

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

- DATE:** Tuesday, March 22, 2016
- TIME:** 1:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Nonini, Patrick, Souza, Den Hartog, Anthon, Rohn (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 1:00 p.m.
- PRESENTATION:** Nellie Christensen, page, Idaho State Senate, was bid farewell from the Committee. Chairman Mortimer gave her a gift and letters of recommendation and appreciation. He thanked her for her hard work and pleasant attitude. **Ms. Christensen** said she has learned how much the Committee and the Senate care about education and want Idaho children to receive a good education. She stated that her peers often believe that only they and their parents care about their grades. Her hope when she returns home is to convey that message to them. She reported to the Committee her future plans and thanked them for their support.
- MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Souza** moved to approve the Minutes from February 25, 2016. **Senator Nonini** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- Senator Souza** moved to approve the Minutes from March 1, 2016. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- Senator Nonini** moved to approve the Minutes from March 10, 2016. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- H 603** **Representative DeMordaunt** presented **H 603**: Relating to Education, Provide for Staff Allowance and Related Provisions. As this will probably be his last presentation to this Committee, he thanked the Committee for the opportunity to work with them over the years to make a difference in education and in children's lives.
- Representative DeMordaunt** said this legislation is in regard to student mobility and school funding. He explained that today's families are mobile and students switch schools throughout the year, creating a fluctuation in school populations. Sometimes students will change schools due to bullying or medical problems. There are some schools that are more impacted by those transfers and have a large number of students coming to them mid-year, resulting in a financial impact. This legislation is an attempt to rectify the situation.

**Representative DeMordaunt** said this bill would allow school districts and public charter schools to receive salary-based apportionment based on adjusted mid-term support units. He explained the funding equation that would be used. Currently, all salary-based apportionment funds are based solely on mid-term support units. He handed-out a chart which reported the four-year funding cycle of the schools that report the most enrollment fluctuations and said had the legislation been in place this would be the results of the last four years (see attachment 1). He spoke about the 97 percent funding protection that is currently in place and explained the bill's 3 percent fluctuation equation. **Representative DeMordaunt** explained the legislation's 3 percent band, plus or minus 100 percent that schools should be able to manage. Once a school's enrollment goes over the 3 percent, it would be able to receive additional funds. He said the fiscal note is based on the average from the last four years.

**TESTIMONY:**

**Tom LeClaire**, President, Coalition of Idaho Charter School Families, spoke in support of **H 603**. He said Representative DeMordaunt has come forward with a great piece of legislation that addresses an important issue. As students move from school to school it gives the receiving schools the funds they need.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** said she is supportive of funds for schools that receive mobile students. She asked if the charter schools would have the ability to receive these funds. **Mr. LeClaire** replied in the affirmative and emphasized that many of the schools will experience growth in transfer student enrollment. Many schools across the State will benefit from this legislation.

**Senator Souza** said that many schools on the list provided by Representative DeMordaunt are online schools. She asked why Richard McKenna Charter School has so many mid-year student transfers. **Mr. LeClaire** said Richard McKenna Charter School and others are specifically designed for at-risk students. The traditional schools send their at-risk students to those schools because of their ability to teach that type of student. He explained that in a crisis situation, online schools are the easiest way for a parent to change their child's environment.

**Stephanie Rose**, Vice President, Coalition of Charter School Families, said the aim is to achieve equal funding for all schools. She gave examples of students who have moved to virtual schools and explained why. She stated this legislation will give fair and equal funding for all students. She urged the passage of **H 603**.

**Amy Chadez**, Idaho Virtual Academy (IVA), told of her experience as an educator and administrator. She said there are cost discrepancies in schools and appreciates the Committee's willingness to address that issue. She reported about the IVA's teachers and the different subjects that they instruct. She explained about the open enrollment throughout the year and told of an elementary student who is benefiting from the virtual school. **Ms. Chadez** spoke about the support that is given to students and parents and said IVA makes a difference to students, one at a time. She is grateful for the Idaho's position on school choice and urged the Committee to support **H 603**.

**Kelly Edginton**, Head of School, IVA, said the Committee seems to understand the challenges that late enrollment brings to schools. **H 603** takes steps to address the funding issue and urged the support of its passage.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked if charter schools currently have the 97 percent floor protection clause. **Ms. Edginton** replied in the negative.

**Monti Pittman**, Director, Idaho College and Career Readiness Academy (ICCRA), reported to the Committee that the enrollment of ICCRA had a 78 percent increase at mid-year. He gave examples of the students that ICCRA serves and explained how they work to ensure that students will complete their schooling. He urged the passage of **H 603**.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked for clarification regarding the changes in sections 2 and 3. **Chairman DeMordaunt** replied the bill has a sunset clause. He explained that movement of the sections is the method to implement the sunset clause.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked if the eight schools on the handout are the only schools that break the 3 percent benchmark. **Chairman DeMordaunt** replied in the affirmative. He explained that many schools receive and lose students throughout the year. They vast majority of schools only experience a 1 percent or fewer differential of students.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** said it was her belief there would be a plan that would allow more money to go with the student if they went to a new school. She asked him if he could explain the 3 percent benchmark. **Chairman DeMordaunt** stated this bill does allow more money to go to schools if it experiences an influx of students greater than 3 percent of the initial enrollment. He explained that the increase of students creates staffing problems and these funds are to address those issues.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked why only fund the increase at the 75 percent level. **Chairman DeMordaunt** explained the majority of students will enroll at the new school at the beginning of the second semester.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked if the 3 percent qualification was removed, what would be the fiscal impact? **Chairman DeMordaunt** said there would be an increase of approximately \$400,000.

**Chairman DeMordaunt** said the testimony from the schools speaks for itself. These schools are a very real safety net for the at-risk student. This is a difficult piece of legislation because there are so many different opinions as to how to get the funding. He believes that this legislation is good and hopes they will move it forward.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** said it is her understanding there is only a \$400,000 difference to cover all schools that experience growth above the 3 percent level. She said that the Governor's recommendation was \$3 million to cover the mobility issue. It seems there is room to do more.

**MOTION:** **Senator Souza** moved to send **H 603** with a **do pass** recommendation. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion.

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **H 603** to the 14th Order for amendment. **Senator Anthon** seconded the motion.

**Senator Anthon** said in reviewing the budgeted numbers, there are funds available for this legislation. The solution is limited for very few schools. The schools **H 603** helps are necessary and they need the additional funds. But, he stated all schools could use the additional funding. He said he would like to see **H 603** be amendment so that more schools could benefit.

**Senator Souza** said she cannot support the substitute motion because the hour is late. If sent to the amending order it could be stalled for another year. She recommended going forward as is, and then return next year to make revisions.

**Senator Patrick** said he isn't sure what the amendments would accomplish.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** said it is important to provide funding for all the students that are affected by mobility. There needs to be enough funding provided to all schools.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked if the bill is sent to the amending order would the House Education Committee meet again? **Chairman DeMordaunt** replied his Committee would meet again if necessary. He explained that the legislation has been carefully crafted to meet many different contingencies. He is concerned that any changes at the late hour would stall the bill.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** said it is important to see mobility funding this year and it is too late to make changes. He is in support of the original motion.

The substitution motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Mortimer will carry **H 603** to the floor.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 1:48 p.m.

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Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn Mohr  
Secretary