

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 23, 2017

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Lincoln Auditorium WW2

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Guthrie, Crabtree, Buckner-Webb, and Ward-Engelking

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Nonini

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 3:06 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Guthrie** moved to approve the Minutes of January 25, 2017. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Vice Chairman Thayn moved to approve the Minutes of January 26, 2017. **Senator Winder** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Senator Winder moved to approve the Minutes of January 30, 2017. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Senator Crabtree moved to approve the Minutes of January 31, 2017. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Senator Ward-Engelking moved to approve the Minutes of February 1, 2017. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

RS 25337 **Senator Guthrie** asked for unanimous consent to send **RS 25337** to State Affairs Committee for print. He explained this legislation is to address education transportation regarding field trips. During the downturn in the recession these opportunities were omitted in statute. This is to reinstate the ability for teachers to add field trips to their curriculum and for the State to provide the funding.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Chairman Mortimer passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Thayn.

DOCKET NO. 08.0203.1701 **Idaho Content Standards – Science.** **Vice Chairman Thayn** said this docket was heard in the House Education Committee. He explained to the audience the procedures regarding the writing and accepting of rules. He said today they are going to allow testimony regarding this agenda item and explained how the proceedings will occur.

Sherri Ybarra, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Department of Education (SDE) said the rule that is to be heard today is a temporary rule and asked the Committee to take action today. She said Scott Cook, Standards Coordinator, SDE is out of town but is on the phone listening and can answer any questions. She explained the review process that was put into place to develop the Idaho science standards for schools. She commented science standards need to reflect the reality of today. If the Committee chooses to do nothing, Idaho science standards will revert back to science standards developed almost two decades ago. She said the SDE has been operating under this temporary rule since December 2016.

Superintendent Ybarra said the committee that reviewed the standards consisted of 19 members from each region of the State. It was made up of teachers, business groups, scientists, parents, and higher education. The development and completion of the standards has taken almost three years. **Superintendent Ybarra** explained the public, through online and public forums, had the opportunity to provide feedback and input on the Idaho standards. There were over 400 comments and only 17 were negative regarding the new standards.

Superintendent Ybarra said the main difference in today's Idaho written science standards by Idaho people is the expectation that science is a verb. She explained the new standards take into consideration the act of "doing" science rather than reading from a book. She gave an example of how the learning process has been enriched with the new standards. She explained there is a link where you can go to better understand the process and read the names of the Idaho people who were on the committee.

Senator Winder stated the legislative procedure of rules is to not amend but to delete by section. He stated that the House deleted five out of the 375 standards. He asked if any irreparable harm was done to the science standards with that deletion. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied it is her request these rules go through as is. The people that wrote these rules are knowledgeable in science and have spent three years to develop acceptable standards. She emphasized the need for the rules to go forward as written.

Senator Winder asked what harm is done to the rules in general if the five out of the 375 that were rejected by the House are rejected by the Senate. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied that is the Senate's decision. She explained the standards are the minimum requirements that teachers must teach. As Superintendent of Public Instruction it is her preference that they all go forward as written. The compromise is to get the majority of the rules approved.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked when the five standards were rejected was it because they didn't want the topics taught or did they suggest the standards be rewritten. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied the House requested a more balanced approach to those five sections. She emphasized that school districts can still teach those topics. **Vice Chairman Thayn** stated these are temporary standards. At the end of this session, the standards go away and in 2018 they will return as pending rules with the standards. He asked if it is their intention to bring back all 375 standards and rewrite the five that were rejected. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied they all will return in 2018. She is asking that the temporary rules be extended through the end of the year so the SDE does not have to rely on the nearly two decade old standards.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked if these standards are currently being taught. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied in the affirmative. **Senator Ward-Engelking** said it seems that legislators are writing curriculum and we are not in the position to be experts in this field. The standards were vetted by teachers and scientists. She asked for more information regarding the development of the standards. **Superintendent Ybarra** said she has great respect for the standards development process which took three years. She said the information for the standards came from representatives of each region in the State and explained the processes and hearings that took place to develop these 375 standards. She said it is her preference these 375 standards go forward as is. She stated as Superintendent of Public Instruction it is her job to protect the students of Idaho and their learning. It is her desire not to revert to the old standards.

Chairman Mortimer said the SDE has been through the rules review process many times and stated it is not uncommon for rules to have deletions in the process. **Superintendent Ybarra** agreed. She said these are temporary rules and will go out for more comments before they return to the Committees in the 2018 Session as pending rules. She is asking that this temporary rule is extended so the SDE does not have to revert back to the old science standards.

Chairman Mortimer said the rules come forward from the SDE and it is thoroughly reviewed and vetted by the experts. The House and Senate Committees review the rule and make suggestions. The final product often results in a better set of rules. He asked if Superintendent Ybarra would comment. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied that is a great statement.

Senator Winder asked if only those five changes are omitted will the science standards need to revert back to the old standards. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied no, the 370 would move forward.

Chairman Mortimer asked if all 375 science standards were rejected would the science standards revert back to the old science standards. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied in the affirmative.

Senator Winder asked if one body approves a set of rules and the other rejects the same rules what is the outcome. **Dennis Stevenson**, Administrator and Rules Coordinator, Division of Administration replied this is a temporary rule that must be approved by a concurrent resolution. This is generally done by an omnibus resolution which would extend all the temporary rules. He said if the Senate were to reject this rule and refused to adopt the concurrent resolution that extends the temporary rule all temporary rules would die. The temporary rule would expire at the end of the session and the old standards would replace the current standards.

Superintendent Ybarra stated she is the Superintendent before she is anything else. Her decisions rest with the children of Idaho at all times. She believes science is a verb and teaching science needs to move in that direction. This curriculum allows students to show what they know versus having someone stand in front of the classroom and teach them to regurgitate facts. She said, the SDE wants Idaho students to have 21st-century capabilities so that they can compete in a global society.

TESTIMONY: The following people spoke in favor of keeping the science standards as they are written:

Ed Wardwell

Walter Grimshaw (see Attachment 1)

Jen Pierce (see Attachment 2)

Dr. Barbara Louise Bowling (see Attachment 3)

Thomas Trotter

Dave Greger: (see Attachment 4)

Dr. Amber Labelle

John Seger

Jennifer LaForge

Eric Lecta

Jonathan Oppimhiemer, Government Relations Director, Idaho Conservation League

Henry Krewer

Dr. Leslie Adkins Elliot, Boise State University (see Attachment 5)

Alyson Martin, Doing What We Can, Citizens for Climate Change

Dave Christenson

Chris Taylor, K-12 Curriculum Supervisor Science and History, Boise School District (see Attachment 6)

Brett Karcher

Holly Paquette

Jamie Richmond

Veronica Richmond

Clayton Richards, Senior, Boise High School

The following submitted written testimony in favor of keeping the science standards as they are written:

Stephanie Hanson (see Attachment 7)

Dr. Paul Dawson (see Attachment 8)

Kathy Reavy, Ph.D. MSN, BSN, RN (see Attachment 9)

Their testimony discussed issues regarding the following: teaching climate change is necessary; climate change is not a political statement; people are causing global warming; in omitting the five rules only a one sided perspective will be taught; the current standards create conversations of the positive and negative impacts in the climate; the earth is warmer and dryer; climate change is real; adopt the current curriculum as written; migratory habits and forest fires can all be attributed to climate change; give Idaho students the instructional tools they need; the omission of the five standards hurt Idaho students; accurate science knowledge is a core value; politicians should not dictate what students are being taught; while the standards are the minimum not all districts will teach beyond the minimum; and science works with new models, climate change is the new model.

The following person spoke in opposition of all the new Idaho science standards:

Bob Compton, Midvale Idaho

Mr. Compton said he is not in favor of the rule. The last set of science standards were called next-generation science standards and they were atheists' standards. Promoting this bill promotes the teaching of religion and atheism. He asked that the standards be rejected in whole and rewritten with a better balanced staff.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Den Hartog asked if schools are not currently teaching these standards what is the timeline for implementation. **Chris Taylor** replied the Boise School District has had time to implement the new standards. The committee, on which he is a member of, has been working with smaller school districts to find curriculum to teach the new standards. If the standards are in place they will find the curriculum.

Senator Winder asked if the rules are approved how soon would the science standards be introduced into the classroom lessons. **Mr. Taylor** replied Boise is currently using the new standards. In speaking with other districts it is his understanding it could take about a year to make the changes. The Idaho Science Standards Committee will then assess curriculum materials.

Senator Winder said because these are temporary rules they will go out for further comment. He asked what that timeline will be. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied this is a temporary rule, but some school districts are already teaching to the standards. She said if the rules are approved the school districts that are not teaching the new standards will start implementation in August 2017.

Senator Winder asked if a district has the option after these are passed to either delay teaching them or not teach them in their districts. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied in the negative. She said these are the standards adopted by the state if they go forward today. Because these are temporary rules they will go out to the public for comment and return to the Legislature in 2018.

Senator Winder asked when will the standards actually be implemented in the schools. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied many districts are currently teaching them. The other districts are waiting for the Legislature to act before they implement.

Chairman Mortimer said the State standards are a minimum standard. The local school districts have the prerogative to teach more than the minimum standard. **Superintendent Ybarra** agreed.

Chairman Mortimer asked Mr. Taylor if the Boise School District has the curriculum to teach the standards in question as well as to teach beyond the standards. **Mr. Taylor** replied in the affirmative. **Chairman Mortimer** asked is there a significant difference between the words "changing climate" and "climate change." **Mr. Taylor** replied he did not think so. He said with the standards developed the Standards Committee was very deliberate and cognizant by adding "natural causes" and "human impact" to climate change. He explained the Standards Committee wants students to analyze and collect data to come to their own conclusions. **Chairman Mortimer** asked if in every place there is the terminology "climate change" could it be changed to "changing climate" and have the same meaning. **Mr. Taylor** replied in the affirmative. He said there needs to be clarity on the content limits.

Senator Ward-Engelking said she feels strongly that the science standards need to be adopted in their entirety so that this content is taught. She asked for information regarding the procedure to reverse the House's decision to reject the science rules. **Dennis Stevenson** replied rules must be approved by concurrent resolution. Both parties must come to agreement on a set of rules. He said if the parties can't come to agreement the rule will die and because these are temporary rules they will revert back to the old standards at the end of the session.

Vice Chairman Thayn thanked the audience for their testimony and he appreciated the civil procedures.

**PASSED THE
GAVEL:**

Vice Chairman Thayn passed the gavel to Chairman Mortimer.

Chairman Mortimer said there are many options in the decisions for this rule. He stated the Committee could accept the findings of the house committee and have 370 of the 375 standards in the classroom, or accept all standards and not come to a concurrent resolution thereby no standards would be accepted. He said because of the lateness of the day he is going to hold the rule until Monday, February 27th and there will not be any new public testimony on this rule. He said this will give members of each of the committees the time to discuss other possible options.

ADJOURNED:

There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 5.02 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary