

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, March 12, 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 3:02 p.m.

**S 1371** **Education – Adds to existing law to provide for the Idaho Student Safety and Educator Disclosure Act.** **Senator Tammy Nichols** presented the bills which would improve hiring transparency across educational entities. The bills would widen the sharing capabilities of relevant misconduct-related information. The intent of the bill was to prevent misconduct from being handled internally and ensure it would be handled by the Idaho Professional Standards Commission.

**DISCUSSION:** **Chairman Lent** asked if the bill would reduce lawsuits regarding misconduct. **Senator Nichols** answered maybe because the bill would create a procedure for how issues were handled and reported. **Vice Chairman Cook** asked if there was a current law about teachers who were involved in a sexual misconduct case, and whether they could still be hired as teachers. **Senator Nichols** responded that it could happen if the misconduct was not reported to the proper authorities and placed in their personnel file. She continued that criminal consequences only occurred when the issue was reported to the authorities.

**TESTIMONY:** **Karen Brooke, Kathy Wilson, and Tori Doell** all testified in support of the bill. **Ms. Brooke** and **Ms. Wilson** testified that the bill would protect children and provide transparency in the disciplinary process. **Ms. Brooke** and **Ms. Doell** additionally testified that **S 1372** would protect whistleblowers.

**DISCUSSION:** **Superintendent Debbie Critchfield** added the common goal behind the legislation was student safety and ensuring that mandatory reporting protocols were followed.

**Senator Burtenshaw, Senator Semmelroth, Vice Chairman Cook, and Senator Woodward** asked about the proposed modifications. **Senator Nichols** answered they were still being drafted but she was open to the Committee's advice on reprinting. **Senator Semmelroth** asked about the required background checks and disclosure of disciplinary information. **Superintendent Critchfield** responded that until recently, she would have answered yes, but school districts had different policies regarding disclosure practices. **Senator Nichols** responded that non-uniformity of disclosure practices was the reason for the amendments. **Senator Semmelroth** asked about the private school section. **Senator Nichols** answered that they were asking private schools to follow the same provisions to create consistency.

**Senator Zito** asked if Idaho was a mandatory reporting state. **Senator Nichols** responded yes, but reporting was not occurring in certain instances. **Senator Zito**

asked if, under existing law, people convicted of sexual misconduct or those on the sexual offender registry applied to a school, whether the background check would flag it. **Senator Nichols** answered yes, but there was a problem that it did not always happen in practice because misconduct was not always reported. **Senator Semmelroth** asked about out-of-state applicants. **Senator Nichols** responded that educational employers could request that information but it would not disqualify them from applying.

**Senator Nichols** asked that **S 1371** and **S 1372** be sent to the 14th Order of Business. **Senator Woodward** asked if she would be open to reprinting the bills and merging them into one. **Senator Nichols** responded that she could agree to that.

**MOTION:** **Senator Woodward** moved to hold **S 1371** and **S 1372** in Committee subject to the call of the Chair. **Vice Chairman Cook** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 3:49 p.m.

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Senator Lent  
Chair

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Lauren Young  
Secretary