

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 04, 2026

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Lent, Vice Chairman Cook, Senators Woodward, Nichols, Carlson, Burtenshaw, Zito, 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 Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:13 p.m.

H 599 **Education - Amends existing law to revise provisions regarding the Public School Digital Content and Curriculum Fund. Senator Jim Woodward** presented the bill which was an amendment to Title 33-4804, Idaho Code. The purpose of the bill was to change the distribution process from a first come, first serve basis to distributing funds to the districts that needed it. **Representative Jerald Raymond** added that the cap of \$50,000 per district would remain in place under this bill.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Nichols** asked how many school districts participated in the fund. **Senator Woodward** answered around 40 to 50. **Senator Nichols** asked if the goal of the bill was to give money to those who needed it. **Senator Woodward** responded yes.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **H 599** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Nichols** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

H 728 **Education - Amends existing law to revise provisions regarding educational staff, teachers, and certificates. Representative Monica Church** presented the bill which amended Title 33-1001, Idaho Code, regarding funding for instructional dollars and non-instructional roles. **Representative Church** explained the bill would change the definition of instructional staff, the definition of school support staff, and would add language for flexibility in rural districts. If the bill passed, it would affect over 100 employees. **Representative Church** closed by stating the bill sought to clarify definitions of school staff roles in Idaho's education funding formula to improve transparency. She asked to send the bill to the amending order to create a new definition for instructional support staff for roles like coaches and mentors.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** and **Senator Semmelroth** asked about sending the bill to the amending order to add a new definition of instructional support staff. **Representative Church** presented the proposed amendments to the Committee. The amendment would create a new category called instructional support staff for those who support instructional staff but do not work directly with students, including mentors and coaches. **Representative Church** further answered that she would agree to send the bill to the 14th Order.

Vice Chairman Cook, Senator Nichols, Chairman Lent, Senator Woodward, and Senator Semmelroth asked about the proposed definition change on page 1, subsection 2c. **Representative Church** answered the language was already

in statute and the bill would change the definition of instructional support staff to administrators. **Vice Chairman Cook** and **Chairman Lent** shared concern over instructional staff being reclassified as administrators and what happened if someone was classified as an administrator but did not hold an administrative certificate. **Representative Church** responded that Idaho allowed individuals to serve in administrative roles without a license in some circumstance and stated that instructional staff had been defined as administrators in Idaho Code since 2015. **Senator Semmelroth** asked where that definition was currently in code. **Representative Church** responded on page 1, subsection 2c. The Committee and **Representative Church** discussed some of the concerns around changing the definition and how it could affect coaches and mentors as well as what implications could occur in districts.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked what feedback was received from administrators and teachers. **Representative Church** responded that she received a variety of different responses with most educators speaking in support. She also received feedback from the Boise and Twin Falls administrators who helped develop the amendment. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked about the emergency clause or charter-school flexibility provisions if a district could not find an administrator. **Representative Church** answered it was before her time and did not have an answer on how the definition was previously used. **Chairman Lent** asked about the career ladder and if instructional staff and teachers would lose their positions if they changed to administrators. **Representative Church** responded no, teachers could maintain or advance on the career ladder through an appeals process if they temporarily left the classroom. **Senator Nichols** asked about the collaboration from stakeholders. **Representative Church** responded there was collaboration with school board administrators, the Department of Education, policy makers, the State Board of Education, and school district staff.

Senator Woodward asked about the financial implications of the proposed changes. **Representative Church** responded that over 100 people would be affected and that the school districts would make the decision on how their employees would be allocated. **Chairman Lent** asked if this could affect the administrative support unit cap. **Representative Church** answered no because most districts would not exceed administrative limits. **Representative Kyle Harris** responded to Senator Woodward's question stating that school districts would have a choice on how they applied the definition which would impact the financial implications. He also stated that it would help taxpayers and lawmakers know where education funds go.

TESTIMONY: **Brady Dickinson**, Superintendent of Twin Falls School District, **Heather Williams**, Idaho Association of School Administrators, and **Peggy Hoy**, Idaho educator, testified against the bill. They shared their concerns about the bill affecting mentor programs, current education funding, and trust built between teachers and support staff.

MOTION: **Senator Nichols** moved to send **H 728** to the 14th Order of Business for possible amendment. **Senator Zito** seconded the motion.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Vice Chairman Cook** moved to hold **H 728** in Committee subject to the call of the Chair. **Senator Burtenshaw** seconded the motion. **Senator Nichols** requested a roll call vote. **Vice Chairman Cook**, **Senator Burtenshaw**, and **Chairman Lent** voted aye. **Senators Woodward, Nichols, Carlson, Zito, Ward-Engelking**, and **Semmelroth** voted nay. The substitute motion failed.

VOTE ON THE ORIGINAL MOTION: **Senator Nichols** requested a roll call vote on the original motion. **Vice Chairman Cook, Senators Woodward, Nichols, Carlson, Burtenshaw, Zito, Ward-Engelking, Semmelroth,** and **Chairman Lent** voted aye. The motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 4:24 p.m.

Senator Lent
Chair

Lauren Young
Secretary