

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, March 12, 2020

**TIME:** 2:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**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 Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 2:02 p.m.

**H 523** **Greg Wilson**, Senior Policy Advisor for Education, Office of the Governor, presented **H 523** and told the Committee that the bill seeks to support educators in order to retain them in the classroom. He went on to outline the benefits of improving the career ladder as outlined in the bill. **Mr. Wilson** described how the challenges of teacher recruitment and retention are met in other states and listed some of the Idaho school districts that rely on supplemental school levies to pay personnel. **Mr. Wilson** then outlined the mechanics by which teachers would advance their salaries through the career ladder as proposed in **H 523**.

**Alex Adams**, Administrator of the Division of Financial Management, spoke to the fiscal note of **H 523**. He described how each of the components of the bill fit into the Governor's budget recommendation. He also detailed the process by which the budget fit into the revenue projections for the next few years

**TESTIMONY:** **Debbie Critchfield**, President of the State Board of Education (Board) and Governor's task force member, testified in support of **H 523** and told the Committee that the Board endorses the bill. She told the Committee that the Board believes **H 523** will help to attract and retain experienced teachers, particularly in rural areas. **Senator Den Hartog** asked how the success of this legislation would be measured. **Ms. Critchfield** responded that one indicator of success would be school districts funding programs they had been previously unable to fund due to supplemental funds being dedicated to payroll. **Ms. Critchfield** responded to further questions that the minimum salaries outlined in **H 523** would help distribute teachers throughout the state and serve areas struggling with teacher shortages.

**Rod Gramer**, President of Idaho Business for Education, testified in support of **H 523**. He described the need to elevate the teaching profession and said that the bill addressed this need.

**Peggy Hoy**, instructional coach for the Twin Falls School District, testified in support of **H 523** and described the need for experienced educators in school districts. She responded to Committee questions that 22 teachers from Twin Falls had applied for the Master Educator Premium.

**Stacy Wescott**, fourth grade teacher for Fruitland School District, testified in support of **H 523**. She described the need to keep experienced educators in school districts and the difficulty of rural school districts to replace experienced educators when they left to teach in surrounding states for higher salaries.

**Harold Ott**, Idaho Rural Schools and Idaho Association of School Administrators, spoke in support of **H 523**. He spoke to the need to appropriately compensate experienced educators. **Vice Chairman Thayn** asked how **H 523** would help improve student achievement. **Mr. Ott** responded that the goal of reaching 75 percent student achievement rates outlined in the bill was realistic and achievable. **Senator Den Hartog** asked about the possibility of unnecessary leadership positions being created in order to allow teachers to qualify for the highest career ladder rung. **Mr. Ott** responded that due to the vast opportunities for meaningful leadership in the teaching profession, this was unlikely.

**MOTION:** **Senator Woodward** moved to send **H 523** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Den Hartog** and **Chairman Mortimer** spoke to the need to have measurable goals and expectations in order to evaluate the success of the bill. **Chairman Mortimer** thanked the Governor's staff for their work on the bill and expressed his support for the legislation.

**VOICE VOTE:** The motion to send **H 523** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation passed by **voice vote**.

The Committee recognized Rob Winslow and Harold Ott for their years of work as lobbyists for education and congratulated them on their upcoming retirement.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 2:57 p.m.

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Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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Morgan Howard  
Secretary