

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, January 31, 2019

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, 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 3:02 p.m.

S 1030 On behalf of Senator Souza, **Senator Rice** presented **S 1030**, Relating to School Board Trustees; Amend, Revise, and Make Technical Corrections. He explained the bill corrects an oversight error for election dates. The other changes remove misplaced hyphens.

MOTION: **Senator Lent** moved to send **S 1030** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: **Terry Ryan**, Director, Bluum, introduced Macke Raymond, Ph.D., Director, Center for Research of Education Outcomes (CREDO), Hoover Institute, Stanford University. Dr. Raymond introduced Sofoklis Goulas, Ph.D., Senior Research Analyst CREDO at Stanford. He presented "Public Charter School Performance in Idaho: What the Data Tells Us."

Dr. Goulas said today's presentation will focus on two pillars of the study: 1.) Charter School demographics; and 2.) Charter School impacts. He spoke about the comparisons they made between charter and traditional public schools and detailed the demographics. He explained the testing program that was used to gather the learning results during a three-year period and compared charter and traditional school student growth. He stated the findings show that students in charter schools excel in learning.

In response to Committee questions, **Dr. Goulas** said there was limited diversity in the charter schools which contributes to the effectiveness of student learning. He stated for this study, the charter and traditional public school students in the comparison were demographically alike.

Dr. Raymond continued the presentation. To help the Committee understand how much more charter students learn, she explained the learning growth cycles for math and English for charter and traditional public school students. **Dr. Raymond** said the charter schools in rural areas performed higher than expected and the impact is significant. She said charter schools in Idaho are performing considerably well and detailed the academic gains made by students per grade level. She concluded her presentation by suggesting possible policy considerations (Attachment 1).

Chairman Mortimer thanked Drs. Goulas and Raymond for the presentation of their study. He said studies like these are beneficial and asked how often a study should be undertaken. They suggested a study every two to three years.

**RECORDING
LINK:**

To hear the complete CREDO presentation, go to:
<https://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2019/standingcommittees/SEDU/>.

**PASSED THE
GAVEL:**

Chairman Mortimer passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Thayn.

S 1029

Chairman Mortimer presented **S 1029**, Relating to the School Turnaround Act; Amend and Make Provisions. He explained the history of the proposed legislation. He said after observing student outcome data, he believes this proposed legislation will help schools perform better. He stated the program provides access to resources for schools or districts who are performing low on identified student outcomes, and with school turnaround experts, a plan would be developed to help the school meet the targeted goals.

Chairman Mortimer stated the program would be housed with the State Board of Education (SBE), which has the means to provide resources to those schools in the low performance quadrant. He explained the process and how the SBE will assist the schools. He spoke about how the turnaround experts would be chosen.

In reviewing the legislation, **Chairman Mortimer** detailed the personnel makeup of a school turnaround expert and the additional funding to administer the program. He explained how the independent experts would be determined and detailed the criteria those experts must possess. He explained the requirements for schools and the State Board of Education (SBE) role in the program. He outlined the reporting functions and timelines. **Chairman Mortimer** addressed the funding component and said there is a financial incentive for low- performing schools to participate.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Ward-Engelking asked if there are local school turnaround experts available and how would the services be selected. **Chairman Mortimer** replied there are national and regional experts. He hopes there are Statewide experts who better understand the culture of Idaho schools. He said the proposals would go out for bid.

Senator Crabtree stated schools are reluctant to take advice. He asked if the program is voluntary. **Chairman Mortimer** replied in the affirmative. He said rather than force schools to participate, the hope is they can see the benefits of participation; the goal is to help them help their students to achieve.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if Title One schools have federal turnaround money available. **Chairman Mortimer** replied in the affirmative. He said the State Department of Education (SDE) administers those funds. He emphasized those funds are limited to only Title One schools which perform at the bottom five percent.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if this proposed legislation would improve those efforts. **Chairman Mortimer** replied the proposed legislation is a voluntary program for all schools. This is a new approach which is designed to help those schools which are not Title One schools.

Senator Den Hartog asked if he knew how many of the schools in the bottom five percent are Title One Schools. **Chairman Mortimer** replied he didn't have that information.

Senator Den Hartog asked if he knew how many school turnaround experts were available in the region. **Chairman Mortimer** replied he is aware of several in this region. He said the proposed legislation addresses the criteria the turnaround experts must possess in order to be considered for a contract.

Senator Den Hartog asked if the measurements that were the qualifiers to determine the lowest five percent schools would be the same measurements used to determine whether the school turnaround intervention was successful. **Chairman Mortimer** replied proposed legislation gives flexibility to measure multiple qualifiers, such as literacy and school culture.

TESTIMONY:

Jason Kriezenbeck, Contract Lobbyist, Boise, said he worked on this legislation last year with Chairman Mortimer. He introduced Dr. Trent Kaufman, Chief Executive Officer, Education Direction, and an independent turnaround expert who will provide more information about turnaround teams.

Dr. Kaufman explained how the work his company provides helps schools raise educational measurements. He stated often low-performing schools have low morale. He outlined the volunteer aspect of turnaround consulting and how teachers participate. He assured the Committee that there are many turnaround providers, regionally and nationally. He illustrated the process of a turnaround team; they work to engage parents, teachers, and staff to determine the root causes for low performance and then develop a plan to achieve the new educational goals. He explained the coaching that is done to help teachers engage students.

Senator Den Hartog asked about the size and qualifications of the turnaround team. **Dr. Kaufman** explained the team size varies because it is dependent on the school's needs. He said coaches are former teachers or administrators with experience.

Senator Den Hartog said the fiscal note has a cost allocation. She asked if he could estimate the typical cost per school. **Dr. Kaufman** replied it depends on the range of services; the average cost is approximately \$160,000.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if there is data to show the initial effect of the turnaround intervention. **Dr. Kaufman** replied there is three-year data which show that there are average gains in English and math. Those gains average in the 30 to 40 percentiles.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if there is data to show the long term effects of a turnaround program on the school. **Dr. Kaufman** replied on average there was no difference. He explained the difference between "long-term" and "quick-hit" turnaround intervention. He emphasize that the culture of the school must be addressed to achieve long-term effectiveness.

In conclusion, **Chairman Mortimer** stated it is time for this legislation. Students, teachers, and the overall school need the ability to seek help in turning their school's performance around.

Senator Woodward asked for a clarification of the finances; state funding verses federal funding. **Chairman Mortimer** explained the current allocation, the federal funding, and how the proposed funding would be used in the schools

MOTION:

Senator Ward-Engelking moved to send **S 1029** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Winder** seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Ward-Engelking stated she supports this legislation for a variety of reasons, but mostly because this is a voluntary program which adds an additional tool to help schools.

Vice Chairman Thayn stated currently there is already \$750,000 allocated to the University of Idaho to help under-performing schools. He asked if Chairman Mortimer knew how those funds were being used. **Chairman Mortimer** replied the program has been in place for approximately three years. It has been used to help schools around the state. He did not know where the schools were in the evaluation process.

Senator Winder asked if the SDE and the SBE had an opinion on the proposed legislation.

TESTIMONY: **Marilyn Whitney**, Deputy Superintendent, Communications and Policy, SDE, said the SDE has reviewed the bill and because it is a voluntary program; the SDE has no objections.

Tracie Bent, Chief Planning and Policy Officer, SBE, said similar legislation was brought forth last year and at that time the Board reviewed it and agreed to support it.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Den Hartog** asked why the SBE would oversee the allocation of funds. **Chairman Mortimer** explained the SBE should oversee the program and detailed the distinction of the work between the SDE and the SBE. He said the University of Idaho has the resources to provide the assistance.

Vice Chairman Thayn said he hopes by working with school leadership, implementing different teaching strategies, and engaging parents, better pedagogical strategies will be developed and shared amongst the State's schools. He stated he will be voting for the bill.

VOICE VOTE: The motion to send **S 1029** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation passed by **voice vote**. **Senator Den Hartog** requested she be recorded as voting **nay**.

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

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Woodward** moved to approve the Minutes from January 9, 2019. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Senator Lent moved to approve the Minutes from January 14, 2019. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 5:08 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary