

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 25, 2019

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, Buckner-Webb, and Ward-Engelking

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Den Hartog

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 3:06 p.m. He opened with a reading from the book, *A Heap O 'Living Along Life's Highway*, by Eager A. Guest, "Ten-Year Old."

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

DOCKET NO. 08-0203-1803 **Vice Chairman Thayn** presented **Docket No. 08-0203-1803**, Rules Governing Thoroughness; Required Instruction. He said he is bringing this forward to discuss the action the House Education Committee made on the rule. He said the House rejected Section 105., Subsection 01.dii., 01.d.iii., and 01.d.iv.; High School Graduation Requirements Mathematics; and Subsection 04., Senior Project.

Vice Chairman Thayn said in 2018, S 1266 removed the senior math requirement from the Idaho Code. Even though it was removed from code, the requirement did not need to be removed from rule. He explained there is a requirement for high school students to take six credits of mathematics and it is highly recommended that students take eight credits, but it is not required.

DISCUSSION: **Matt Freeman**, Executive Director, State Board of Education (SBE), stated only six credits of math are required and it is highly recommended that two of those credits be taken in the student's senior year for a better transition into post-secondary education.

Senator Woodward inquired about the history regarding the two of the six credit hours being in the senior year of high school. **Mr. Freeman** replied the SBE was trying to achieve more rigor so that they are prepared for college for a seamless transition. He noted there is a significant number of students taking four years of math. The findings reveal they are receiving higher grades in their junior and senior years resulting in lower college remediation rates.

Senator Winder asked if the rule is in line with the legislation. **Chairman Mortimer** replied the requirements were added in rule, which may not have been the intent of the legislation, but it is within the SBE's scope.

Vice Chairman Thayn said the House Education Committee believed the legislation required the removal of the senior math requirement.

Senator Lent said he would like to address this situation as a former school board member and as a director of industry training. He said industry leaders have indicated the importance of having rigor in the school system. He expressed his disappointment that the trend is moving away from that and spoke about the STEM meeting he attended which encouraged more rigor. He said reducing the math requirement creates one more barrier for students in the next step of their educational and career journey. **Senator Lent** spoke about how young people directly out of secondary school were unable to pass the industry tests for entry level positions. He stated the more course work requirements are reduced, the faster Idaho students fall behind. He said he strongly believes this rule should remain.

Vice Chairman Thayn said the legislature has been working on giving students more flexibility with their course loads. He explained the reason that senior math was required was because of senior slump. He believes the Advanced Opportunities program with dual credits has eliminated the senior slump.

Chairman Mortimer asked how S 1266 was considered in this section of the rule. **Mr. Freeman** replied S 1266 removed the math requirement in the senior year in statute, but it did not require the SBE to remove it from rule. He read Governor Otter's transmittal letter to the Senate which stated he would have vetoed S 1266 except that the math requirement for graduation would remain in effect by administrative rule.

Senator Woodward noted there is great substance to the continuation of learning. He detailed the progression of math learning and how math builds upon itself. He said there is value to having math in the senior year of high school.

Vice Chairman Thayn addressed the House Education Committee's decision to reject Subsection 04.; Senior Project.

Senator Lent said the issues are with the words "analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information." He noted as a former school board member, the discussion was about the importance of the senior project. He detailed Bloom's Taxonomy of learning and correlated to the capstone of the senior project. He stated the purpose of the senior project is for the student to demonstrate a higher order of knowledge in both written and oral learning. He said the project is of such value in our educational system. He supports the rule as written.

MOTION: **Senator Lent** moved to stand with the Committee's original decision to accept **Docket No. 08-0203-1803**. **Senator Mortimer** 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 3:42 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary