

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, January 25, 2022

**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Thayn, Vice Chairman Lent, Senators Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Blair (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.

**Chairman Thayn** announced that the agenda would be amended to remove consideration of **S 1226**.

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

**RS 29247** **Relating to Education. Chairman Thayn**, District 8, presented the proposed legislation to establish a self-directed learner designation. **Chairman Thayn** reported that the RS represents changes to **S 1226** suggested by the Idaho Education Association. He asked Dr. Jeff Dillon to explain a similar program in place at the Wilder School District (WSD).

**Dr. Jeff Dillon**, Superintendent, WSD, introduced himself to the Committee. **Dr. Dillon** described the WSD's mastery based approach to learning, in use for the past seven years. He stated that 90 to 95 percent of seniors will attain level three, which allows the students the privilege of flexibility in attendance.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Crabtree** asked how WSD outcomes and measurables compare to elsewhere in Idaho and the United States. **Dr. Dillon** answered that the WSD focuses on preparing students for college and the workforce. He said that of the 90 percent of graduating seniors, 80 percent attended a first year of college and 75 percent were still enrolled for a second year of college. **Dr. Dillon** reported that students attending college on scholarship receive \$10-12,000 per student.

**Senator Cook** asked about the WSD's dropout rate. **Dr. Dillon** replied that the dropout rate is very low. He said students who do not graduate are typically juniors or seniors who come from families who move away. He added that the WSD does not allow students to fail.

**Senator Cook** inquired what administrative work would be necessary to manage the self-directed learner program. **Chairman Thayn** answered that the RS does not require a mastery based approach to learning. He clarified that developing a plan would be the responsibility of the parent and the student, not the teacher.

**Senator Cook** asked about the difference between the RS and the bill passed last session regarding outside learning. **Chairman Thayn** answered that the RS waives the seat time requirement for school funding. He said if learning is taking place, a student could choose when to attend school.

**MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **RS 29427** to print. **Senator Nelson** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

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

**PRESENTATION: Teacher Certifications.** **Dr. Dillon** reported that Idaho schools face a teacher shortage, often resulting in lowered standards to fill vacant positions. He observed that current teacher preparation programs are inappropriate to address current learning modalities and student needs. **Dr. Dillon** said that Idaho must change its approach to teacher training.

**Dr. Dillon** recommended adopting the 1970 model for the Washington Wyoming Alaska Montana Idaho (WWAMI) Medical Education Program. He advised that this model would better prepare individuals to teach while decreasing the training burden on school districts. **Dr. Dillon** stated that universities must create teaching programs that include a one to two-year residency or apprenticeship requirement. He said school districts would be responsible to provide coaching. **Dr. Dillon** urged the Idaho State Board of Education to support funding for the residency program, especially for rural and remote districts. He shared the story of an undergraduate who volunteered and observed in the classroom for two years while completing her coursework. **Dr. Dillon** said when the WSD needed that student to become the teacher of record, she had the necessary skills and was prepared to step into the classroom right away. (See Attachment 1)

**DISCUSSION:** In response to Committee questions about components of a suggested teacher certification program, **Dr. Dillon** answered that it would be up to the universities to develop their own programs. He said the year of residency should be part of the fourth year of an undergraduate program. He clarified that student teaching would take place at the end of the program. **Dr. Dillon** commented that he has researched other teacher development programs that utilize a residency program. He added that he is working on draft legislation.

**Chairman Thayn** announced that the order of the remaining presentations on the agenda would be reversed.

**PRESENTATION: Idaho PTA Meet and Greet, Advocacy Day.** **Maria Johnson-Lorcher**, Advocacy Chair, Idaho Parent Teacher Association (IPTA), introduced herself to the Committee. **Ms. Johnson-Lorcher** reviewed IPTA's priorities and 2022 goal to reconnect volunteers with parents, teachers, and students. **Ms. Johnson-Lorcher** described the IPTA Advocacy Day sessions on social media and digital security issues, full day kindergarten, and focus group discussions with the Idaho State Department of Education. She provided the NPTA's legislative priorities: safe, supportive and inclusive practices in schools; re-authorizing the Child Nutrition Act; increasing federal investment in public education and school infrastructure; and sensible solutions to gun violence. **Ms. Johnson-Lorcher** reported on NPTA and IPTA grant recipients. She urged the Legislature to fund full day kindergarten to provide equal access to kindergarten statewide. **Ms. Johnson-Lorcher** listed several benefits of full day kindergarten, including building social and emotional skills, preparing students for first grade, and time to focus on reading. (See Attachment 2)

**PRESENTATION: Update on Workforce Training Council.** **Wendi Sechrist**, Executive Director, Idaho Workforce Development Council (IWDC), introduced herself to the Committee. **Ms. Sechrist** gave an overview of the IWDC's composition and mission. She mentioned the IWDC's effective partnerships with industry association representatives. (See Attachment 3)

**Ms. Sechrist** provided statistics and information on funding for youth apprenticeship programs using monies from the Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF). She reviewed the Idaho Launch program created to enhance employment opportunities and wages using Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and WDTF funding. **Ms. Sechrist** reviewed the IWDC's fiscal year 2023 proposed projects using \$50 million of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds (see Attachment 1). She emphasized that the IWDC is shifting toward using the WDTF for industry based efforts.

**Wayne Hammon**, Chief Executive Officer, Idaho Associated General Contractors (AGC), introduced himself to the Committee. **Mr. Hammon** described the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) strategies to identify necessary job skills, sources of talent, and qualified trainers. He reported that the WTC will need funding to fully implement the TPM strategies.

**Ms. Sechrist** stated that the Governor also recommended \$50 million in ARPA funds to expand child care capacity statewide. She noted that increasing access to child care is necessary to improve labor participation.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Cook** asked if parents would pay for the expanded child care. **Ms. Sechrist** answered that child care could be subsidized by employers as an employee benefit. She added that the ARPA funding is one-time money. **Senator Cook** inquired about the effect of public funds on struggling private sector child care providers. **Ms. Sechrist** replied that the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare has programs available to support current child care providers. She stated that it is imperative to expand child care capacity.

**Chairman Thayne** asked what advice Ms. Sechrist would give to anyone wishing to start a career. **Ms. Sechrist** answered that the NextSteps.idaho.gov website allows viewers to explore career options and identify training and apprenticeship opportunities. She said the IWDC will soon add a link to real time job openings.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayne** adjourned the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

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Senator Thayne  
Chair

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Katy Morden  
Secretary

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Jeanne Jackson-Heim  
Assistant Secretary