

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Monday, January 16, 2017
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Nonini, Den Hartog, Guthrie, Crabtree, Buckner-Webb, and Ward-Engelking
- 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 Mortimer** called the Senate Education Meeting (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m. He welcomed the new committee members, Senators Winder, Guthrie, and Crabtree. He also welcomed the new page, Hanna Smith, Eagle, Idaho, and invited her to the podium to introduce herself and share her interests and future aspirations
- INTRODUCTION:** **Chairman Mortimer** said he is continuing the weekly tradition of reading a poem from the book, *A Heap O'Living Along Life's Highway*, by Eager A. Guest. He then read, "When Father Shook the Stove."
- PRESENTATIONS:** **Marilyn Whitney**, Senior Special Assistant for Education and Government Services, Office of the Governor, stated that in the upcoming legislative session the Governor's Office anticipates the continued implementation of the Governor's Task Force on Education recommendations. She explained the funding requests in the following areas: career ladder, teacher evaluations, school administrator training, technology, college and career funding, employee benefits, STEM Action Center, adult completer scholarship legislation, medical residency program, and the permanent building fund. She also reported that legislation will be brought forth in some of those areas.
- Matt Freeman**, Executive Director, State Board of Education (SBE), thanked the committee for the time and explained the make-up of the SBE and its role in education for the state. He reported the SBE's work during the interim and emphasized the literacy initiative, career ladder work, and teacher evaluation review. He stated he will report the SBE recommendations to the Committee in February. **Mr. Freeman** concluded with an outline of upcoming legislation that will be brought forward by the SBE (see Attachment 1).
- Sherri Ybarra**, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Department of Education (SDE), explained her role as the superintendent for the state. She said the main goal of SDE is to strengthen communications and relationships. She is working to insure the necessary information is readily available to legislators in order for them to make informed decisions. **Superintendent Ybarra** invited the Committee Members to the legislative open house schedule for January 23rd in the Capitol. She disclosed that the SDE will be making several informational presentations during the Legislative Session to the Committee regarding the different responsibilities of SDE. She introduced SDE executive team and encouraged Committee members to contact anyone of them with questions, concerns, or the need for assistance.

Dwight Johnson, State Administrator, Career Technical Education (CTE), reiterated Governor Otter's statement during the State of the State address which emphasized the current critical shortage of skilled workers in Idaho and reported the shortfall amount. He explained that CTE is working diligently to remedy that predicament by providing post-secondary educational opportunities through an associate or technical degree, an industry certification or by participating in an apprenticeship. He deemed any of these are in demand careers and CTE is creating a pipeline for trained workers. **Mr. Johnson** summarized the priorities of CTE for the legislative year. He concluded by emphasizing the benefits of Governor's initiatives. They will advance the work of CTE especially the expansion of Eastern Idaho Technical College (EITC) and the new career technical building on the Lewis Clark State College (LCSC) campus.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked why the CTE school is being built at LCSC. **Mr. Johnson** explained there are six CTE facilities in the state: three are embedded in the community colleges, LSCS, Idaho State University (ISU); one stand alone campus (EITC); the most antiquated are at LCSC and ISU. Currently, North Idaho College (NIC) and a local area high school are partnered to develop technical trained students. This program has been successful. The city of Lewiston is bonding a new high school in the proximity of LSCS, thereby being able to develop a technical program similar to the one at NIC

Briana LeClaire, Executive Director, Idaho Federation of Independent Schools, explained her organization is a statewide private school association and listed the schools in their membership. She said the federation protects the freedom to have educational choice. She reported a recent survey states 27 percent of families would prefer private school but only 3 percent are enrolled in one. **Ms. LeClaire** explained the difference between the two numbers is due to high costs and disclosed that there are over 5,000 empty seats in private schools. **Ms. LeClaire** explained if children were to have vouchers, their families could put the student in their schools of choice. Her legislative priority is to work with the legislature to ensure families can be able to attend the school of choice: be it private or public (see Attachment 2).

Penni Cyr, President, Idaho Education Association (IEA), said IEA is the largest professional association that advocates for students, teachers, and classified employees. She introduced the IEA staff and members from the IEA governance board. **Ms. Cyr** asked the Committee to continue the commitment to the teacher salary career ladder, teacher evaluation system, and discretionary funding. She detailed the many different courses of professional development and teacher training the IEA lead.

Senator Thayn said the Master Teacher program will begin in 2018. He asked if the IEA is expecting a large number of teacher to apply for the program. **Ms. Cyr** replied that every teacher who has worked at least 8 years qualifies for the program. When the IEA offers the Master Teacher classes the enrollment is typically high with waiting lists for the classes.

Senator Guthrie said in the past discretionary funding has been allocated to line item accounts, namely employee health insurance costs. He asked if the IEA has reviewed the current line item amount for health insurance and how it now compares to past discretionary funds that were used for health insurance. He asked if the districts are now receiving now more funding. **Ms. Cyr** replied when control is given to the local districts, they have the ability to run their districts well. She said discretionary funding is playing catch-up. Rather than making each expense a line item, let districts make the decision as to how to spend the funding.

Helen Price, Legislative Assistant, Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA), introduced Rob Winslow, Executive Director, and Harold Ott, Director of Idaho Rural Schools. She explained the IASA represents school administrators and the strong working relationship IASA has with other stakeholder groups. She shared with the Committee the IASA legislative priorities which were set in the fall of 2016. She thanked the Committee for the 2016 legislative work and reported IASA's priorities for 2017, emphasizing their concern in regards to the Public School Funding Formula (see Attachment 3).

Jessica Harrison, Director of Policy and Government Affairs, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), introduced her colleagues. She explained the make-up of ISBA and emphasized the importance of charter schools in their membership. Ms. Harrison explained ISBA adopted a position in support of the principle of local governance, funding the career ladder, and adjusted appropriation of operational funds. She explained the ISBA Committees and the concerns they are working to resolve. Ms. Harrison emphasized that school funding is the top priority (see Attachment 4).

Terry Ryan, Executive Director, Idaho Charter Schools Network (ICSN), stated the past support for charter schools from the legislature is much appreciated. He explained the growth of charter schools does not match the population growth of the state and revealed there has only been a five percent growth in charter and innovative schools. **Mr. Ryan** said the legislation ICSN is supporting is charter school facility funding, flexibility in spending, new school development. He concluded by introducing the ICSN team who accompanied him to the meeting.

Jane Wittmeyer, Coalition of Idaho Charter School Families (Coalition), explained the history and purpose of the Coalition. She stated they are the Coalition holds the large state house rally to urge the expansion of public school choice. The legislative priorities for the Coalition include the need to review Idaho Charter School Commission's evaluation system of charter schools, funding for charter school facilities, and the student funding formula (see Attachment 5).

Chairman Mortimer thanked all the presenters. He asked Committee members to share their legislative educational priorities.

Senator Den Hartog stated that her primary focus is the student. When examining new proposals the top criteria will be how it benefits students.

Senator Guthrie indicated discretionary funding levels are a concern. He stated there is an ongoing need for CTE which should be supported with funding and personnel. Testing, data, and reporting requirements seem high, and he is concerned the effect of that is reduction in instructional time. Finally, he would like to examine transportation reimbursement.

Senator Winder explained he had served on this committee when he was first elected and had taken a four year hiatus. He returned to the Committee because of his leadership roles on education interim committee. He emphasized that desire to work with appropriations to allocate more discretionary funds. He concluded that working together with stakeholders develops better policy.

Senator Ward-Engelking remarked that as a retired educator, education is her top priority. She stated that teachers are to be valued. A highly valued teacher makes for a better educator, and the student benefits.

Chairman Mortimer stated that over the interim he has thought about the work of the Committee. He said his number one priority is parent and student engagement in the educational process. School funding and the career ladder are tantamount to good education. There will be a renewed focus on student data collection and how that is reported. **Chairman Mortimer** said he desires emphasis on the CTE programs and integrating the students be collage and career ready. Implementing technology usage by teachers in the classroom is important. He is concerned technology advancement will exceed the teachers willingness to utilize that tool. Encouragement and incentives should be developed to motivate education professionals to learn to use technology in the classroom.

Senator Buckner-Webb stated her professional experience in the technology field makes her be a strong Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) proponent. We need to continue to promote other disciplines.

Vice Chairman Thayn explained that he is a proponent of the Advanced Opportunities program. This year there will not be a bill brought forward to change it. He reported the number of students that are using the program to earn college credits, which is increasing every year.

ADJOURNED: There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:17 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary