

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 01, 2018

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 Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to approve the Minutes of January 29, 2018. **Senator Winder** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Senator Ward-Engelking moved to approve the Minutes of January 30, 2018. **Senator Nonini** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Senator Crabtree moved to approve the Minutes of January 31, 2018. **Vice Chairman Thayn** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Senator Buckner-Webb moved to approve the Minutes of February 1, 2018. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

Chairman Mortimer stated there will be a hearing on **S 1303**. Today, no motions will be allowed.

S 1303 **Relating to the State Board of Education; Amend and Revise Provisions Regarding the Office of the State Board of Education (SBE).** **Marilyn Whitney**, Deputy Chief of Staff, Senior Special Assistant for Government Services and Education, Office of the Governor (Governor), presented **S 1303** and stated the bill would give the SBE the flexibility needed to hire executive-level staff to implement the Governor's Higher Education Task Force (Task Force) recommendations. To aid in achieving the 60 percent goal, it is recommended by the Task Force the consolidation of the federated system into a more centralized, student-centered model. She stated for SBE to achieve the objective, immediate action is necessary to put in place a leadership structure and establish a base operating budget.

Ms. Whitney explained the basis for the fiscal note and relayed how the salary for the executive leadership position was determined. She clarified misunderstandings and emphasized the intent is not to add a layer of staff, but to remove layers. While they do not yet know what the potential savings will be, they do foresee savings. Notwithstanding other factors, there is potential for added revenue via income tax gain once the 60 percent goal is attained.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Bucker-Webb** asked if the salary survey conducted was for systems similar in nature to Idaho. **Ms. Whitney** replied the survey she referenced was national.

Senator Bucker-Webb asked if any formal reporting structure had been established. **Ms. Whitney** stated the process would be left with the SBE.

Senator Den Hartog said beginning in 2010, a significant investment has been allocated towards achieving the 60 percent goal (Goal) and little progress toward the Goal has been made. She asked if there is an amount spent towards the Goal is available. **Ms. Whitney** replied she would provide that number. She explained how the recession impacted higher education and the lag time for certification and degrees.

Senator Den Hartog asked if the Goal refers to the 25-34 year old Idahoans. **Ms. Whitney** replied in the affirmative. She said SBE is analyzing postsecondary attainment in general. The Task Force has recasted the Goal to be a more population-based goal rather than age-based.

Senator Winder asked if it is necessary to have the executive hired prior to the completion of the study for "systemness." **Ms. Whitney** replied in the affirmative. She said from other states recommendations, it is important to have a staff member in place to oversee the study.

Senator Winder asked if SBE has a staff member to oversee the study. **Ms. Whitney** replied the SBE has the experience and capabilities to oversee the study. They are limited on the resources.

Senator Winder asked if funds have been allocated for the executive position. **Ms. Whitney** replied in the negative. She stated the legislation is pending.

Senator Winder asked if any legislative intent wording had been placed in the study that would prohibit other forms of funding. **Ms. Whitney** replied in the negative.

Senator Den Hartog referenced a new system Boise State University (BSU) recently invested in. She asked if that significant investment would become obsolete should consolidation materialize. **Ms. Whitney** said the intent would not be to replace a new, effectively operating system with another new system.

TESTIMONY: **Dr. Linda Clark**, President, SBE, spoke in support of **S 1303** (Attachment 1).

Vice Chairman Thayn inquired as to the nature of the study. **Dr. Clark** replied those doing the study would analyze specific areas and processes that relate to higher education in Idaho. She stated the goal is to determine how to standardize operations in higher education.

Rod Gramer, President, Idaho Business for Education (IBE), spoke in support of **S 1303** (Attachment 2).

DISCUSSION: **Senator Den Hartog** asked if the proposal and the additional cost would help the State reach the 60 percent educational goal. **Mr. Gramer** replied attaining the 60 percent goal would produce higher earners and there would be a gain in the tax revenue. He said the funding amount for higher education has not returned to pre-recession levels.

Senator Den Hartog asked if he knew the percentage of 25-34 year olds with post-secondary credentials during the recession. **Mr. Gramer** stated he did not know the exact number, but asserted it was roughly 38 to 42 percent; that figure is still 20 percent short. He added studies indicate only 22 percent of jobs by 2020 will go to people with high school diplomas or less.

Senator Buckner-Webb asked if there is an estimated time as to when the assessment will be completed. **Mr. Gramer** explained the process to change higher education leadership comparable to a major management change in a large corporation. He stated the transition could take a few years, and re-emphasized the need for a skilled executive.

TESTIMONY: **Susan Buxton**, Administrator, Idaho Division of Human Resources (DHR), spoke in support of **S 1303**. She stated the proposed legislation would enhance existing authority to address implementation of the Task Force's recommendations. She explained the DHR had been charged to oversee the study and develop a job description for the executive position. She gave an overview of basic descriptions they had on review. The purpose of the position would be to identify, develop, and lead the delivery of change management.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Guthrie** asked if this individual would have administrative authority over university presidents. **Ms. Buxton** replied the authority granted to the individual would allow them to have information in a timely manner to enhance decision making.

Senator Crabtree asked if avenues of authority have been established. **Ms. Buxton** replied the SBE will oversee the structure and develop the procedures for the position.

Senator Den Hartog asked if the position of change agent is temporary or permanent. **Ms. Buxton** replied the expectation is the position would be permanent. She stated the individual, as a change agent, needs the authority to make immediate adjustments.

Ms. Whitney closed by detailing how the funds saved with this new position could be reinvested in higher education programs.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Chairman Mortimer passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Thayn.

S 1291

Relating to the School Turnaround Act. **Senator Dean Mortimer**, District 30, presented **S 1291**. He said similar legislation had been introduced the previous year. He detailed at length the bill, and stated the proposed legislation would create a program targeted at school improvement for student outcomes. He explained the resources the lowest performing five percent schools would receive during a three-year period and the requirements for a turnaround plan. **Senator Mortimer** disclosed the costs and possible funding source for the program. He added federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) funds are available for Title 1 schools as well. He detailed at length the proposed legislation stipulations.

Senator Mortimer said there needs to be some changes to **S 1291** to its current form. He detailed at length the proposed changes. **Senator Mortimer** concluded by emphasizing the incentive-based legislation is subject to appropriation. He restated the importance of beginning to work with low-performing schools to improve student outcomes.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** remarked she appreciated the amendments. She asked how the legislation related to Idaho's Consolidated State Plan. **Senator Mortimer** replied the legislation is an additional tool that is more targeted and incentive based.

Senator Ward-Engelking said Title 1 schools receive federal funding to help with student achievement. She asked if those federal funds would remain. **Senator Mortimer** said a portion of Title 1 funds can be used to help low-performing schools turnaround.

Senator Ward-Engelking asked if funds from the General Fund would be used for those low-performing schools that are not listed as Title 1 schools. **Senator Mortimer** replied there are some General Funds set aside for that purpose. However, additional funding may be needed to help those schools that are not classified as a Title 1 school.

Senator Buckner-Webb asked if identified schools could choose not to participate in the program. **Senator Mortimer** replied the accountability oversight committee would identify the low-performing schools. He hoped those schools would see the benefits in the program.

Senator Buckner-Webb asked if a school chose to opt out of the program, would there be a negative consequence. **Senator Mortimer** replied there is a high probability the school would remain in the low-performing quadrant.

Senator Den Hartog asked what are the consequences if a low-performing school does not succeed in the turnaround program. **Senator Mortimer** replied the SBE would continue to work with the low-performing school. He stated in rural areas where school choice is limited, it is imperative that help be available for student achievement.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked how the \$750,000 allocation is being used. **Senator Mortimer** replied the SBE has contracted with the University of Idaho (UI) and they are working with six districts in a self-help method.

Vice Chairman Thayn explained his conversation with a change agent of an elementary school in Horseshoe Bend, Idaho. He stated improvement can occur. Staff and faculty work together to change the culture which then leads to improvements. **Vice Chairman Thayn** asked if the change agent worked for the SBE or the SDE. **Pete Koehler**, Chief Deputy, State Department of Education, said the change agents are capacity builders employed by SDE and are funded by grants. He explained the majority of capacity builders have prior experience as either a superintendent or a school principal.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if those efforts will fit with this legislation. **Mr. Koehler** replied it is complementary. He said if a low-performing school did not qualify for federal funds, the proposed legislation would allow for State directed intervention.

Senator Mortimer mentioned the SDE has been very helpful. The turnaround experts will have direct access to the SDE for data, consultation, and assistance.

TESTIMONY: **Rod Gramer**, President, IBE, spoke in favor of **S 1291**. He commended Senator Mortimer for his efforts.

Senator Mortimer said the turnaround program is exciting option for low-performing schools. Student achievement will benefit from the program.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **S 1291** to the **14th Order**. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Winder** asked for more information regarding the funding mechanism. **Senator Mortimer** said there is an ongoing appropriation of \$750,000 a year. If the legislation is passed, the SBE could request more funding.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked if the current turnaround efforts have been successful. **Mr. Koehler** replied the SDE has a State Tactical Assistance Team (STAT) in place to help low-performing schools. The SDE is pleased with the progress.

The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Vice Chairman Thayn passed the gavel to Chairman Mortimer

Chairman Mortimer said the presentation regarding "Teacher Evaluations" would be rescheduled due to time constraints.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:36 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary

Diane James
Assistant Secretary