

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Monday, January 13, 2025
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Lent, Vice Chairman Cook, Senators Woodward, Nichols, Carlson, Zito, Ward-Engelking, and Semmelroth
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Burtenshaw
- 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 2:59 p.m..
- WELCOME:** **Chairman Lent** introduced the members of the Committee, as well as the Page, Truman Smith. Members of the Committee then shared a bit about themselves including who they were, where they were from, and an interesting fact about themselves. **Chairman Lent** then introduced the Secretary, Savannah Phelan. **Ms. Phelan** introduced herself and expressed her excitement at being a part of the Committee.
- INTRODUCTION:** **Chairman Lent** introduced the new Committee Page and invited Page Truman Smith to address the Committee. **Mr. Smith** shared that he was from Idaho Falls, he had a connection to Chairman Lent's love for snowmobiles, and finished off with the reasons why he applied as a Page. He included information about the boost in resume quality, the various recommendations he received from previous Pages that he knew, and, finally, that it was an excuse to get out of school for a bit. He was then asked a few questions by the Senators. **Senator Nichols** asked what he hoped to gain out of the experience, and **Mr. Smith** stated that he hoped to get some real life experience in the behind the scenes work of government that directly impacted Idahoans' lives, including legislation such as Advanced Placement (AP) and Concurrent Level classes. **Senator Cook** then asked what his plans were for after high school. **Mr. Smith** shared that he planned to go home, finish school, go on a mission, and college or private pilot school after that. **Chairman Lent** thanked Truman Smith for sharing and then provided a quote from former Senator Thayne to segue into the presentation.
- PRESENTATION:** **Idaho's Success Story: How Idaho is Helping Charter Schools Reduce Facility Costs and Focus Resources on Instruction.** **Matthew Joseph**, the Senior Policy Advisor at ExcelinEd, presented to the Committee about Idaho's funding for local charter schools (Attachment 1). He shared how Idaho had a unique, initiative program regarding charter schools that involved two-parts: a Revolving Loan Fund and a Moral Obligation Program. This allowed local charter schools to receive a decrease in the interest on the loans required to start up their schools and offered tax breaks. As a result, more teachers were hired at these charter schools and increased ability to allocate monetary resources to the growth of their schools and programs, rather than paying high interest rates on loans. **Chairman Lent** thanked Mr. Joseph for his presentation and asked if there were any questions. The Committee had none at that time.

GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT: **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Reappointment of Kurt Liebich of Boise, Idaho, to the State Board of Education to serve a term commencing July 1, 2024 and expiring July 1, 2029.** **Mr. Liebich** introduced himself and stated that he was honored to be in front of the Committee. **Mr. Liebich** expressed that he first took the position at the start of COVID it radically changed education and the approach to keep kids in school. However, he believed Idaho struggled to find a good solution, yet still performed better than other schools across the country due to collaboration between schools and legislators across all demographics and levels. He stated that Idaho made massive investments in K-12 schools and need to strive for a return on that investment within the next five years. **Mr. Liebich** also stated he wished to continue to be involved in the tremendous growth and achievements that Idaho had been innovative on in order to support the Idaho education system. **Senator Cook** asked about the top three priorities that Mr. Liebich wanted to see in the next five years. **Mr. Liebich** stated that he wanted to see improvements in middle school math proficiency, grade 3 literacy rates, and see more high school students on pathways post-high school graduation. In higher education, he stated that too many people take on debt and don't finish school, therefore, he would like to see more individuals finishing their degrees. **Mr. Liebich** also stated that he wanted to see an encouragement for post-high school students to pick in-demand degrees that were needed by the economy. **Senator Nichols** then asked about how Mr. Liebich could work to prevent federal overreach in the education system. **Mr. Liebich** stated that most of the overreach, in his mind, stemmed from the "No Child Left Behind" Act from the Bush administration. **Mr. Liebich** explained that, while it had good intentions, it created a lack in assessments for how children were judged in their knowledge and competency. His advisement was to "stay close to Washington" and watch the policies that would come from Washington.

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Lent** asked for Vice Chairman Cook to share his plans on rules for this session. **Vice Chairman Cook** stated that each Senator on the Committee was to be responsible for every rule assigned to the Committee. He also stated that if the Senators needed hard copies, they could receive them from the Secretary.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 3:42 p.m..

Senator Lent
Chair

Savahanna Phelan
Secretary