

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 18, 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 3:01 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to approve the Minutes of March 8, 2021. **Senator Nelson** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Senator Lent moved to approve the Minutes of March 10, 2021. **Vice Chairman Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 250 **Relating to Education; Amends Existing Law to Provide That Advanced Opportunities Funds May Be Used For College Entrance Examinations, Preliminary College Entrance Examinations, and Costs Associated With Certain Examinations. Representatives John McCrostie and Wendy Horman** presented the bill to the Committee.

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Thayn** asked if the Department of Education raised any concerns about **H 250**. **Representative McCrostie** said the Department didn't express any concerns.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **H 250** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Lent** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

H 221 **Relating to Education; Adds to Existing Law to Provide for Teacher Certificates Specific to a Local Education Agency. Blake Youde**, on behalf of the Idaho Charter School Network, outlined the bill for the Committee and asked that **H 221** be sent to the 14th Order of Business for possible amendment. **Mr. Youde** said this legislation will only apply to charter and rural schools. **H 221** is an optional tool for districts to get teachers into a classroom.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked why **H 221** was needed since 33-1203 was signed into law last year. **Mr. Youde** said 33-1203, only asks for two years of college training, and some level of subject matter knowledge. **H 221** requires a higher level of education (bachelors versus two years of college), and the person must have relevant knowledge. In addition, the district or charter school must submit to the State several documents to substantiate why it hired the person. They must submit the job listing or advertisement, how many people applied for the position, how many were interviewed, and why the candidate chosen was selected.

Senator Ward-Engelking voiced a concern about teaching candidates being placed in jobs for which they are not qualified, such as a music teacher teaching science, or a reading teacher teaching special education. **Mr. Youde** said hiring of teachers for special education is protected by federal law so **H 221** does not change that protection. He also said school administrators make good hiring decisions and **H 221** does not stop them from hiring those they believe would make good teachers. **Senator Ward-Engelking** said last year the Legislature did away with the requirement for certification for administrators, so there may be administrators making hiring decisions who are not certified. **Mr. Youde** said the seven school administrators he is aware of, who are not certified, have done a good job in hiring qualified teachers.

Senator Nelson asked if the State Board of Education was contacted to streamline the current process instead of introducing this new bill. **Mr. Youde** said no, the Board was not contacted.

Chairman Thayne asked what is the size of the school mentioned in **H 221**. **Mr. Youde** said the definition is based in part on the population of the county. **Senator Nelson** read the language: “fewer than 20 enrolled students per square mile, and the county is smaller than 25,000 residents.” **Mr. Youde** said the school districts that will be excluded from using **H 221** would be: Middleton, Lewiston, Kuna, Caldwell, Post Falls, Valley View, Twin Falls, Idaho Falls, Coeur d’Alene, Pocatello, Nampa, Bonneville Joint School District, Boise, and West Ada Joint School District. Those districts represent 52 percent of the student population in Idaho.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked how uncertified teachers would be treated under the teachers code of ethics, and how **H 221** would impact Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) violations. Lisa Colón Durham, Director, Certification and Professional Standards, State Department of Education, took the podium to answer the previously mentioned questions. Per Idaho statute, and pertaining to line 30 of **H 221**, which clarifies that 33-1208 can be used to deny a certificate to someone, however, if there is a violation of the code of ethics after they are certified, the State Department of Education could not hold them responsible. In reference to ESSA, there are some questions as to how it would be enforced and more research is being done on this issue. It is believed that a communication to parents would be mailed out by the school districts to notify them of teachers in the classroom who are using **H 221** certification to teach.

TESTIMONY:

Erin Paredis, teacher from Meridian, Idaho; **Will Thompson**, teacher from Lewiston, Idaho; **Stacy Pickins**, teacher from Caldwell, Idaho; **Donna Looze**, retired teacher from Boise, Idaho; testified in opposition to **H 221**. They all worried that allowing people in classrooms who are not certified, or have gone through teacher training, would do a disservice to Idaho students.

Steve Lambert, Principal, Treasure Valley Classical Academy, Fruitland, Idaho; testified in support of **H 221**. He said hiring teachers is sometimes difficult in rural areas. Many teachers applying for jobs in Idaho are coming from out of State and without Idaho certification, but they bring good knowledge, and skills, to the classroom.

Josie Fretwell, Boise, Idaho; **Alexandra Velardes**, Nampa, Idaho; **Victor Guner**, Pocatello, Idaho; **Martin Kokol**, Victor, Idaho; **Katrena Hauger**, Grangeville, Idaho; **Jennie Withers**, teacher from Meridian, Idaho; **Bob Solomon**, Caldwell, Idaho; **Brittany Sanchez**, Meridian, Idaho; **Kendall Lancaster**, Idaho Falls, Idaho; **Tiffany Sorensen**, Rigby, Idaho; **Robin Lundgren**, Boundary County, Idaho; **Mary Ollie**, Bonners Ferry, Idaho; and **Becky Mitchell**, Idaho 2018 Teacher of the Year; sent in written testimony in opposition to **H 221** (see Attachment 1). They wrote they were worried about allowing people in classrooms to teach who are not certified, have not had adequate teacher training, and what the long term effects would be on Idaho students.

- MOTION:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to hold **H 221** in Committee to the call of the Chair. **Senator Nelson** seconded the motion.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** acknowledged the teacher shortage was real, but said she felt **H 221** was not the way to solve this shortage and not the way to incentivize people interested in teaching.
- SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** **Vice Chairman Crabtree** moved to send **H 221** to the 14th Order of Business for possible amendment. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Nelson** said he will not support **H 221** even if amended because he does not think that students in charter schools should have educators who are less trained or uncertified.
- ROLL CALL VOTE:** **Chairman Thayn** called for a roll call vote on the substitute motion. **Senators Woodward, Lent, Johnson, Cook, Ward-Engelking**, and **Nelson** voted nay. **Senator Den Hartog, Vice Chairman Crabtree**, and **Chairman Thayn** voted aye. The motion failed.
- MOTION:** **Chairman Thayn** called for a vote on the original motion. **Senators Woodward, Lent, Johnson, Cook, Ward-Engelking**, and **Nelson** voted aye. **Senator Den Hartog, Vice Chairman Crabtree**, and **Chairman Thayn** voted nay. The motion carried.
- ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Senator Thayn
Chair

Florence Lince
Secretary