

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 06, 2017

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Nonini, Den Hartog, Guthrie, Crabtree, 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 3:00 p.m. and read a poem titled "Greatness," from Edgar A. Guest's *A Heap O' Living Along Life's Highway*.

S 1103 **Relating to School Districts: Amend, Clarify, Revise and Make Technical Corrections**, held over from the meeting of March 2, 2017. **Senator Mary Souza**, District 4, reviewed the proposed legislation, the purpose of which is to increase low turnout in school board elections. **Senator Souza** stated that the bill: 1.) moves the election date from May of odd years to November of even years; 2.) allows local school boards the option of retaining zone voting or opening to district-wide voting; and 3.) if a school board stays with zone voting, the bill requires that it align trustee voting zones to the underlying precinct voting zones to accommodate problems associated when zones overlap several precincts.

TESTIMONY: **Senator Souza** read excerpts from several letters of testimony, along with an editorial from the *Coeur d' Alene Press*, all expressing support for **S 1103** (see Attachment 1). The rationale of those supporting the legislation centered on increasing voter turnout and attracting a broader range of citizens to run as candidates.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked if changing from nonpartisan to partisan voting dates could be a problem and wondered if a better option might be a change to odd years in November when cities vote. **Senator Souza** said that option was considered and discounted because it was believed city elections would be less likely to attract county voters. **Senator Ward-Engelking** also questioned voters' interest in school board candidates during a general election when top-of-the-ticket candidates are the major focus. She also wondered if school board candidates would need to raise more money during that election cycle.

Karen Echeverria, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), testified in opposition to **S 1103**. Objections centered on: 1.) difficulties involved in overlaying precinct boundaries with school district boundaries and retaining equitable distribution of populations in each trustee zone; 2.) the fiscal impact to school districts; and 3.) moving the election dates from nonpartisan to partisan ballots. She also said that having trustees take office on January 1 would not work well with the school schedule and would make it difficult for new trustees to properly evaluate their superintendents (see Attachment 2).

Senator Den Hartog asked if ISBA has concerns with a mix-up in ballots where trustee zones don't align. **Ms. Echeverria** said counties are trusted to distribute appropriate ballots.

Chairman Mortimer asked for more information on trustee zones. **Ms. Echeverria** answered that most districts consist of five zones with one trustee representing the population in each of those zones.

TESTIMONY: **Kelli Brassfield**, representing the Idaho Association of Counties, spoke in opposition to the legislation, citing concerns with aligning school trustee zones with precinct boundaries and the added costs involved.

Wayne Rush, Superintendent, Emmett School District, testified in opposition to the legislation, citing the difficulty of aligning the school year and fiscal year with the election. He said that Emmett School District votes as an entire district without zones, which he said brought in a broader range of candidates.

Senator Den Hartog asked Mr. Rush if switching voting by zones to district-wide changed the number or types of candidates for the trustee positions. **Mr. Rush** said it did not. **Vice Chairman Thayn** asked if the Emmett District has no choice to switch district to zone. **Mr. Rush** said it did not have that choice.

Rob Winslow, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA) testified in opposition to **S 1103**, expressed concerns about mid-year disruptions and difficulties in setting the budget.

The following people submitted written testimony in support of **S 1103**:

Carroll Carey (see Attachment 3);

Jim Hightower (see Attachment 4);

Kathleen Sims (see Attachment 5);

Todd Banducci (see Attachment 6);

Tom Hamilton, Terri Seymour, Ann Seddon, Brent Regan (see Attachment 7);

Gary Nystrom (see Attachment 8);

Dan Gookin (see Attachment 9); and

Len Crosby (see Attachment 10).

Senator Souza concluded her presentation by thanking those testifying and addressing their concerns. She asked the Committee to keep the stakeholders in mind and asked that **S 1103** be sent to the 14th Order for possible amendment.

MOTION: **Senator Guthrie** moved to send **S 1103** to the 14th Order for possible amendment. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved that **S 1103** be held in Committee. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion.

Chairman Mortimer called for a roll call vote. **Senators Nonini, Buckner-Webb, and Ward-Engelking** voted aye and **Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Guthrie, Crabtree** and **Chairman Mortimer** voted nay. The motion failed.

ORIGINAL MOTION: The vote on the original motion to send **S 1103** to the 14th Order for possible amendment passed by **voice vote**.

RS 25382 **Chairman Mortimer** addressed **RS 25382**, Relating to Higher Education, which he said has to do with articulation and transferability. He asked the Committee to consider unanimous consent.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT: **Vice Chairman Thayn** requested unanimous consent that **RS 25382** be sent to privileged committee for introduction. There were no objections.

RS 25451

Chairman Mortimer addressed **RS 25451**, Relating to Schools. He said the proposed legislation merits further consideration and asked consideration of unanimous consent to send to a privilege committee.

Senator Winder asked why the legislation warranted a print hearing this late in the session. **Chairman Mortimer** said he felt it was important because the proposed legislation gives direction to the State Board of Education on disposition of monies.

**UNANIMOUS
CONSENT:**

Senator Guthrie requested unanimous consent that **RS 25451** be sent to a privilege committee for introduction. There were no objections.

PRESENTATION: **Mike Bullock**, Account Executive, Edgenuity, presented on the digital curriculum provider via slides to illustrate examples of how students interact and learn using the system. Edgenuity also includes tools for teachers that enhance traditional education (see Attachment 11). He said the digital tools do not change how students are taught, but they add another layer to help prepare them for high-stakes tests and also provide data for teachers in their evaluation of a student's performance.

Senator Den Hartog asked if Edgenuity is being implemented on a contract basis in Idaho's districts. **Mr. Bullock** said it is currently in a small number of districts but there is no partnership agreement with the State.

Mr. Bullock illustrated via video how teachers work through the program with each student and how it ties in with mastery based learning to fill in the gaps of missed standards. He said the primary goal is to provide individualization for each student for optimum results.

PRESENTATION: **Emily Bybee**, Area Partner Manager, Imagine Learning said the core mission of Imagine Learning is to teach language, literacy and numeracy to the children of the world, changing lives and opening doors of opportunity for them (see Attachment 12). **Ms. Bybee** described how the program began at Taft Elementary School and went on to receive a contract with the State Department of Education serving school districts with K-3 literacy funding and specialized needs.

Ms. Bybee introduced Tracy Zarradi, formerly a teacher at Taft Elementary, now an ELL teacher at South Junior High in Boise. Using a video presentation, **Ms. Zarradi** reviewed the challenges and successes of two students who used the technology as aids in learning. **Ms. Bybee** shared other success stories and explained how the technology helps students achieve.

Chairman Mortimer asked how many schools in Idaho are using the technology. **Ms. Bybee** said the program is currently in 75 districts and over 200 schools, mostly with English language learners.

PRESENTATION: **Rudi Lewis**, Chief Operating Officer, Silverback Learning Solutions, presented an update on the technology, which helps students receive personalized learning, captures data around each student and provides learning plans and interventions. **Mr. Lewis** said that through the IASA and a consortium of over 85 districts in the State, the majority of Idaho students are on Silverback.

Mr. Lewis described how the program can guide the entire employee process for principals and administrators while empowering teachers to actively take charge of their professional growth. He illustrated how the system assists the collection and storage of data, both on the evaluation side and on the teacher side, and said new templates have been created to meet the updated Master Premium rules.

Chairman Mortimer observed that technology is being used increasingly for administrators and teachers to help them understand how they can build portfolios in instruction and the management of school systems.

ADJOURNED: There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary

Jeanne Clayton
Assistant Secretary