. She enjoys public speaking and is interested in government policy and how our country has evolved. She plans to get a degree in political science.

Senators asked her a variety of questions about her schooling and hobbies. She answered each and concluded that she is excited about this learning opportunity.

PRESENTATION: **Emmett Wemp**, Project Lead the Way (PLTW), said that he is here to educate and advocate regarding systemic elementary STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education. He explained his experience as a high school engineering teacher and the accomplishments of the students he had the opportunity to teach. His students said that their experience with STEM education in high school has made them more prepared for their education and careers after high school. The STEM classroom prompted his students to try harder and achieve more.

Mr. Wemp said his students were never formally exposed to STEM curriculum in elementary school and are still very successful, but imagine the potential that could have been built upon had they been exposed to STEM in their earlier years. He used common examples to illustrate the benefits of early learning.

Lynn Shafter, K-5 STEM Specialist, Barbara Morgan STEM Academy (Academy), said she teaches using integrated instruction that includes the arts, music and physical education; all are necessary for a well-rounded education. Children need to be excited about what and why they are learning. She explained how STEM education gives students an understanding of why it is essential to explore different subjects.

Ms. Shafter explained each of the different grade level projects and how these students, unbeknownst to them are learning about math and engineering. She stated they learn how to collaborate and communicate with each other and their teacher to complete the project. She said elementary school is where STEM education should begin. It sets the tone for children's learning and carries forward for the remainder of their education.

Ms. Shafter said to replicate the programs from the Academy means the way teachers have been trained to teach must change. They must teach using project-based learning. They are excited about the STEM Action Center as it will be a great resource for students and teachers.

Sydney Madsen, Junior, Renaissance High School, detailed her experience as a STEM student. She stated she had no real interest in STEM because of the "M." As she progressed through the engineering courses she realized she was learning and understanding math. She realized that all subjects were related and through STEM her overall grade point average improved. She said she is excited about school. She is learning to think, solve problems and apply what she has learned.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked what resources Ms. Shafter used in the classroom. **Ms. Shafter** described the wide variety of resources that she uses.

Senator Nonini asked if the older generation of teachers are nervous about applied learning. **Ms. Shafter** replied everyone is nervous. She explained there must be professional development because teaching by lecture is no longer pertinent. She reported the different development programs she has attended.

Vice Chairman Thayn explained that rural children have the benefit of hands-on living, which helps them learn at often a higher level than urban children. **Ms. Madsen** said she is an officer in the Technology Student Association (TSA). Their concern is that rural areas are not getting the support for technology to further those students' STEM education.

Senator Nonini asked what kind of support is needed. **Ms. Madsen** replied that children are excited about technology. Adults tend to not see the value in smart phones or similar types of things because it seems like play; but technology is a tool. A platform such as the STEM Action Center gets adults to talk about technology and realize that careers are in technology. She stated that technology is not seemingly frivolous activities on the computers and cell-phones. Those tools are the gateway to coding careers. She said they need people in leadership to advocate for technology.

PRESENTATION: **David Wallace Eastwood**, Vice President, Strive for College (Strive), informed the committee of the work of Strive for College by playing a video. It explained the low "go on" rates and how Strive has worked to address this issue. He outlined the tools that are being used to help students with the myriad of issues to get to college. He said this program began in Idaho with 19 mentors, four and one-half semesters ago. Now there are more than 360 mentors helping about 800 students. **Mr. Eastwood** stated that Strive has measurement tools in place to track their results in admission, college retention and student debt.

Michael Carter, Founder, Strive for College, explained Strive has a tech algorithm to measure individual students and select the best colleges for that student. He explained that Strive mentoring can be done anywhere, is low maintenance, compliments other programs, and has a great online community. He said that many of the popular concepts from other virtual sites have been emulated by the Strive platform. He emphasized the power of technology can bring people together to help each other solve problems (see attachment 1).

Senator Den Hartog commented that mentoring and counseling play an important role for students in college selection. She thanked Mr. Carter for keeping Strive's costs low. **Mr. Carter** said this is the most cost effective way to scale virtual mentoring. It is his desire to scale this program across all of Idaho. He said that smart phones can be a way to continue to keep the costs low and to reach a broad spectrum of students.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked how would he scale this program up and what would be the financial cost. **Mr. Carter** replied he believes they could provide statewide service to every student who would like the aid for about \$1 million. He explained in technology the ramp-up costs are the same whether it serves 1,000 people or 100,000 people.

Chairman Mortimer asked how many volunteers will it take to service Idaho and where would you get them?. **Mr. Carter** replied the amount in Idaho needed would be 10,000 to 30,000; the range is large because some mentors are willing to serve more than one student. Strive volunteers are college students and other professionals, who have had the college experience. He spoke about the support they have received from Idaho's universities.

Abby Lipschultz, Strive for College, Chapter Director Boise State University, explained the work she and the chapter have done to get students enrolled in college. She is confident that getting more mentors to serve the State would not be a problem. The best thing about Strive is it is customized to the needs of the student. This program has helped students achieve their dreams.

**GUBERNATORIAL
CONFIRMATION
VOTE:**

Senator Anthon moved to approve the reappointment of Emma Atchley to the State Board of Education, term to commence March 1, 2015, and to expire July 1, 2020. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Chairman Mortimer will carry on the floor.

S 1291

Marilyn Whitney, Senior Special Assistant for Education and Government Service, Office of the Governor, presented **S 1291**, Relating to Scholarships: To Provide for the Adult Degree Completion Scholarship. She explained this legislation is to create an adult completion scholarship that is targeted at bringing Idahoans with some college but no degree back into the postsecondary pipeline, and outlined the specifics of the legislation. She detailed the unmet financial burdens of many of Idaho students and stated that is often the reason they drop out of postsecondary education. She reported the 2011 findings from the Office of Performance Evaluations, which surveyed students to find the barriers to attaining postsecondary education. They found the most challenges student had were associated with finances.

Ms. Whitney distributed to the committee an overview of the postsecondary progress of high school students, and explained the charts (see attachment 2). She said this legislation will help increase the supply for a more skilled workforce. She concluded by outlining the stipulations regarding administration and rulemaking for the legislation. She said the State Board of Education would oversee the scholarship.

Senator Den Hartog asked how many students have dropped out of college due to the lack of financial aid. **Ms. Whitney** replied based from the opportunity grant data, there is a noticeable enrollment drop from freshman to sophomore year of college.

Vice Chairman Thayn wondered if this legislation has matured to the best plan. He said there are students in the workforce and asked if their employers would be willing to partner to help their student-employee get their degree. **Ms. Whitney** stated that is a great idea and explained it was discussed in the crafting of the legislation. It is up to the legislators and appropriators as to which type of education funds would be dedicated. **Vice Chairman Thayn** asked what the evaluation points are to receive the scholarships. **Ms. Whitney** replied that policymakers will use the available data to track students going into the workforce to ensure that students are picking pathways that benefit the labor force and meet industry needs.

TESTIMONY:

Mark Browning, Vice President for Communications and Governmental Relations, North Idaho College spoke in support of **S 1291**. He explained **S 1291** is an economic sustainability effort through a trained and educated workforce (see attachment 3).

Jeff Fox, President, College of Southern Idaho, submitted his testimony in support of **S 1291** (see attachment 4).

Bert Glandon, President, College of Western Idaho, is in support of **S 1291**. He explained the stop-out rate creates underemployed and underwage workers. This bill will incentivize people to reenroll in school to obtain the necessary skills to be fully employed to their potential.

Chairman Mortimer asked if it will be difficult to get people to apply for this scholarship. **President Glandon** said in his 33-year career of being a community college president, student stop-out due to financial constraints is the number one problem. This legislation gets those students back in school to quickly earn a certificate or degree. **Chairman Mortimer** asked if there are other types of scholarships for a returning student. **President Glandon** replied that people who have left school have lost their vision for success and are reticent to return. This legislation can give them hope.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if the \$5 million level of funding is enough to get people to enroll immediately. **President Glandon** replied from the community colleges aspect, those entities can respond quicker to accommodate increased enrollment.

Caroline Merritt, Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), said they are in support of **S 1291**. The members of the Chamber have a vested interest in a qualified workforce. She said this scholarship fits well the Governor's educational goals for 2020. She encouraged the passage of **S 1291** (see attachment 5).

Misty Rose, Student, Boise State University, supports **S 1291**. She spoke about her life experiences and the debt she has incurred; this would have saved her so much money. She spoke about how low wages are for even those with education and hoped wages will improve (see attachment 6).

Dwight Johnson, State Administrator, Professional-Technical Education (PTE), is in strong support of **S 1291**. PTE at the State's technical colleges will play a vital role in helping Idaho workers get the skills they need to take advantage of job opportunities and increase their ability to provide for themselves and their families. It will make a significant impact towards the Governor's education goals for 2020.

Vice Chairman Thayn said the legislation identifies four qualifications but it doesn't layout a clearly defined career path. He asked if the scholarships should have more focus. **Mr. Johnson** replied that PTE provides great career opportunities for people. Focusing students' efforts would help make use of these resources more efficient and effective.

Rod Gramer, President, Idaho Business for Education, is in favor of **S 1291**. He said IBE has reported that area businesses need 60 to 70 percent of their workers to hold a postsecondary credential. He stated that in Idaho there are over 280,000 working-age adults that have some college but no degree. This scholarship can easily help achieve the Governor's goal, which this Committee has agreed to pursue. The goal can only be attained if policies and investments are made. He urged support of **S 1291**.

Senator Den Hartog asked if there is data to show that college graduate skills meet the workforce needs. **Mr. Gramer** replied in Idaho there is a mismatch between graduates and jobs with the high demand. The fastest growing jobs are in the STEM fields. It is necessary to career counsel young people to select an educational path that leads to job opportunities. He said investment in this scholarship is a good start. **Mr. Gramer** emphasized one of the problems in Idaho is that there really is an employment problem.

Wayne Hoffman, Idaho Freedom Foundation, said they are opposed to **S 1291**. He explained the problems with the legislation. He said there is no cap in funds written into the bill; instead, funding is to be promulgated through the rulemaking process. Mr. Hoffman then explained there is the likelihood that students would take advantage of the scholarship funds by purposely starting college then sitting out to later receive the scholarship. He concluded stating there is too much financial aid available and colleges are taking advantage of it by continuously raising tuition. He suggested the legislation is looking at the wrong problem.

The following people submitted written testimony in favor of **S 1291**: Vicki Budd, Director of the Multidisciplinary Studies, Boise State University (see attachment 7), and Rebecca Morgan, BSU graduate (see attachment 8).

Ms. Whitney said Idaho agencies will work to meet demands that result from increased enrollment. She stated the language in this legislation is similar to what is in statute for the Opportunity Scholarship. The specific details have been left to administrative rule, which will be carried forth by the SBE.

Senator Den Hartog asked how the \$5 million cost was determined and why it is a continued General Fund appropriation. **Ms. Whitney** replied it is a guesstimate of those who are qualified and who would actually apply for the scholarship. The \$5 million could probably serve 1,500 to 2,000 students a year.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Thayn said he appreciates the need that this legislation meets, but in the current form he cannot support this bill. He pointed out that the definition of the eligible student qualifications doesn't go far enough. He recommended that "a clearly defined career path" be added and then he could support the bill.

Vice Chairman Thayn moved to send **S 1291** to the 14th Order for possible amendment. **Senator Nonini** seconded the motion.

Senator Den Hartog appreciates the concerns and is in support of sending it to the amending order.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Senator Ward-Engelking moved to send **S 1291** to the floor with **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Anthon** seconded the motion.

Senator Anthon said he is not opposed to Vice Chairman Thayn's recommendations. He is in support of moving forward because this legislation will deal with an immediate need in the State of Idaho: the workforce and economic development. He said President Glandon and Rod Gramer indicated that this bill will achieve the Governor's goal. This is good for Idaho families.

Senator Nonini said he is in support of the original motion. He is in appreciation of the community colleges and the IBE. He said this bill in its current form, if it makes it through the Senate, will die in the House. He still wants the opportunity to keep this legislation active. He added that he has concerns about the fiscal note, saying that in the first year he doubted there would be that many people who would take advantage of the scholarship.

The motion failed by **voice vote**. **Senator Anthon** requested to be recorded as voting aye.

**ORIGINAL
MOTION:**

The motion to send **S 1291** to the 14th Order for possible amendment passed by **voice vote**. Vice Chairman Thayn will carry **S 1291** to the 14th Order for possible amendment.

S1307

Senator Rice, presented **S 1307**, Relating to Education: Revise the Election Date for School District Trustees, Provide a Term Expiration Date for Incumbent Trustees. He explained this legislation moves the election date for school board trustees from its current May odd-year election to the November general election, which occurs in even years. It also moves the date to when the trustees would assume their office. He stated these changes will address the low voter turnout in school board elections and district budget setting.

Senator Ward-Engelking stated that she is concerned that by moving the election date to the general election, there would be voter fatigue and people would not make an educated vote. She said that school board elections are nonpartisan, and when placed with partisan races there can be an issue. She asked him to please address those concerns. **Senator Rice** said that lower voting numbers are in the even years with primaries. He then detailed the other voting dates and the turnout numbers.

Phil McGrane, Chief Deputy Clerk, Ada County, also spoke on behalf of the Idaho Association of County Recorders and Clerks and the Idaho Association of Counties. He said his testimony is in regard to **S 1307** and **S 1308**. As election administrators, they believe these two issues cannot be separated. While he understands why this legislation is being discussed in the Education Committee, this really is an election policy issue. He outlined the concerns with election error and voter trust. He emphasized that elections work in single votes not percentages. **Mr. McGrane** stated that until the zones are removed, the election date should remain the same. He is not in support of **S 1307** (see attachment 9).

Karen Echeverria, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA) said they are in opposition to the bill. She outlined the issues being that moving the date would create and suggested an alternate solution (see attachment 10).

ADJOURNED:

Chairman Mortimer said due to the Senate reconvening at 5 p.m. today, **S 1307** and the remainder of the February 18, 2016, agenda would be held to be heard at a future date. The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary