

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 16, 2026

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Lincoln Auditorium

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Lent, Vice Chairman Cook, Senators Woodward, Nichols, Burtenshaw, Zito, Ward-Engelking, and Semmelroth

ABSENT/EXCUSED: Senator Carlson

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 3:06 p.m.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT: **Chairman Lent** asked for unanimous consent to switch **HJM 11** and **RS 33392** on the agenda. There were no objections.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Burtenshaw** moved to approve the Minutes of February 9, 2026. **Senator Woodward** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

HJM 11 **States findings of the Legislature and calls on Congress to pass and fully fund legislation that fulfills the 40% federal funding commitment in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).** **Senator Burtenshaw** presented the memorial which called on Idaho's congressional delegation to assist with IDEA, a program that was created in 1975 that received joint payments from the State and Congress.

TESTIMONY: **Stoney Winston**, Fruitland School District, testified in favor of **HJM 11**. **Mr. Winston** stated that the memorial applauded the State for doing a good job funding IDEA and that the federal government needed to do more.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **HJM 11** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Woodward** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

RS 33392 **Provides a framework that two or more school districts or charter schools can use to share services that are cost-prohibitive or impractical for a single district or charter to deliver independently.** **Senator Burtenshaw** stated that no new funding would be required as it was accounted for in the Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Cook** moved to send **RS 33392** to print. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: **Idaho School Boards Association. Jason Sevy**, President of the Idaho School Boards Association, stated that good governance wasn't something learned, but something practiced. **Mr. Sevy** explained how he joined the school board and what the board had been working on. **Mr. Sevy** ended on Superintendent Debbie Critchfield being a positive leader for Idaho's education system.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Semmelroth** asked how the State could support communities and school boards. **Mr. Sevy** said it could remove funding barriers.

PRESENTATION: Meridian Technical Charter High School. **Craig Miller**, Principal, introduced what Meridian Technical Charter High School did different than other state charter schools (Attachment 1). Students received technical trainings in different pathways like software development, computer science, etc. **Mr. Miller** introduced three students, **Finnegan Heffley**, **Elias Warren**, and **Nicole Prosser**, who spoke to the Committee on their experience. **Mr. Miller** closed with the school's plan to grow and that the school was working on a fundraiser to accomplish its goal.

DISCUSSION: **Vice Chairman Cook** asked how they used artificial intelligence (AI) in their schooling. **Mr. Warren** answered that AI was involved in school work and that there would be assignments asking students to use AI as a tool. **Vice Chairman Cook** asked what percentage of internships were in students' fields of study. **Mr. Miller** answered 100% of the internships. **Senator Nichols** asked where the students would be if they did not attend Meridian Technical Charter High School. **Mr. Warren** answered that he probably would have failed high school but was a "straight-A" student at Meridian Technical Charter High School.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 4:01 p.m.

Senator Lent
Chair

Lauren Young
Secretary