

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 18, 2019

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Lincoln Auditorium

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, 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 3:04 p.m. He opened with a reading from the book, *A Heap O 'Living Along Life's Highway*, by Eager A. Guest, "One Kindly Deed."

PAGE WELCOME: **Taylor McMullin**, Meridian Idaho, introduced herself to the Committee. She said she is a senior at Rocky Mountain High School and is being sponsored by Senator Winder. She stated she will be attending Boise State University with the intention to study biology and ecology.

HCR 6 **Representative John McCrostie** presented **HJR 6**, Concurrent Resolution: Music in Our Schools Month. He said he would like the legislature to recognize the importance of music in Idaho schools and recognize the month of March as Music in Our Schools month. He spoke about his experience as a music teacher and being involved as a member in the Idaho Music Educators Association. He said he is bringing this resolution forward because of his concern that music may not have as high of a priority in education as the STEM curriculum. He detailed how music education helps students learn other subjects through patterning, tempo and other techniques.

TESTIMONY: **Erin Paradise**, K-5 Educator, Valley View School District, Caldwell, explained how music benefits the learning in other educational subjects. She said students with music education score higher in math and English. They have a greater ability for abstract reasoning and stronger listening and memory skills. In Idaho, music is celebrated because it offers students opportunities that might not otherwise exist, such as traveling across the nation to compete or having the opportunity to meet renowned composers and performers. She spoke about music's cross cultural reach, from movies to weddings, to a variety of diverse cultures. **Ms. Paradise** encourage the Committee to send **HCR 6** to the floor with a do pass recommendation.

Jeff Davis, Idaho Music Educators Association, Boise, spoke in support of **HCR 6**. He said the power of music connects people to one another and helps to develop creativity in students. He stated a well rounded education includes the arts, of which music is central. **Mr. Davis** said **HCR 6** recognizes the miraculous work of music educators working in Idaho schools as they enrich the lives of students with the transcendent beauty of music. The resolution demonstrates a profound understanding that education is not just about creating productive citizens. It is also about helping shape better people. He urged the Committee to send **HCR 6** to the floor with a do pass recommendation.

Sherri Ybarra, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Department of Education (SDE), spoke in support of **HCR 6**. She said music is an excellent example of mastery based education. A student must exhibit knowledge of the material in front of them before they can move to the next level. She said music is a cultural and the SDE supports the subjects in the arts. **Superintendent Ybarra** stated her excitement in support of **HCR 6**.

Representative McCrostie thanked those who testified and asked that **HCR 6** be sent to the floor with a do pass recommendation.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **HCR 6** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

S 1057 **Superintendent Ybarra** presented **S 1057**, Relating to Education; Continuous Improvement Plans. She said the proposed legislation is a compromise on how to streamline and eliminate duplicate reporting. The specific recommendation was the ability for the report card to include the measures and effectiveness that is required in the continuous improvement plan, the literacy plan, and the college and career advising plan, and to link that information to the report card. **Superintendent Ybarra** explained the removal of the specific metrics and the requirement of school districts to link to the SDE report card. She asked Marilyn Whitney, Deputy Superintendent Communications and Policy, SDE, to walk the Committee through the proposed legislation.

Ms. Whitney said the changes to **S 1057** include deleting out dated references and updating to the current practices.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked how many years of data are available on the report card. **Ms. Whitney** replied three years of data, unless the assessment is new. The intent is to have three years of rolling data on the report card site.

Superintendent Ybarra said the proposed legislation is to reduce the paperwork burdens on school districts. She emphasized accountability is not reduced. The data is in one place and easily accessible to understand schools' progression.

TESTIMONY: **Rod Gramer**, President, Idaho Businesses for Education (IBE), spoke in support of **S 1057**. Reporting requirements have been burdensome for districts. The proposed legislation allows continuous improvement plans to be current in order to help school districts meet their goals.

Quinn Perry, Policy and Government Affairs Officer, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), spoke in support of **S 1057**. She said the ISBA membership passed a resolution in November 2018, to support efforts to remove redundant report requirement and simplify the continuous improvement plan.

Mike Kecker, Chief Communications and Legislative Affairs Officer, State Board of Education (SBE), spoke in support of **S 1057**. He said the SBE Board voted unanimously in support of **S 1057**.

MOTION: **Senator Crabtree** moved to send **S 1057** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Lent** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: **Karen Echeverria**, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association, said the ISBA is here for the annual presentation to the Committee. She introduced Jennifer Parkins, President, ISBA.

Ms. Parkins, School Board Trustee, Genesee, presented K-3 Literacy. She said she will be addressing the ISBA resolutions related to funding all day kindergarten and funding early childhood education programs. She stated ISBA is in support of the Governor's Office recommendation to increase K-3 literacy dollars. She said there are many Local Education Agencies (LEA) that use local levy dollars to accomplish some form of all day kindergarten and early childhood education. She detailed the benefits of these programs for schools, families, and society.

Ms. Parkins spoke about the success of Genesee's literacy program. She explained how Genesee used literacy dollars to provide literacy interventions to students in K-3 along with the technology to allow the district educators to test students in small groups. She detailed the fall reading test scores and the current test score increases. She stated Genesee believes preschool and full day kindergarten builds a strong foundation for the youngest learners. She encouraged the Legislature to consider allowing state funds to support those programs.

Wally Hedrick, President-Elect, ISBA, Meridian Technical Charter High School (Meridian Tech) Board President spoke about Mastery Based Learning (Mastery). He said there are two truisms in education; 1.) One size does not fit all in education; and 2.) Local governance is the key to tailoring successful educational programs. He said his presentation about Mastery is from one school's perspective; Meridian Tech. He said Meridian Tech moved to Mastery to achieve deeper learning and find a way to help the students learn better and faster; Mastery benefited students and staff. **Mr. Hedrick** stated some subjects modify better to the Mastery methods. He said the students still needed to be guided and directed by teacher instruction, deadlines were also imperative. The student who were self-starters and goal oriented performed better under the Mastery model. He said for the underachieving student finding one subject they could focus on helped them to achieve at Meridian Tech.

Vice Chairman Thayn asked which type of subjects do not work well in the Mastery format. **Mr. Hedrick** replied the more abstract the subject the more difficult it is for the teacher to determine if the student has mastered the subject. He said those courses with a more defined outcome, such as science or math, seem to have worked better in Mastery.

Ken Hart, Second Vice Chair, ISBA, Nez Perce School Board Trustee's Chairman, presented Health Insurance. He said while all the schools in the state operate under the same charter, they all operate differently. Every year boards negotiate with teachers about salaries and health insurance. He stated 85 percent of their district funds extend to those two issues and in each district, the health insurance coverage and costs are different. **Mr. Hart** stated the biggest impact on their funding is the annual increase in health insurance premiums. He reported the increase in the 2020 appropriation which included discretionary health insurance funding.

Mr. Hart explained the program Nez Perce has implemented to control costs and the health insurance program they are operating under. He said because of the insurance program costs, they have had to reduce the coverage for the family members of their staff. **Mr. Hart** emphasized the need to be able to have the freedom to negotiate the best plan that will meet the financial and health needs of their employees.

In response to questions from the Committee, **Ms. Parkins** said the community is in favor of the pre-school program so it is funded by parents, and if they cannot pay, the money comes from the supplemental levies. She explained the literacy programs that are used to help students in K-3 grades to read.

Committee members discussed the work of the Public Schools Funding Formula, emphasizing the priority of local control. Board members were thanked for their commitment and work in their local districts. Funding concerns of Career Technical Education and rural school facilities were addressed.

RECORDING

LINK:

To hear the complete presentation from the ISBA, go to:
<https://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2019/standingcommittees/SEDU/>.

ADJOURNED:

There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:27 p.m.

Senator Dean M. Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary