

MINUTES
JOINT MEETING
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 07, 2019

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: WW02 Lincoln Auditorium

MEMBERS: Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Mendive, DeMordaunt, Moon, Ehardt, Goesling, Marshall, Raymond, Wisniewski, McCrostie, Abernathy, Berch

Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, Buckner-Webb, Ward-Engelking

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office until the end of the session. Following the end of the session, the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Mortimer called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm.

Chairman Mortimer turned the gavel over to **Chairman Clow**.

Superintendent Sherri Ybarra discussed items in the draft public school funding formula bill that the State Department of Education believes require further discussion. She stated the payment schedule could cause cash flow problems for districts and she is not supportive of a plan where any district loses significant funding. She expressed concern about a fiscal cliff if there is insufficient revenue to fund the hold harmless provision for three years. She stated the wealth adjustment is problematic. She noted the draft language is far more prescriptive regarding teacher salaries than current statute and there is no recognition for additional educational attainment for teachers. She also noted several terms need to be properly defined and aligned to current administrative rule definitions.

Rob Winslow, Executive Director of the Idaho Association of School Administrators, spoke on behalf of his organization and the Idaho Rural Schools Association. He expressed concern the budget tool used to model the draft legislation uses inconsistent data for year-to-year comparisons. He noted the Career Ladder teacher pay system was a salary model, not an allocation directive like the draft. He expressed concern about the end of the hold harmless funding and expressed a desire to see the proposed funding formula projected out three to five years, to better gauge the impact. He stated at-risk students should be funded and districts should be added as fund recipients for weighted student groups. He too expressed concerns about the payment schedule causing cash flow problems and expressed concern about the teacher evaluation review requirements in the draft. He stated Idaho Digital Learning Academy should be funded by the new formula in a way similar to its current funding. He stated the wealth/market value adjustment is confusing and the weight ought to reflect the wealth of the student population, more than the market value of the district.

Kari Overall, Elected President, Idaho Education Association, urged the germane committees to reject a false sense of urgency and return to a collaborative method, including more voices. She suggested working with the governor's proposed task force over the summer. She noted the goal of the interim committee was to create a funding formula that is transparent, flexible and easy to understand; she stated the proposed language does not meet these goals. She stated the market value weight will be unpredictable for districts to rely on. She noted the biggest complaint about the current funding formula is the difficulty calculating money that will flow to districts and the draft legislation has the same problem. She stated the draft reduces local control and removes funding plans and commitments for teacher salaries and accountability provisions.

Karen Echeverria, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association, spoke on behalf of over 900 school board members. She stated her organization has not had enough time to properly review the draft language. She noted uniform terms need to be used and definitions added. By including career ladder requirements, but removing funding, she stated the draft imposes a mandate and the vast majority of local education agencies do not have salary schedules that resemble the draft. Unless the career ladder is directly funded by the state, she feels the language should be removed. She noted a requirement for additional district funds for Career and Technical Educators, without any additional state funding. She too raised concerns about the payment schedule as currently drafted. She expressed concern about the additional data that will be required to be reported and questioned whether the State Department of Education will need to hire additional staff to process it. She noted there may be a large increase in the special education population if schools are required to report, but noted there is no requirement for families to report if they qualify for free and reduced lunch. She stated the wealth adjustment is not working as intended and suggested it may need to be removed. She mentioned **Governor Otter's** K-12 Task Force and stated the draft legislation goes much farther than they recommended. She too urged using a collaborative, task force model to implement a new funding formula.

Blake Youde spoke on behalf of Idaho Charter School Network and expressed support for the proposed funding formula, for philosophical and functional reasons. He noted his group approves of an enrollment-based formula with weighted student funding, likes the simplicity of the draft compared to the current formula and welcomes the opportunity to improve data reporting. He asked the germane committees to work on the tiered implementation of the special education weight and more clearly link outcomes to funding. He too requested a three to five year projection of the proposed funding formula.

Tom LeClaire, President, Coalition of Idaho Charter School Families, spoke on behalf of his group as well as virtual charter schools. He expressed support of the draft because funding will be more student-centered and less program-centered. He stated charter schools will overall be better funded and noted many charter students fall within the weighted groups.

Rod Gramer, President and CEO, Idaho Business for Education, stated his group has not taken an official position. He noted one of their biggest concerns is key education stakeholders do not support the draft as currently written, yet their support will be crucial for implementation. He urged the creation of a framework for all stakeholders to come together and work in collaboration. He noted if a consensus cannot be reached this session there is plenty of time to get it right and work with stakeholders over the summer.

Fred Birnbaum, Vice President, Idaho Freedom Foundation, spoke **in support** of the proposed formula, but felt there should only be two or three weights. He also noted the need to compare true dollar amounts across funding years to accurately gauge the impact.

Superintendent James Gilbert, Mountain Home; **Superintendent Michael Garrett**, Orofino; **Superintendent Kevin Lancaster**, Bliss; **Jonathan Gillen**, CFO, West Ada School District and **Superintendent Paula Kellerer**, Nampa, testified **in opposition** to the wealth adjustment.

They felt the wealth adjustment was added to appease specific districts who would lose money under the new formula, but it is not an accurate reflection of the wealth of a student body, nor is a district's market value something school leaders can control. They expressed concern the adjustment would discourage community growth. They stated small districts need to be a funding priority without a special adjustment to give them needed funds. They also encouraged the germane committees to include superintendents and other school leaders in the drafting process.

Brandon Durst, Citizen, spoke **in opposition** to the wealth adjustment and suggested looking to Washington State's system as an alternative. He noted the current formula already has "losers" and stated Idaho Digital Learning Academy's funding needs to be considered.

Nick Smith, Human Resources Director, Boise School District, testified **in opposition** to the wealth adjustment and suggested restoring the property tax equalization. He expressed concern about the career ladder being rolled into the funding formula.

Steve Smylie, Educator and former Representative, spoke **in opposition** to the draft legislation and said it does not directly address the disparity in per-pupil spending. He expressed doubt a single formula can be used for every school and charter district.

Superintendent Andrew Grover, Melba, spoke **in opposition** to the special education weight, unless maintenance of effort dollars are considered.

Allison Westfall, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Nampa School District, spoke **in opposition** to the small school adjustment. She also expressed frustration with the current school property tax system and urged a conversation about alternatives.

Superintendent GwenCarol Holmes, Blaine, noted schools need to ensure every child has the same opportunities by focusing on equity, not equality.

Superintendent Wayne Rush, Emmett, asked the germane committees to slow down and take more time with the draft bill. He urged funding to be included for at-risk students and Idaho Digital Learning Academy.

Chairman Clow turned the gavel over to **Chairman Mortimer**.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:41 pm.

Representative Clow
Chair

Erica McGinnis
Secretary