

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 02, 2026

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

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

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Chairman Lent

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: **Vice Chairman Cook** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:02 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Nichols** moved to approve the Minutes of February 18, 2026. **Senator Carlson** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

S 1335 **Education - Amends existing law to revise provisions regarding contract requirements for state-supported medical and veterinary students.** **Senator Nichols** presented the bill which would help allow students to attend out-of-state institutions for veterinary studies. The bill would strengthen an existing program and mirror the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho Regional Medical Education Program (WWAMI). **Senator Nichols** closed that the bill would address the demand for veterinarians in Idaho.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Semmelroth** asked how this legislation was different than previous versions. **Senator Nichols** answered the question would be addressed in testimony.

TESTIMONY: **Dexton Lake**, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, testified in support of the bill. **Travis Jones**, Idaho Veterinary Medical Association, testified as neutral. **Patxi Larrocea-Phillips**, Idaho Cattle Association and Idaho Wool Growers Association, testified in support of the bill.

DISCUSSION: **Mr. Lake** answered a question from Senator Semmelroth on whether **S 1335** legislation would expand on a current program. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if a former senator had a similar version of the bill. **Mr. Lake** responded that it was before his time but it involved getting large animal veterinarians back in the state and mirroring the WWAMI program. **Vice Chairman Cook** asked about the clinical practice time from small animal to large animal. **Mr. Lake** responded that it was 600 hours and the bill text allowed for mixed animal courses. **Senator Semmelroth** asked which school year would be affected, 2026-2027 or 2027-2028. **Mr. Lake** responded the 2027-2028 school year due to the application process timeline.

Mr. Jones stated the bill would address the shortage in large animal veterinarians and would bring a positive impact to our rural areas. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked what concerns there were and what the incentives of the program were. **Mr. Jones** responded that there was a concern over the requirements versus incentives of the program. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if there was any pushback from students. **Mr. Jones** responded no because the program applied to new students.

Mr. Larrocea-Phillips stated the bill would help with the veterinarian shortage.

Senator Ward-Engelking and **Mr. Larrocea-Phillips** further noted how the program was not a complete solution, but a step forward in finding one.

MOTION: **Senator Burtenshaw** moved to send **S 1335** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Carlson** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. **Senator Zito** requested to be recorded as voting nay.

PRESENTATION: Idaho Higher Education Literacy Partnership (IHELP). **Dr. Sally Brown**, Associate Professor of Education, College of Idaho, explained the program worked with Idaho's higher education institutions to create literacy plans to strengthen reading across the state and to provide resources to school districts. **Whitney Ward**, Associate Professor, Northwest Nazarene University, and **Carolyn Cort**, Associate Clinical Professor of Education, Boise State University, added to the presentation on the partnerships IHELP utilized to collaborate with schools and the strengthen reading. **Dr. Brown** noted that Idaho was the only state with a program like IHELP.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Semmelroth** asked about the instructional experience and leadership summits for administrators. **Dr. Brown** answered that they offered workshops to administrators because many were teachers in secondary schools. **Dr. Brown** concluded that administrators were instructional coaches to their teachers and it was important for them to understand what was being taught in the classroom.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business at this time, **Vice Chairman Cook** adjourned the meeting at 3:44 p.m.

Senator Cook
Vice Chair

Lauren Young
Secretary