

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 21, 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 Education Committee (Committee) to order at 2:05 p.m.

Chairman Lent requested unanimous consent to change the order of the Agenda. All in favor.

H 309: **Elections - Motion to refer back to the Senate floor for re-referral. Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **H 309** back to the floor for re-referral. **Senator Semmelroth** seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Herndon** stated that this bill was heard in House Education and was related to the operations at the schools, the school budgets, and had school implications and it was appropriate for the bill to be in this Committee.

ROLL CALL VOTE: **Senator Herndon** asked for a roll call vote. **Senators Den Hartog, Ward-Engelking, Semmelroth** and **Chairman Lent** voted aye. **Senators Nichols, Herndon, Lenney, Carlson** and **Vice Chairman Toews** voted nay. The motion failed.

INTRODUCTION: **Chairman Lent** introduced Idaho's 2023 Teacher of the Year. **Mrs. Lauritzen** was chosen last September after a statewide competition that included hundreds of nominations. She graduated from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks in 2002, received her Master of Arts in Special Education from Ball State University in 2018, and wrapped up her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Idaho. She had served on her school's behavioral leadership team and firmly believed that relationships and communication were the foundation of effective learning.

PRESENTATION: **Retaining Educators in Idaho. Mrs. Lauritzen** stated that she asked many educators what they felt about education in Idaho and all indicated that retaining quality educators was very important. Educator retention is approximately 90 percent and rural and remote districts only retained 70 percent of educators each year. Teachers were leaving for the following reasons: 1). Student attendance had fallen from 95 percent to 90 percent and the new attendance-based funding negatively impacted many districts, 2). The professionalism and expertise of the career were being weakened by apprenticeship concepts, 3). Pay gap - educators could not afford the cost of living in Idaho, 4). Voters rejected 70 percent of the supplemental levies and many of the levies funded educator pay, 5). High class size, student mental health needs, and increased student behavior issues, and 6). Student to counselor ratio of 1 to 400-500.

Mrs. Lauritzen shared some solutions to the teacher attrition crisis. 1). Currently, teachers had a 30 percent pay cut. Pay them a salary that compared to other fields that required a bachelor's or master's degrees, help pay for professional development that was required for recertification, and consider paying tuition for new teachers. 2). Funding education at the state level as opposed to the local level. Educators could no longer rely on levies and bonds to make up the funding the 2006 tax changes created. 3). Funding education to lower class size so teachers could make meaningful connections with students, teach small groups, and increase test scores. 4). Allow educators to teach Social Emotional Learning. It was giving the students skills in self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills so that students could get along in the classroom. 5). Create a pathway for Board Certified Behavior Analysts. The requirement was a master's degree in Special Education, apply for this certification, and then you could work for a School District and make behavior plans for students. To get this certification, you had to go out-of-state and pay another college/university out-of-state tuition. She indicated that Idaho was losing thousands of dollars in tuition to other states and she would like to see University of Idaho or Boise State University (BSU) create this program.

Mrs. Lauritzen also stated that she would like to see increased funding for school counselors which would allow students to receive the help that they need, enrollment-based funding and look at the attendance rates when looking at achievement data.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** commented that they were trying to move so many of her ideals forward. As for the apprenticeship program, they were going to involve teachers and Higher Ed and make sure we get an apprenticeship program that worked, starting small with paraprofessionals that had training already.

Senator Nichols asked how did one get to that status, what was the process, and what did that mean. **Mrs. Lauritzen** explained that someone must submit their name, submit essays about different question prompts, and the Blue Ribbon Panel at the State Department of Education made the selection. **Senator Nichols** asked what kind of topic or what kind of questions did they have you write about. **Mrs. Lauritzen** said they asked about classroom practice, what you believed about education, and how you get to know your student.

Senator Semmelroth commented that BSU was in the process of creating a program and it was to be launched in the fall of 2024. Also, research indicated that Idaho's teacher shortage was a retention problem and that 42 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years and providing new teachers with support was critical for keeping them.

Senator Semmelroth asked Mrs. Lauritzen on how to create a different way to structure a leadership pathway so that teachers stay in the classroom. **Mrs. Lauritzen** replied when it came to the younger and newer teachers, it was more of a deficit model - what were our deficits and how did we address them. Especially with the newer teachers, it was more of an asset model - what were their strengths in the classroom and how could they build upon them.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 2:37 p.m.

Senator Lent
Chair

Linette Grantham
Secretary