

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Wednesday, January 20, 2021
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Thayn, Vice Chairman Crabtree, Senators Den Hartog, Woodward, Lent, Johnson, Cook, and Nelson
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Ward-Engelking
- 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 Thayn** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.
- DISCUSSION:** **Chairman Thayn** reviewed the following handouts in the Committee folders: an article titled "What Head Start Can Teach Us About Engaging Families"; "2020 School Building Maintenance Report," provided by the Idaho State Department of Education; and "Seven Components of a Quality Education," presented by Chairman Thayn (see Attachments 1, 2, 3).
- PRESENTATION:** **Alex LaBeau**, President, Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry, and **Beth Oppenheimer**, Executive Director, Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children, spoke about early childhood education. **Mr. LaBeau** said his organization did not intend to get involved with childcare, however their research found that 80 percent of childbearing women in Idaho were not entering the workforce due to not being able to find affordable childcare. **Ms. Oppenheimer** talked about the Preschool Development Grant which helped her office do a needs assessment statewide. The assessment found that parents were at a loss as to where to go to help their students be better prepared for school. Parental engagement was a top priority for school readiness. Using the grant, they were able to create "Kids of Idaho Love to Learn" kits to get kids excited about school. Three thousand of the kits were handed out statewide. **Ms. Oppenheimer** said her office has also partnered with Idaho Public Television and Idaho libraries to create four early learning literacy programs online. The Early Learning Academies began an online webinar series with over 1,000 families logging in.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Lent** asked where the state could be in five years as the Board implements the vision presented today. **Mr. LaBeau** stated that continuing the collaboratives has the best chance for success moving forward.
- PRESENTATION:** **Tom Luna**, Lobbyist, introduced **Rich Stombres**, Director of Government Relations for Waterford / Upstart, who outlined the strides the online program has made in getting Idaho students ready to read by the time they enter kindergarten (see Attachment 4).
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** asked if there was data to show how students in Utah had done after being in this program. **Mr. Stombres** said gains made in the program lasted the students through the end of the fourth grade, and he would share that data with the Committee. **Senator Cook** asked if there was data to show how the children who did not go through this program were doing by the end of the third grade. **Mr. Stombres** said he would get that information to the committee.

PRESENTATION: **Alayna Knop**, Coordinator, English Language Arts and Literacy, State Department of Education, gave a presentation on literacy intervention (see Attachment 5).

DISCUSSION: **Senator Den Hartog** asked how program outcomes were being tracked, how students are doing after they are out of the program, and whether the gains they are making while in the program are being maintained long-term. **Marilyn Whitney**, Deputy Superintendent of Communications and Policy, ISDE, took the podium and said that due to the pandemic, only 28 percent of students took the spring assessment, so data would not be all inclusive. But she said she could send the committee the data from the 2018-2019 fall and spring assessment.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 4:17 p.m.

Senator Thayn
Chair

Florence Lince
Secretary