

MINUTES  
JOINT MEETING  
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, January 17, 2019

**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** WW02 Lincoln Auditorium

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Mendive, DeMordaunt, Moon, Ehardt, Goesling, Marshall, Raymond, Wisniewski, McCrostie, Abernathy, Berch

Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, Buckner-Webb, Ward-Engelking

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Rep. Shepherd, Sen. Winder

**GUESTS:** The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office until the end of the session. Following the end of the session, the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

**Chairman Mortimer** called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

**Rep. Wendy Horman**, Co-chair, reported on the work of the Interim Public School Funding Formula Committee. The Committee has met since 2016 and has now submitted a set of recommendations which have unanimous support from the full Interim Committee. She explained the proposed new, student-centered funding formula and noted the current formula is wildly complex and the goal was to make it more understandable, transparent and flexible at the local level.

**Sen. Lori Den Hartog** spoke on behalf of **Sen. Chuck Winder**, Co-chair, who was unable to attend. She noted today was the handoff from the Interim Committee to the Germane Committees to continue work on a new public school funding formula. The current formula was built in 1994 and was no longer meeting student and district needs. The Committee's recommendations resulted from years of feedback from administrators, teachers and other stakeholders and she expressed her desire for people to remain welcome and engaged in the policy process. She stated her hope to end the session with a signed bill adopted by both bodies.

**Emily Parker**, Policy Analyst, Education Commission of the States (ECS), explained ECS is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a mission to help states learn from each other and create better education policy. She stressed the process in Idaho had been open and inclusive and noted the budget tool about to be demonstrated was the fifth or sixth version offered publicly.

**Rep. Scott Bedke**, Speaker of the House, demonstrated the budget tool. The formula starts by providing a base amount per student, so the more students in a district, the more funding the district receives. Certain students and types of districts then receive additional funding ("weight") because they require additional resources. These weighted groups are: economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, Gifted and Talented students, Special Education students, students in grades K-3 and 9-12, small districts or charter schools, remote school buildings, very large districts and wealth adjustment for districts with a low property value per student. Once the weights have been adjusted, the budget tool shows the total amount of per student funding. Estimated expenditures on salaries and benefits, along with line items such as transportation, are then added, resulting in the total state funding to districts. The budget tool then lists the funding for every district, along with a comparison to 2017-18 funding with the current formula.

**Michael Griffith**, Principal Contractor, School Finance, ECS, further discussed the budget tool. He recommended the final formula have mild, moderate and severe weights for Special Education students, rather than a single weight, and noted when you turn off a weight, the base cost per student increases. He stated the proposed new formula tried to mirror existing state law as closely as possible, such as in the definition of a small district or remote buildings, both to cater to Idaho's unique needs and to avoid making policy decisions beyond the scope of the formula.

In response to Committee questions, **Rep. Bedke** and **Mr. Griffith** explained how to prevent big "winners" and "losers" when transitioning to a new formula. The budget tool allows a cap on annual funding increases and a maximum annual per pupil funding increase. With a cap in place, the extra funding that would have gone to "winners" is redistributed to "losers." They recommend holding districts harmless from a funding loss for three years, although some districts' funding would simply remain flat. They also noted the number of line items in the current formula is 35, while the budget tool lists 14 with the new formula, which would account for 9% of the budget. It is the responsibility of the germane committees to write the policy language for a new funding formula.

In conclusion, **Rep. Horman** explained the forthcoming bill draft from the Interim Committee includes an automatic five year review of the funding formula by the germane committees. She stated the current formula dictates how money can be spent, but the new formula will allow districts to allocate funding according to their individual priorities. She expressed hope this will spur innovation and local control to meet student needs.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.

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Representative Clow  
Chair

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Erica McGinnis  
Secretary