

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Wednesday, February 10, 2021
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Thayn, Vice Chairman Crabtree, Senators Den Hartog, Woodward, Lent, Johnson, Cook, Ward-Engelking, and Nelson
- 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 Thayn** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:06 p.m.
- PASSED THE GAVEL:** Chairman Thayn passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Crabtree.
- S 1052** **Relating to Education: Creates an Optional Program That Encourages Parents to Be Involved in Their Elementary Child's Education and Partner with Public School Teachers, by Rewarding Advanced Students with Flexible Attendance Options.** Chairman Thayn addressed the Committee and shared supplemental math guidelines from the Core Knowledge Sequence website concerning grades 1-3 (see Attachment 1).
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if students who are in school only four days would then be in school three days a week if this bill passes. **Chairman Thayn** said that was possible. **Senator Ward-Engelking** said if a student was no longer an advanced student, and they could no longer participate in this program, being removed would seem punitive. **Chairman Thayn** sees this as an incentive to students to stay advanced in their studies. **Senator Ward-Engelking** worries that students who are not in a classroom daily might miss out on events with their fellow classmates. **Chairman Thayn** thinks that advanced students have earned some flexibility, and teachers would not need to come up with activities to keep them engaged. **Senator Den Hartog** asked how this bill aligns the Core Knowledge Sequence with content standards. **Chairman Thayn** said this model was based on content standards from Massachusetts and closely aligns to the Common Core standards.
- TESTIMONY:** **Dr. Jason Bransford**, Chief Executive Officer, GEM Innovation Schools, testified in support of **S 1052**. He highlighted the collaboration needed between parents and teachers in developing flexibility in the best interests of the child.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Cook** asked when will students get tested to insure they are still advanced. **Chairman Thayn** said the testing would be done monthly. **Senator Nelson** asked who was accountable if the student fell behind and out of advanced classes. **Chairman Thayn** said advanced students usually have more parental engagement, so he does not anticipate many students falling out of the program.
- MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **S 1052** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Lent** seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Vice Chairman Crabtree called for a roll call vote on **S 1052**. Senators Den Hartog, Lent, Cook, and Chairman Thayn voted aye. Senators Woodward, Johnson, Ward-Engelking, Nelson, and Vice Chairman Crabtree voted nay. The motion failed.

S 1046 **Relating to Education; Creates a Framework for Parents to Request an Alternative Curriculum Within a Public School if Parents from at least 24 Students Request Accommodation.** Chairman Thayn turned the time over to those who wished to testify.

TESTIMONY: Representative Wendy Horman, Rob Menlove, teacher and Attorney Kate Haas, testified in support of **S 1046**. This bill gives parents a choice to work collaboratively with school districts to create the best curriculum for their students, they said.

Andy Grover, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administrators, and Quinn Perry, Director, Policy and Government Affairs, Idaho School Board Association, testified in opposition to **S 1046**. Both said this option was already available to parents and was not necessary.

DISCUSSION: Chairman Thayn clarified that curriculum is planned years before any student is enrolled. Parents also do not know that they can challenge curriculum and ask for changes. Parents who feel they have no voice in their child's education have left their districts and started their own charter schools or switched to home schooling. In addition, many of the curriculums used by districts are created by national providers and they are not very good. This bill would also help low income parents who might not be aware that they can ask for a curriculum change, and give them a voice.

Senator Den Hartog asked Chairman Thayn to detail changes that could be made to bring this bill to the 14th Order of Business. Chairman Thayn said there were two changes: clarifying class sizes and finding textbooks for these classes.

MOTION: Senator Den Hartog moved to send **S 1046** to the 14th Order for possible amendment. Senator Cook seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Vice Chairman Crabtree called for a roll call vote on **S 1046**. Senators Den Hartog, Lent, Johnson, Cook, and Chairman Thayn voted aye. Senators Woodward, Ward-Engelking, Nelson, and Vice Chairman Crabtree voted nay. The motion carried.

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

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, Chairman Thayn adjourned the meeting at 4:44 p.m.

Senator Thayn
Chair

Florence Lince
Secretary