

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, January 15, 2024

TIME: 3:00 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: **Senator Lent** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.

PRESENTATION: **From the Bottom to the Top: Curriculum Re-Design and Student Focused Education.** **Joni Stevenson**, Superintendent, Cascade School District #422, presented to the Committee about the turnaround in the Cascade School District over a five-year period (Attachment 1). After being identified by the State Department of Education as an underperforming school in 2018, Cascade School District implemented a number of strategies to improve student outcomes. The district invested in new curriculum and focused on high quality, timely instruction. They worked to shift the culture in the district away from blame and complain to one of ownership and accountability. She explained that the district also created Professional Learning Communities where teachers collaborated on data-driven learning targets, assessments, and progress monitoring. **Joni Stevenson** shared that these strategies were successful and led to district wide improvements including achieving #1 district for science proficiency, top 10 district for math proficiency, and top 20 district for English proficiency in Idaho. Cascade School District was also recognized as a 2022-23 #4 IHSAA School of Excellence.

DISCUSSION: In response to Committee questions, **Joni Stevenson** spoke about issues such as the change of culture in the district, professional development for teachers, the use of data to drive educational decisions, and the importance of leadership. She shared that all staff in the district adopted the mindset that every student was important and every student could achieve. She shared that the district mission was, "Engaging every student, every day, in character development and rigorous education".

PRESENTATION: **Layne McInelly**, President, Idaho Education Association (IEA), acknowledged the committee for past session achievements including increasing K-12 spending, raising teacher salaries, and broadening the pool of mental health professionals available to schools. He spoke about the importance of investment to improve school facilities across the state. He shared that according to a survey by the IEA of 2,300 likely voters, 94 percent of respondents said that Idaho students have a right to safe, secure, and modern facilities. He also highlighted the need for more mental health resources for Idaho students.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 3:58 p.m.

Senator Lent
Chair

Lisa Stein
Secretary