

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

- DATE:** Tuesday, January 23, 2018
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Nonini, Den Hartog, Guthrie, Crabtree, and Ward-Engelking
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Buckner-Webb
- 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:** **Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC), Dr. Anthony Fernandez**, President, introduced the LCSC staff in the audience and announced LCSC is celebrating the 125-year anniversary of the founding of the LCSC Normal School. He explained the Normal School was established during an economic depression with no appropriations from the state.
- Dr. Fernandez** stated LCSC reduces costs and increases accessibility for students with minimal tuition increases and the elimination of administrative fees. He stated the increase in internal scholarship dollars available through the LCSC Foundation and the continual pursuit of external scholarship funding has allowed LCSC to earn the ranking of first in the nation for servicing the needs of non-traditional and working adult students.
- Dr. Fernandez** stated the quantity and quality of dual-credit classes is important at LCSC. He said more than 1,000 students are taking advantage of the program. The quality of the LCSC dual-credit program is maintained by properly credentialed high school teachers delivering the program and course evaluations which correspond with LCSC.
- Dr. Fernandez** highlighted student employability and explained it is ensured by a partnership at the local Idaho Department of Labor office. Customized degrees are offered so students can combine multiple areas of interest into a degree at the associate or even the baccalaureate level.
- Dr. Fernandez** explained the student retention and incentive standards at LCSC and the programs for at-risk-students; such as TRiO Student Support Services, and College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP).

**Dr. Fernandez** stated the following needs for higher education:

- Recognition and affirmation of the different roles, missions, and students of Idaho public higher education institutions.
- Competitive salaries to attract the best faculty and staff. He said current faculty salaries are 86 percent less than their peers in other states.
- Increase in need-based scholarships. He stated nearly half LCSC students are part-time due to work. They would enjoy the benefits from tuition assistance.
- LCSC is currently looking for more institutional autonomy to quickly meet the changing needs of students, faculty, staff, and local industry.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** asked what the roadblocks are to institutional autonomy. **Dr. Fernandez** replied purchasing and explained State contracts limit their ability to get the best price for products. He gave examples of some instances.

**Senator Thayn** asked if an executive to oversee institutions was implemented what would be the ramifications. **Dr. Fernandez** said each institutions' presidents understand the merits. He believed it would be best to hire a consultant to help with the decision. **Dr. Fernandez** stated until all the factors are determined it is difficult for him to answer that question. .

**Chairman Mortimer** asked what are the opportunities for autonomy in the areas of human resources and personnel. **Dr. Fernandez** stated that LCSC does use the State to process their payroll and work with them to resolve any issues. Currently, LCSC is not equipped to take over the personnel responsibilities in the same manner as the State offers.

**Chairman Mortimer** clarified his question. He asked if LCSC has the right to hire and dismiss employees without consulting the State's personnel department. **Dr. Fernandez** responded in the affirmative and explained they must use the appropriate forms.

**Dr. Fernandez** announced his retirement and thanked the Committee for their support of higher education.

**Chairman Mortimer** thanked Dr. Fernandez for his years of service. He said the Committee will miss working with him.

**PASSED THE GAVEL:**

Chairman Mortimer passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Thayn.

**DOCKET NO. 08-0202-1702**

**Rules Governing Uniformity – The Standards for Idaho School Buses and Operations.** **Duncan Robb**, Chief Policy Advisor, Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) presented **Docket No. 08-0202-1702** and stated the changes are in regards to the changes in the national landscape and changes in the procedures at SDE. This rule is designed to get students to and from school safely. Idaho Code §33-1006 requires that all Idaho school buses adhere to the manual and comply with the national-level and the Idaho-level for reimbursements.

**Mr. Robb** said the sections of the purposed rule change include: Standards for construction, standards to withdrawal buses from service, and standards regarding school bus operation. He said the language changes reflect what is currently being practiced and standards set by law enforcement.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked if there are additional reporting requirements to SDE. **Mr. Robb** stated to the best of his knowledge those are all of them. **Derek Newland**, Director of Student Transportation, SDE commented he is not aware of any new changes.

**Chairman Mortimer** stated there appears to be many alternate routes for school buses to use. He asked if those routes are communicated to Mr. Newland. **Mr. Newland** explained safety routes of travel are dictated by the local districts and the standards are set by the local board; those standards are reviewed annually.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked if any additional safety requirements are imposed upon the districts by the new manual. **Mr. Newland** responded in the negative.

**Senator Thayn** asked if seatbelts would be implemented on school buses. **Mr. Newland** responded in the negative. He said other states have had them implemented.

**Senator Guthrie** questioned if, on the conformity or nonconformity issue, there is anything in this rule change that will make it more limiting to school districts. **Mr. Newland** emphasized that these are the current safety standards that are being followed.

**Senator Guthrie** asking if these rules will make things more or less restrictive. **Mr. Robb** replied the contents of the manual reflect what is already in practice at the SDE. He said the approval of the docket would not change how the State reimburses districts for vehicle usage.

**Senator Den Hartog** noted that, last year, there was much discussion on the safety standards for school buses specified in Idaho Code §33-1006. She asked if the buses must be conventional yellow school buses. **Mr. Robb** stated it is his understanding the school bus reference in the standards must be the yellow buses. He said it is to be more aligned with federal safety laws. He emphasized with the passage of the proposed rules, school districts will not experience any changes in expectations.

**Senator Thayn** asked if the past have any school districts been reimbursed for transportation on something other than a yellow school bus. **Mr. Robb** replied in the negative.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked if there are schools that use other types of vehicles to transport students. **Mr. Newland** said it is up to the discretion of the district to use other colored buses.

**Chairman Mortimer** questioned whether non-yellow buses are allowed for extracurricular activities (i.e. other than transporting students to/from school) or if those are restricted to just yellow school buses. **Mr. Newland** believes that is up to the district.

**Chairman Mortimer** requested clarification on the section regarding emergency evacuation plans within the bus. He asked if those rules are rewrites or revisions. **Mr. Newland** stated his belief that it is a revision.

**Senator Guthrie** brought up a previous question as to whether buses need to be yellow. **Mr. Newland** thinks it is in Title 49 CFR that bus color is defined. Mr. Newland specified that he does not have oversight of coach buses and others used, so he can not verify their safety standards.

**Senator Guthrie** expressed frustration at the reimbursement process and the confusion as to which buses can be reimbursed. **Mr. Newland** believes the new system will help with the process.

**Senator Den Hartog** was not ready to accept who has oversight of the non-yellow buses that are used by districts and expressed frustration that school districts have found efficiencies, but are unable to be reimbursed. She concludes that, if this is an efficiency oversight, this manual has not solved the problem.

**Senator Thayn**, when rereading the rule regarding what is reimbursable and what is not, found that sporting events are still not reimbursable, which are the types of events that Senator Thayn believes the coach buses are used.

**MOTION:** **Senator Guthrie** moved to accept **Docket No. 08-0202-1702**. **Senator Mortimer** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**DOCKET NO:** **08-0203-1702** **Rules Governing Thoroughness - College Entrance Exam Graduation Requirement.** **Mr. Robb** presented **Docket No. 08-0203-1702**. He said this rule has two components; the first change is to undo a premature change. He explained the language impacts the current testing rules regarding student graduation. Mr. Robb said the second component in the rule addresses rare situations for some students where the requirements for the entrance exams created a barrier to going to college. The proposed rule changes will benefit students going on to college. **Karlynn Laraway**, Director of Assessment and Accountability, SDE, explained the changes are from the counselors and reviewed the language changes made to the language to meet current standards.

**MOTION:** **Senator Mortimer** moved to accept **Docket No. 08-0203-1702**. **Senator Guthrie** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**DOCKET NO.** **08-0203-1703** **Rules Governing Thoroughness – The Idaho Extended Content Standards.** **Mr. Robb** said this **Docket No. 08-0203-1703** will replace the standards for the one percent of students in the State with cognitive disabilities. He said the proposal repeals the prior standards because they were out-of-date and not in alignment with current State standards.

**DISCUSSION:** **Dr. Charlie Silva**, Director of Special Education, SDE, explained the process to develop the new standards and said teachers were from across the State and collaborated with 24 other states to develop The Idaho Content Standards Core Content Connectors (The Connectors). **Senator Thayn** requested more clarification about the collaboration. **Dr. Silva** said they wanted to achieve the following: align The Connectors with the Idaho standards; align with the assessment; and set priorities for establishing what needs to be taught to the students.

**Senator Mortimer** asked if there was a basic format standard used to begin this discussion or if it The Connectors were developed from scratch. **Dr. Silva** explained that the work was driven by a national and state collaborative which was put into place to assist all states in aligning their standards. **Dr. Silva** said she did not personally participate in the process. She said a framework was provided to the group to begin the conversation regarding aligning the requirements to the State standards.

**Senator Mortimer** asked if replacing a 50 page document with a 650 page document was necessary. **Dr. Silva** explained she is not familiar with the old standards. She said those using the new Contents find them to be useful and are appreciated.

**MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to hold **Docket No: 08-0203-1703** until the call of the chair. **Senator Guthrie** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

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

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:28 p.m.

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Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn Mohr  
Secretary

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Samuel Griffin  
Assistant-Secretary