

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Wednesday, March 09, 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.
- PRESENTATION:** **Karen Glassman**, Principal, Inspire Academy (Inspire), said they are here to talk about the graduation rates in the virtual schools. She explained that Inspire serves students all across the State and value any data that helps them improve their reach and program. Graduation rates are a concern of the State Board of Education and she said it is important that many understand the role virtual schools have in improving the graduation rate. **Ms. Glassman** explained the type of student that attends the virtual schools the assessment process for determining the graduation rate, and the impact that has on the overall State graduation rate as reported to the U.S. Department of Education. She stated the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) allows for flexibility in determining graduation rates and hopefully that accountability will move to Idaho (see attachment 1).
- Kelly Edington**, Head of School, Idaho Virtual School (IVS) addressed the Committee regarding the issue of graduation rates and how IVS affects the State's graduation rates. She outlined the make-up of the board of directors, the teaching staff and the demographics of students. She read a letter from a current student who was in a traditional school and then moved to IVS. He praised the teachers for their help, understanding and motivation for him to continue until he graduated. **Ms. Edington** concluded her presentation stating they would like to see an accountability that reflects mobility and at-risk issues as well as an equitable funding formula in order to better serve their students (see attachment 2 and 3).
- Paris Johnson**, Graduate, IVA, spoke about the reasons she chose to attend IVA. She said as a graduate of IVA she has been able to attend postsecondary school with confidence. She outlined her future goals and praised IVA for helping her to get her education.
- Crista Bradshaw**, Student, IVA, said she is a junior and has been attending IVA for ten years. She explained that she had attended a virtual school when she lived in Ohio and when they moved to Idaho IVA was where they chose to enroll her in school. She said that IVA has taken an interest in her educational and life goals and has helped her attain them. She emphasized the importance of technology in schools and how it is a necessity for learning (see attachment 4).
- Senator Souza** asked if Idaho's online learning was as good as Ohio's. **Ms. Bradshaw** replied she thought Idaho's was better and much more personalized.

Jessica Lecertia, School Counselor, IVA, detailed the situations about the students IVA serves. She explained the different programs and options that IVA offers in order to help students attain their education. She reported the number of students that are enrolled in the Advanced Opportunity program. She explained that IVA students' families often have nontraditional situations, making online schooling the better option. IVA and other virtual schools are schools of choice and offer quality education.

Monti Pittman, Director of the Idaho College and Career Readiness Academy (IDCCRA), reported the history of IDCCRA, and the statistics and demographics of the students they serve. He gave an example of the type of students that they work with and the work they do to address remediation. **Mr. Pittman** emphasized IDCCRA is not contributing to the state's drop-out rate but bringing up the graduation rate. He emphasized the need for a mechanism to fund schools that enroll the highly mobile at-risk students later in the school year (see attachment 5).

H 514

Representative Horman, District 30, presented **H 514**: Relating to Education, Idaho School Safety and Security Act. She explained the past school shooting tragedies have led to the increased awareness for provisions regarding school safety. The Office of the Governor commissioned a task force and a study to of 10 percent of Idaho schools to identify school vulnerability. She cited an article from Campus Security Magazine, which reported the study's findings (see attachment 6). Idaho was recognized because it was being proactive in assessing their safety deficiencies. She explained the procedures implemented from the findings of the report.

Representative Horman explained that **H 514** enhances the safety and security of students and educators by providing for an Office of School Safety and Security (OSSS) with the Division of Building Safety (Division). She said that school security encompasses more than building safety but also includes up-to-date security measures. **Representative Horman** explained the reason that the Division would be assigned the security assessment. She said there is broad support for the legislation and State Superintendent's Office would add this item in the budget process.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked if this legislation were to pass, would the State qualify for grant funding. **Representative Horman** replied in the affirmative. Because the State does not currently have an agency solely dedicated to school safety and security Idaho has not been able to apply for some of the grants.

Senator Patrick stated in reviewing the information it seems that what would be accomplished by the Division would be preventative measures for security - similar to locking a house or a car. **Representative Horman** replied it is unfortunate that teachers are first responders, but they are and they need appropriate training to respond. The assessors while in the buildings will teach the most current security information.

Senator Den Hartog said she agrees that safety for students, teachers and administrators is extremely important. She asked if this structure with an advisory board is necessary. **Representative Horman** explained her experience at a school and safety task force meeting she attended following the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut. In the past, law enforcement was able to oversee security. Today, with all the safety issues, teachers are now the first responders and it is important they understand their role. An advisory board would be interagency. Schools need to be secure without impacting the ability to learn. She emphasized having professionals work with the schools can get the right balance of security and learning.

TESTIMONY: **Curt Shankel**, Captain, Nampa Police Department, said that one of his duties is to oversee the schools' resource officers (SRO) division. He explained the scope of the SRO's work. While their staff is large, they are not in every building every day, therefore when an incident occurs the first responders are the school's staff. He reported that when he has toured buildings he has recommended changes so as to increase security; however they are often not implemented. Having OSSS review buildings and make recommended changes will ensure that those are accomplished. For the safety and security of students, **Captain Shankel** urged the passage of **H 514**.

Senator Souza asked if all schools in districts have SROs. **Captain Shankel** replied in the negative and stated it is a luxury.

Anita Christenson, Administrator of Assessment, Nampa School District, outlined her responsibilities, which include school safety and security. She said there is a need and a sense of urgency to improve school safety; there is a lack of best practices in school safety resources. Regarding the limited safety procedures schools try to implement, she said that funding comes from discretionary funds or SDE grants and are not enough to address all the issues. She told of her role as a member of the State's safety and security committee. She stated that school districts need one place where they can access best practices information. She urged the passage of **H 514**.

Clete Edmunson, Principal, New Plymouth School, said this legislation will provide great tools for schools. He stated in small schools, safety procedures are performed by the principal. He reported that his school was part of the school safety pilot and he has put in place the recommendations. He believes that this service should be made available to all schools in Idaho. He asked the Committee to please support **H 514**.

Mike Munger, Safety and Security Specialist, Boise School District, he explained his role on the State Department of Education's safe schools task force. He explained a situation in the Boise School District where a student was threatening to harm himself and with security and safety procedures in place they were able to thwart the situation. He said there are many things that have to be in place for safety and security. If there is a failure of those procedures, that often means a student is hurt or dead. There is that expectation that schools must deal with all endangerment incidents expertly. He outlined the responsibilities of principals, which now includes things such as hazardous waste, weapons and mental health issues. There is no lack of desire from principals for safe schools; what is lacking is the expertise.

Mr. Munger emphasized there is the expectation of schools that every night every student will be returned home healthy and safe, but there is no central training resources, no repository for best practices and few expert recommendations. Some of the only help school districts are currently getting is from vendors trying to sell safety and security. What districts really need is one highly trained person surveying the building and reporting necessary adjustments. In **H 514**, the Division would train and supply that resource; he urge to move the bill forward with a do pass recommendation.

Rob Winslow, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA), said they are in favor of **H 514**. The rural and small schools especially need this service.

Molly M. Stein, Ed. D, Superintendent of Schools, Soda Springs Joint School District No. 150, submitted her written testimony in support of **H 514** (see attachment 7).

Representative Horman concluded the presentation stating that neither teachers nor principals nor staff receives the necessary training in safety and security to fully prevent a crisis.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if annual assessments will be conducted at every school every year. **Representative Horman** replied the annual safety assessments will happen every year. The security assessments would be on a three-year rotation.

Chairman Mortimer asked if the bill is covering safety as well as security. **Representative Horman** replied the OSSS will house both the safety inspectors and the security assessors.

Senator Souza asked if in the bill there is a definition regarding safety and security. **Representative Horman** said the safety inspection is about building code violations and is mandatory to correct. The security assessment is about the school climate, visitor policies and culture. **Senator Souza** asked if the security assessment would give recommendations regarding school access points. **Representative Horman** replied in the affirmative. She reported the remodel the Genesse School District did to control access to a school building. She stated the security recommendations are to be voluntary.

Senator Souza asked if there is a safety concern for public schools, why are public elections still held inside the schools? **Captain Shankel** replied that school elections do present a security issue. He explained how schools work with the election offices to locate polling sites away from student activity.

Senator Souza asked if part of the fiscal impact creates a full-time position. **Representative Horman** explained the additional funds from the General Fund would be used with the current funding sources to cover the wages and all other costs.

Senator Ward-Engelking said everything needs to be done to ensure the safety of the teachers and students.

MOTION:

Senator Ward-Engelking moved to send **H 514** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion.

Senator Souza said she believes deeply in safety and security but letting hundreds of people into schools for elections makes no sense. She is concerned about starting another agency that could be prone to grow larger over time. Safety and security should be administered at the local level. She said she will not be supporting **H 514**.

The motion passed by **voice vote**. **Senators Den Hartog** and **Souza** requested to be recorded as voting nay.

Senator Ward-Engelking will carry **H 514** to the floor.

ADJOURNED:

There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary