

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Tuesday, March 02, 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 3:00 p.m.
- MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Vice Chairman Crabtree** moved to approve the Minutes of February 17, 2021. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
Senator Woodward moved to approve the Minutes of February 18, 2021. **Senator Johnson** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- PRESENTATION:** **Wendi Secrist**, Executive Director, Idaho Workforce Development Council (Council), gave a presentation on the Council's successes (see Attachment 1).
- DISCUSSION:** **Chairman Thayn** asked how long the portion of the program known as Idaho Launch has been running. **Ms. Secrist** said it began last November and has authorized over 130 vouchers for various opportunities around the state including training for truck drivers, software programming, medical billing and coding, and more. **Chairman Thayn** asked if workforce development could absorb some students transitioning between high school and post-secondary and help them get apprenticeships. **Ms. Secrist** said there are currently 1,400 apprentices in Idaho and the Council hopes to have 3,000 in four years' time. The age range to be eligible for an apprenticeship is 16-24. **Ms. Secrist** also said the issues that face Idaho will not be solved with one program but with a collaboration between agencies and other programs. **Chairman Thayn** asked what the number of youth apprenticeships could be in two to three years. **Ms. Secrist** said placing 400 youth apprenticeships is the goal for the next four years, but a better defined goal does need to be developed.
- PRESENTATION:** **Riata Chandler**, Secretary, and **Nathan Stastny**, Sentinel, Future Farmers Association (FFA), gave an update on the organizations activities (see Attachment 2).
- DISCUSSION:** **Chairman Thayn** asked if FFA thrived or struggled during COVID-19. **Ms. Chandler** said everyone at FFA learned to work around the pandemic restrictions and felt the challenges they faced strengthened the program and its members. **Mr. Stastny** said it was disappointing to not have in-person events to build personal connections, but he still felt FFA accomplished a lot this last year. **Chairman Thayn** asked what their future plans were. **Mr. Stastny** said after he completes his two-year mission to St. Louis for his church he will return to Utah State. **Ms. Chandler** said she is a student at Brigham Young University, Idaho, and hopes to finish her education and then work in agricultural or environmental law.

PRESENTATION: **Jane Donnellan**, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), gave a presentation on Vocational Rehabilitation successes, titled "A Century of Service" (see Attachment 3).

DISCUSSION: **Senator Cook** said he noticed on the VR website they assist students between age 15-21 and wanted to know a little more. **Ms. Donnellan** said pre-employment transition services help students with disabilities gain workplace readiness training, independent living skills, counseling services, and more. Fifteen percent of the VR budget is required to be used to help those 15-21 with pre-employment services. **Senator Johnson** wanted to know more about the autism spectrum mentioned in the presentation. **Ms. Donnellan** said many people are not aware that high-functioning autistic individuals can work as doctors and engineers. The autism spectrum also includes lower-functioning individuals who need more support to secure training and work experience.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 3:57 p.m.

Senator Thayn
Chair

Florence Lince
Secretary