

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 11, 2020

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

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

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

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 Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:01 p.m.

S 1293 **Vice Chairman Thayn** presented **S 1293** and told the Committee that the bill allows elementary schools to implement a program to allow students to advance a year ahead of their grade level and negotiate a flexible schedule. He went on that parents are a major indicator of student success, because engaged parents help their children to succeed in school. **Vice Chairman Thayn** said that, in writing the bill, he was careful to minimize extra work on the teacher, as the teachers do not track the children's progress or homework at home, and that if a student's teacher does not believe the flexible schedule will work for the student, the flexible schedule will not be implemented. He continued that because the bill does not contain any mandates, any school district could participate in the flexible schedule program, but no school district would have to. He listed the benefits of the program, including increased student engagement in standardized testing, higher parent engagement, and opportunities for students

DISCUSSION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked how a teacher would assess a child's performance who was only attending school 55 percent of the time. **Vice Chairman Thayn** responded that the bill requires participating children to attend school 65 percent of the time and that the bill requires the parents, teachers, and administrators of the student to agree on the flexible schedule ahead of time, in order to allow teachers to schedule accordingly. He went on that many of the parents he had spoken to in drafting this bill were looking for ways to spend more time with their children without home schooling their children.

Senator Buckner-Webb expressed concerns about the program being utilized in a way that may not benefit the children involved. **Vice Chairman Thayn** responded that the teachers must sign off on the flexible schedule, which would protect the child's education. **Vice Chairman Thayn** made the point that children would be evaluated more than once per year. **Chairman Mortimer** told the Committee that it was important to remember that the program was voluntary, applied only to students who were advanced by a year, and stated his support for parent involvement in education. He went on that many advanced students, by remaining in the mainstream education schedule, lose their passion for learning.

Senator Ward-Engelking commented that she agreed that parent engagement is essential to student success, but that she believed it was more important in the classroom. **Senator Woodward** said that he struggled with the idea of funding the school at the same level as if the student were attending and the idea of the burden on the teacher.

MOTION:

Senator Den Hartog moved to send **S 1293** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Winder** seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Den Hartog said that while the concerns expressed by the Committee were valid, the bill gave an opportunity to enhance the partnership between parents and schools. She went on that she was more concerned about funding schools for the education students received rather than for their physical attendance. She finished by stating parents are a resource that Idaho can and should tap into. **Senator Winder** told the Committee that some of the concerns that the Committee had raised over this bill were similar to the concerns raised over dual credit classes and expressed his support for **S 1293**.

VOICE VOTE:

The motion passed by **voice vote**, with **Senator Woodward, Crabtree, Buckner-Webb,** and **Ward-Engelking** requesting to be recorded as voting nay.

S 1304

Senator Den Hartog introduced **S 1304** and told the Committee that an educator in Idaho was told that an endorsement she held on her teaching certificate could no longer be displayed on her certificate because Idaho no longer offered that endorsement. She went on that the bill would allow teachers to keep endorsements that Idaho no longer offers on their certificate, so long as that teaching certificate was kept up to date.

Senator Lent asked if she knew what the State Department of Education's (Department) stance on **S 1304** was. **Senator Den Hartog** responded that she did not. **Marilyn Whitney**, Deputy Superintendent for Communications and Policy for the Department, told the Committee that some endorsements become out of date and are transitioned into differently-named endorsements. She went on that the Department had requirements for teachers to keep their endorsements, and that the Department works with teachers whose endorsements are expiring to transition them into the new endorsements. **Lisa Colon Durham**, Director of Certification and Professional Development for the Department, told the Committee that the Department has a process for transitioning teachers from an expired endorsement to a new endorsement. She went on that many of the expired endorsements had been renamed and changed.

MOTION:

Senator Lent moved to send **S 1304** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

DISCUSSION:

Chairman Mortimer told the Committee that they would find some basic education budget information in their folders and briefly explained each of the documents. He invited the Committee to write down their top three funding priorities and to write a statement to the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC) which he would share with JFAC when he presented the Committee's budget recommendation.

ADJOURNED:

There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

Morgan Howard
Secretary