

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, March 18, 2019

**TIME:** 2:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Lincoln Auditorium

**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 2:03 p.m. He opened with a reading from the book, *A Heap O 'Living Along Life's Highway*, by Eager A. Guest, "Difficulties. "

**S 1196** **Chairman Mortimer** welcomed the audience and stated this is a listening session. He said there will not be vote today on **S 1196**.

**Senator Den Hartog** presented **S 1196**, Relating to Education; Public School Funding Formula. She said the overarching goal and objective of the Public School Funding Formula was to focus on student needs. In drafting the proposed legislation, the goal was to allocate additional resources to the students who need it the most. There is less emphasis on inputs and more on outcomes.

**Senator Den Hartog** said the current model, which was designed over 25 years ago, does not meet the educational delivery needs for students and/or schools. She walked the Committee through **S 1196** and explained the items the proposed legislation will address: student weighting by grade levels, remote schools, small schools, enrollment, Career Ladder, and local salary schedules. She said there is a four-year transition period and explained the reasons for a first year side-by-side comparison. She emphasized the need for additional clarity will come from negotiated rulemaking (Attachment 1).

**TESTIMONY:** **Sherri Ybarra**, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Department of Education (SDE), spoke in opposition to **S 1196**. She emphasized the need for more time to better understand the legislation; it is not well understood by those in the field. She listed the SDE's concerns. She asked the Committee to continue to work on the proposed legislation (Attachment 2).

**Tim Hill**, Deputy Superintendent of Finance, SDE, spoke in opposition to **S 1196**. He said his role in the Superintendent's office is to provide the data to ensure the policy outcomes. He explained the two areas of concern with the proposed legislation: 1.) Enrollment dates used for the payments; and 2.) Career Ladder average appropriated salaries (Attachment 3).

**Harold Ott**, Director of Idaho Rural Schools, and Idaho Association of School Administrators (ISAS), spoke in opposition to **S 1196**. He said the brevity of the proposed legislation is concerning. School superintendents are bothered by the inability to forecast budgets, programs, and staffing with reasonable accuracy. He said there is still much work to be done. He asked the Committee to hold **S 1196** (Attachment 4).

**Karen Echeverria**, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), spoke in opposition to **S 1196**. She stated the concerns are as follows: the overall process to write the legislation, Interim Committee recommendations versus the proposed legislation, alternative schools, experienced teachers' allocations, technology dollars, and others (Attachment 5).

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Winder** said the Interim Committee spent many years in the process with many hours of listening to develop a report for the Germane Committee. He stated to now criticize the Interim Committee for not listening and/or not including stakeholders is not in the spirit of what was accomplished. He believed the Committees made a strong effort to include everybody to develop the funding formula.

**TESTIMONY:** **Blake Youde**, Idaho Charter School Network, spoke in support of **S 1196**. He stated the Public School Funding Formula provides flexibility and innovation. Education is evolving and the proposed legislation works with the changes (Attachment 6).

**Kari Overall**, President, Idaho Education Association (IEA), spoke in opposition to **S 1196**. She detailed the inadequate funding component for teacher salaries and cautioned the Committee to move slower (Attachment 7).

**Rod Gramer**, President, Idaho Business for Education (IBE), spoke in opposition to **S 1196**. He listed the areas of concern, which included the following: 1.) little accountability or reporting for how funding is allocated; 2.) incompatibility with the Career Ladder; 3.) inclusion of wealth adjustments; and 4.) voluntary enrollment cap. He asked that the Committee takes more time to develop the funding formula (Attachment 8).

The following School Superintendents and Administrators spoke in opposition to **S 1196**:

**Scott Woolstenhume**, Superintendent, Bonneville School District (Attachment 9)  
**Jonathan Gillin**, Chief Financial Officer, West Ada School District (Attachment 10)  
**Lisa Sexton**, Assistant Superintendent, Lakeland Joint School District (Attachment 11)

**James Gilbert**, Superintendent, Mountain Home School District (Attachment 12)

**Byron Stutzman**, Superintendent, Freemont County (Attachment 13)

**Pat Charlton**, Superintendent, Valley View School District

**David Sotutu**, Superintendent, New Plymouth School District (Attachment 14)

**Randy Dewey**, Finance Director, Nampa School District (Attachment 15)

**Paula Kellerer**, Superintendent, Nampa School District

**Jeff Dillion**, Superintendent, Wilder School District (Attachment 16)

**April Burton**, Business Manager, Caldwell School District (Attachment 17)

**Dr. Shalene French**, Superintendent, Caldwell (Attachment 18)

**Shawn Tieg**s, Superintendent, Nezperce School District (Attachment 19)

**GwenCarol Holms**, Superintendent, Blaine County School District (Attachment 20)

**Wendy Johnson**, Superintendent, Kuna School District (Attachment 21)

**Mandy Simpson**, Trustee, Nampa School District (Attachment 22)

The concerns they addressed were inaccurate data for projecting funding, the Career Ladder, confusion with discretionary fund allocations, inadequate funding for alternative schools and transportation, Advanced Opportunities being negatively impacted, lack of equability, the need to be consistent with federal definitions, and whether the base funding is enough to provide equal education to all students.

**Senator Winder** said he appreciated all the input today. He stated there is no need to rush this legislation and that the legislature is working diligently to provide funding for schools. He emphasized the goal of the funding formula is to provide adequate funds to promote student learning.

**Chairman Mortimer** thanked all those who came to testify. He stated the Committee has received much additional information that will need to be considered.

**RECORDING**

**LINK:**

To hear the complete Public School Funding Formula hearing, go to;  
<https://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2019/standingcommittees/SEDU/>.

**ADJOURNED:**

There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 3:54 p.m.

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Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn Mohr  
Secretary