

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 07, 2018

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

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 3:00 p.m.

RS 26085 **Relating to School Districts; Amend, Make Technical Corrections, Revise Certain Dates.** **Senator Mary Souza**, District 4, presented **RS 26085**. She stated this legislation has been discussed in the past. This proposed legislation changes school board elections to city elections. The elections will be held in November of odd years. She said the Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA) heard a resolution for this compromise at their annual convention; the membership overwhelmingly approved. **Senator Souza** said the proposed legislation changes the election date and aligns ISBA activities with the new election dates.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Thayn** moved to send to **RS 26085** to print. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

RS 25886C1 **Relating to Education; Amend and Revise.** **Duncan Robb**, Chief Policy Advisor, State Department of Education (SDE) presented **RS 25886C1**. He said the proposed legislation addresses the wireless technology standards in Idaho Code § 33-1025. He explained the updated legislation would remove outdated wireless technology standards from code. It would task the existing Education Opportunity Resource Committee (EORC) with annually reviewing and recommending necessary changes of the standards to the SDE. He said the recommendation came from EORC. He explained the reason for the C1 is to keep the filtering requirements. **Mr. Robb** said under the Internet Privacy Act, federal law requires any entity receiving E-rate funds to use filtering.

MOTION: **Senator Guthrie** moved to send **RS 25886C1** to print. **Senator Winder** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

RS 25719 **Relating to the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship; Amend, Provide Funds, Make Technical Corrections.** **Marilyn Whitney**, Deputy Chief of Staff and Senior Special Assistant for Government Services and Education, Office of the Governor, presented **RS 25719**. She said the proposed legislation seeks to amend the State's Opportunity Scholarship. It is to provide the State Board of Education (SBE) the flexibility to use a portion of the funds appropriated for the scholarship to target adults who have earned some college credits, but have not earned a degree or certificate. She said this does not establish a new program nor is it dependent on an additional appropriation. This proposed legislation does address the recommendations from the Higher Education Task Force (Task Force) on access and affordability.

Ms. Whitney explained the Task Force's recommendations to remove affordability barriers to higher education to meet the 60 percent goal. She said the provisions in the proposed legislation add flexibility to the existing scholarship program with the intent the SBE would work with legislators, higher education institutions, and other stakeholders to bring specifics through administrative rulemaking.

MOTION:

Senator Winder moved to send **RS 25719** to print. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion.

Vice Chairman Thayn said he is interested to learn what rules the SBE will be considering.

The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: Advanced Opportunities (Adv Ops). **Matt McCarter**, Director, Student Engagement and Postsecondary Readiness, SDE, said Adv Ops is gaining recognition statewide and nationally. He explained the inquiries the SDE receives regarding Adv Ops. He said this program is exciting, cutting-edge and shifts the high school experience for Idaho students. He handed the Committee the detailed data of the program (Attachment 1).

Mr. McCarter detailed the per-student funding for grades seven through twelve to spend on advanced coursework and exams, the number of student participants, the credits earned, the total cost to the State, and the savings to families. He reviewed the coursework data and stated many aligned with career technical education coursework, as well as core educational courses. **Mr. McCarter** said overload credits are part of Adv Ops which help students earn an early graduation scholarship. He reported the number of overload credits taken in 2017. He said Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA) is the largest provider of overload credits.

Mr. McCarter said the legislation to provide funding for the College Advisors and Career Mentors programs have helped students navigate the options available through the Adv Ops program. He detailed the advising programs across the State to help students.

Mike Keckler, Chief Communication and Legislative Affairs Officer, SBE, presented information regarding the steady increased percentage of students earning dual credits and the increase per student of dual credits. He detailed the attributes of a dual credits student. He said the research conducted by the staff at the SBE showed students who completed dual credit earned higher GPA and have a higher retention rate. The number of high school graduates earning an associate degree is increasing. **Mr. Keckler** addressed the overall trends and gaps in the dual credit participation in the areas of economic status, ethnic groups, and gender. He stated the SBE is conducting more research as to how to best address those concerns (Attachment 2).

Senator Buckner-Webb asked if dual and advanced placement credits are accepted by colleges outside of Idaho. **Tracie Bent**, Chief Planning and Policy Officer, SBE replied advanced placement credits are accepted nationally. She said the variances are "how" they are accepted.

Senator Buckner-Webb asked if there is a cost benefit to taking dual credits over AP courses. **Ms. Bent** replied it varies based on the student goals or the specific high school's programs.

Senator Guthrie said the go on rate is stagnant yet there is growth in dual credits. He asked if there is a way to target those students who are not going on to post-secondary schooling. **Ms. Bent** said there are more students going on, but the overall percentage does not show a statistically significant increase. She said the SBE is examining the underserved populations with largest dual credit and go on gap to identify the barriers. She said the initiative on College and Career advising is important. It provides additional funding to the school districts, so they can work directly with students.

Mr. McCarter replied there is a time lag. More students in the lower grade levels are enrolling in dual credits. The hope is the go on rate will increase in the near future.

Chairman Mortimer asked if there are problems or concerns with the Adv Ops program. **Mr. McCarter** replied there are two challenges: schools which have a difficulty implementing the dual credits; and the group of students not served. The SDE and the SBE are gathering data to work to solve those problems

Chairman Mortimer asked Mr. McCarter to provide the Committee the high school dual credit data.

Vice Chairman Thayn reported the history of the program and said the goal was to have the parents as the instigators of their students' education. He stated this program has been very organic and is growing substantially. He said he is tracking two things: increase in SAT scores; and greater participation in the unserved population.

Senator Guthrie asked if there is a way to address the gender gap. **Mr. McCarter** said CTE programs may help.

Senator Crabtree said there are many things that ready a child for college. He asked if we are pushing students into academics and foregoing extracurricular activities. **Mr. McCarter** the statute requires a parent's signature for a student to participate in the hope there is a discussion regarding the rigor of the classes.

Chairman Mortimer asked if the SBE is seeing problems with the Adv Ops program. **Ms. Bent** replied barriers are student advising prior to the senior year and resources in the student's school district.

Chairman Mortimer asked what the SBE would like for the Adv Ops program. He stated the budget request is \$15 million. **Ms. Bent** replied they would like to see an increase in availability of the general education courses. She explained how the courses offered are determined in the school district.

Matt Freeman, Executive Director, SBE, replied the SBE is trying to identify the dual credit courses delivered through the institutions and offered on IDLA so a student could earn an associate degree through IDLA. He explained they are working with the College of Southern Idaho and the College of Western Idaho to develop that program.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if an associate degree could be earned through a virtual campus with IDLA being the foundation. **Mr. Freeman** replied the Task Force discussed the merits of a digital campus with IDLA. He stated IDLA is not a degree granting school; the student's home school transcripts the credits. He explained IDLA could help with the delivery of the content.

Chairman Mortimer said Tina Polishchuk is an integral part of this program. He asked her to comment about the program.

Tina Polishchuk, Statewide Coordinator of Advanced Opportunities, SDE, said this is the most exciting program she has helped develop. She said the advising piece has been a challenge and explained the high school and college advisors see their roles differently. The SDE is trying to formulate a bridge which will facilitate the transition between high school and college. The goal is to help the retention rate. She detailed why the go on rate at the end of high school does not matriculate to the fall college enrollment. She stated the out-of-district tuition and textbook fees are a barrier for some students.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 3:52 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary