

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 13, 2023

TIME: 2:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Lent, Vice Chairman Toews, Senators Den Hartog, Nichols, Carlson, Herndon, Lenney, Ward-Engelking, and Semmelroth

**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 Lent** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 2:00 p.m.

PRESENTATION: Industry & Higher Ed: Working Together for Idaho. **Kurt Liebich**, President of the Idaho State Board of Education (ISBE) introduced all the presenters that were set to follow. After, he enumerated the primary goals of the ISBE, which was to establish an efficient operating system for all eight institutions, to preserve the access and affordability of higher education for Idaho students, and to facilitate partnerships between higher education and Idaho industries.

PRESENTATION: Cyber Security. **Michael Haney**, University of Idaho (U of I) and Idaho National Laboratory (INL), said great advances had been made to address cybersecurity concerns in Idaho. First, he noted the Idaho Legislature appropriated \$1,000,000 to higher education institutions in Fiscal Year 2021 for cybersecurity. Part of those dollars were used for professional development for faculty, but the bulk went to create security operation centers on community college campuses, the expansion of labs and classrooms at universities, and a partnership with Idaho Regional Optical Network (IRON) to connect Idaho's higher education institutions, coordinate curriculum, create programs for students, and increase outreach. **Dr. Haney** said a group of representatives from Boise State (BSU), Idaho State University (ISU), and U of I established ongoing communications to work on the development of solid cybersecurity curriculum for each school in the State. Those talks resulted in the creation of new programs and degree pathways. U of I and ISU were among the first universities in the country to receive accreditation from the National Security Agency through the National Centers of Academic Excellence for their cyber defense programs. Since then, BSU received its accreditation, and North Idaho College (NIC) became one of the first two-year schools to receive accreditation. At the moment, he said Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC), College of Southern Idaho (CSI), and College of Western Idaho (CWI) were on their way to being accredited as well. **Dr. Haney** said those developments were important, because cybersecurity workforce needs had reached crisis proportions. He said, at present, there were between 3,000 to 4,000 job openings in the field of cybersecurity in Idaho, which resulted in many Idaho students in cybersecurity programs receiving multiple job offers while still in school. **Dr. Haney** stated he and his colleagues decided to expand faculty capacity in those programs and to expand facilities.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Semmelroth** asked what some of the most pressing cybersecurity concerns were for Idaho and the country. **Dr. Haney** said the nature of increased integration of technology in the cyber space had resulted in the multiplication of potential points of failure in the result of outside manipulation. **Chairman Lent** asked what Dr. Haney meant when he referred to society being in the middle of the fourth industrial revolution. **Dr. Haney** explained the first came with mechanized power, the second came with the creation of the combustion engine, the third was the establishment of the electric grid, and the fourth was the digital interconnection of industries and people.

PRESENTATION: Career Technical Education (CTE). **Tony Kuphaldt**, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories and Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC), discussed the benefits of partnerships between industry and higher education, and shared best practices from his CTE programs for others to emulate. He noted many advantages to such an arrangement. Financially, state governments would benefit greatly. The colleges were not responsible for the compensation of the instructors and there were no state financial commitments beyond initial capital investments. Quality of instruction was amazing due to accountability for instructors to the college and their employer and instructors had year-round work, which offered professional development opportunities and was incentive to attract and retain talent. For students, they benefited from an open-source curriculum, which saved them money, as did part-time and remote learning opportunities. The greatest benefit to the students was job placement, as graduates of the program had a 100 percent job placement rate.

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Lent** inquired about the cost of the program and how long was needed to complete it. **Mr. Kuphaldt** confirmed it was a two-year program, and the cost was between \$13,000 and \$14,000 for the two years, with graduates paying off their loans in months, rather than years. The average starting salary for graduates of the program was around \$60,000. **Chairman Lent** asked if there were offerings in the program for K-12 students. **Mr. Kuphaldt** confirmed there were dual-credit opportunities available for them.

PRESENTATION: Health Care. **Brian Whitlock**, President/CEO of the Idaho Hospital Association (IHA), listed the three biggest problems that faced the medical sector as: workforce, workforce, and workforce. Idaho had spent many years ranked nearly last in the nation in terms of physicians per capita, and suffered a shortage in nurses for decades. **Mr. Whitlock** said, in 2023, there were as many as 9,000 healthcare position vacancies in the State, and 1,600 of those were for nurses. Those shortages resulted in many staff being assigned overtime and the enlistment of travel nurses, both of which caused great financial strain on hospitals. He said Idaho healthcare providers had a fantastic relationship with in-state colleges and universities, and those connections solidified the medical workforce pipeline. Those students often got work experience with assignments to rural or underserved areas, which was beneficial for everyone.

S 1153 **SCHOOLS - Adds to existing law to establish provisions regarding teacher spending accounts.** **Senator Herndon** said conversations with superintendents in his district gave him the inspiration to run this bill. They told him many teachers spent upwards of \$1,000 per year out-of-pocket for materials for their classes. He said **S 1153** gave teachers the support to procure the resources needed to best serve their students. If passed, annual appropriations from JFAC and the Legislature were needed. The bill's language defined an eligible teacher under the program as those that were certified and currently working in Idaho public schools and public charter schools. The Idaho State Department of Education (ISDE) was the designated recipient of the allocation from the Legislature, and would then be responsible for the distribution to teachers each year. By September 1 each year, schools would submit a list of eligible teachers, ISDE would transfer the funds to

digital wallets on September 30, to be expended by the end of June, or the end of the fiscal year. The funds were limited to use for materials and supplies used directly for student instruction, other incidental materials used in the classrooms, technological equipment, organizational equipment, and professional development courses for teachers with the requirement that the money be spent during the fiscal year it was appropriated.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Den Hartog** asked what the estimated number of teachers that would be eligible for a spending account. **Senator Herndon** said it would be about 15,000. **Senator Semmelroth** noted the Statement of Purpose for **S 1153** said no funds would be eligible for use at the administration or district levels. She then asked if funds would be used for the creation and administration of a digital wallet. **Senator Herndon** said there would need to be additional funds appropriated for that function to be carried out or they would need to use funds in their appropriation to do so.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **S 1153** to the **14th Order** for possible amendment. **Vice Chairman Toews** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 2:46 p.m.

Senator Lent
Chair

Linette Grantham
Secretary

Kieran Sprague
Assistant Secretary