

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Friday, March 27, 2026

**TIME:** 8:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW53

**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 8:02 a.m.

**H 940** **Education - Amends existing law to revise provisions regarding the Idaho Digital Learning Academy. Representative Doug Pickett** presented the bill which would focus on policy corrections to Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA). **Representative Pickett** stated that IDLA was designed to fill gaps in Idaho's education and how it was utilized by small and rural school districts. **Representative Pickett** walked the Committee through each section of the bill including definitions, administrative cost concerns, fee structure, and concerns with double dipping. He explained that the bill would require future reports on outcomes.

**DISCUSSION:** **Chairman Lent** asked about the language of "not entirely virtual." **Representative Pickett** answered that if a student was completing school through virtual only, they would not qualify to take IDLA, but if they were attending physical classes, they could qualify for IDLA. **Representative Sonia Galaviz** provided additional clarification on the "fully virtual" language. **Vice Chairman Cook** asked if there was an exception for students to use IDLA if ineligible. **Representative Galaviz** answered that students could still use IDLA but they would need to pay out-of-pocket. **Senator Nichols** asked about the \$13.38 million reduction in the fiscal note. **Representative Galaviz** responded that the amount was calculated from cuts of multiple programs and reductions to others. **Representative Galaviz** gave a line-by-line breakdown of what changed.

**TESTIMONY:** **Andy Grover**, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administrators, **Craig Woods**, Superintendent of Emmett School District, **Dr. Jason Moss**, Superintendent of Grace School District, **Jeff Gee**, Superintendent of Grace School District, and **Kathryn Larson** testified in opposition to the proposed amendments to the bill. They testified that the amendments would change IDLA's purpose and each version of this bill that had been introduced had worsened overtime.

**Dr. Jeff Simmons**, Superintendent of IDLA, testified on behalf of IDLA. **Dr. Simmons** stated that **H 940** alone was workable but the proposed amendments would be a serious issue. He continued that under the bill, private school students, fully online students, elementary students, and driver's education would be removed from IDLA and there would be a 50% reduction of the budget. **Dr. Simmons** had concerns that more fees would fall on the families rather than the school.

**Quinn Perry**, Idaho School Boards Association, reluctantly testified in support of the bill and opposed the proposed amendments. **Ms. Perry** testified that IDLA could be

a lifeline to rural districts and urban districts who were having staffing shortages. She continued that the bill was not ideal but was better than the alternatives.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked Mr. Grover for examples of unfunded mandated courses. **Mr. Grover** responded that digital literacy, western civilization, and civics were a few courses that would go unfunded. **Senator Nichols** asked about the statement on fees. **Mr. Grover** answered the \$40 fee was already common but the \$100 fee was new. He continued that many of these fees would be passed on to families. **Senator Nichols** asked about non-graduation courses. **Mr. Grover** responded that they were mostly electives to meet the total credit requirements. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked where dual credit fit into this. **Mr. Grover** answered that dual credit was currently free to districts because the State directly paid universities.

**Senator Nichols** asked Mr. Woods what the current elective course fee was. **Mr. Woods** answered it was about \$40 per course.

**Senator Nichols** asked Dr. Simmons what the current caps were and who set the pricing. **Dr. Simmons** responded that State Board set the cost annually and it was historically set at \$75 per course but was recently reduced to \$40 per course. **Senator Nichols** asked if removing caps increased flexibility. **Dr. Simmons** responded that it would because it lowered cost. He continued that the enrollment caps limited IDLA's ability to respond to demand. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked when enrollment projections were made. **Dr. Simmons** answered that they were submitted a year in advance. **Vice Chairman Cook** asked about his position on the bill. **Dr. Simmons** answered that the bill was manageable but the proposed amendments would be very difficult to implement. **Vice Chairman Cook** asked what the impact of **H 940** and the JFAC budget cuts would be to IDLA. **Dr. Simmons** responded that IDLA would not be able to admit as many students as they currently do. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked about the bill's additional requirements like reporting. **Dr. Simmons** responded that reporting was manageable but the biggest issue would be access to additional funding and no flexibility when cap was met.

**Senator Nichols** asked Ms. Perry about the concerns of double dipping. **Ms. Perry** answered that the major concerns were stemming from fully-online students and the custom section limits. **Senator Nichols** asked why the Legislature set fees instead of the State Board. **Ms. Perry** answered that it kept costs from rising. **Senator Nichols** asked about the concern of fixed fees and lack of flexibility. **Ms. Perry** acknowledge her concern and answered it was a part of political compromise. **Senator Zito** asked if IDLA had violated any law or rule. **Ms. Perry** responded that IDLA had made no violations.

**MOTION:** **Vice Chairman Cook** moved to send **H 940** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Burtenshaw** seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Nichols** stated she would support the motion but reserved the right to change her vote on the floor. **Senator Carlson** stated she would not support the motion because she believed the bill should be amended. **Senator Zito** stated she would not support the motion because the bill added cuts to IDLA. **Senator Ward-Engelking** agreed with Senator Zito on the cuts being unnecessary but she would support the motion.

**VOICE VOTE:** The motion to send **H 940** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation passed by voice vote. **Senator Carlson** and **Senator Zito** requested to be recorded as voting nay.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

---

Senator Lent  
Chair

---

Lauren Young  
Secretary