

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, February 14, 2022

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

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Thayn, Vice Chairman Lent, Senators Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Blair (Johnson), Cook, Ward-Engelking, and Nelson

**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.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Cook** moved to approve the minutes of January 25, 2022. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to approve the minutes of February 02, 2022. **Senator Nelson** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**RS 29544, RS 29545, RS 29527, RS 29531, RS 29535, RS 29546, and RS 29542 MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **RS 29544, RS 29545, RS 29527, RS 29531, RS 29535, RS 29546, and RS 29542** to print. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PRESENTATION:** The **Ideal Idaho College Savings Program Update (IICSP)** was provided by **Christine Stoll**, Executive Director, Ideal Idaho College Savings Program. The program was started in 2000 with a purpose of helping families save for education dreams in a tax advantaged way. **Ms. Stoll** stated that the program is administered by the College Savings Program Board made up of constitutional officers. The funds can be used for K-12 education, which includes public, private or religious school tuition. You can also use it for certificate programs, graduate schools and federally registered apprenticeships. **Ms. Stoll** pointed out that families with children or students that have any type of college savings or educational saving accounts are more likely to go on and finish a post high school program. Employers can work with the savings program in three different ways: first, a payroll deduction, second, by contributing directly to employee accounts, and lastly through awarding community scholarships through IICSP. (See Attachment 1)

**S 1280:** **Senator Crabtree** presented a high-level overview of **S 1280**. This piece of legislation pertains to dyslexia, and how this affects Idaho students. This bill adds a new section which outlines a uniform network for identifying dyslexia and similar disabilities ensuring they receive appropriate and adequate learning interventions. **Senator Crabtree** explained that a requirement for K-12 students to be screened when entering the public schools for the first time, and those students who identified with having these issues. **Senator Crabtree** pointed out that there will not be additional funding due to savings from keeping these students out of special needs classes which are expensive. **Senator Blair** provided a personal background for his support of **S 1280**.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** expressed concern over adding to teachers work-load,

and if they would receive allocated professional development time. **Senator Blair** responded that the intent is not to overload educators, however this is something that needs to be dealt with.

**Chairman Thayne** asked if the money that was currently in the budget would cover the costs of requirements for testing. **Senator Crabtree** stated that the money is available, and the work to identify students needs to be done.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked for additional clarification regarding the implementation of the screening measure, and if the department has one already in place. **Senator Crabtree** explained that the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) is being used as an initial tier one screener, which is testing that is currently in place.

**Marilyn Whitney**, Deputy Superintendent for the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) shared concerns over **S 1280**. She stated that the fiscal note does not provide the necessary funding to train teachers while the current appropriation for professional development is noted. **Ms. Whitney** explained that in addition to teacher training, there must be resources and support to provide necessary intervention. She also stated that the time-line requiring this training by the 2023-2024 school year is unrealistic given recent experience with mathematical thinking instruction courses that were required courses for educators.

**Senator Den Hartog** made an inquiry on whether the teacher prep program has dyslexia training for college and universities teacher prep programs. **Ms. Whitney** clarified that if a teacher prep candidate is doing a literacy emphasis, then the dyslexia training would cover it, however not in detail or specificity.

**Elena Knopp**, English Language Arts Coordinator, SDE testified against **S 1280** due to a lack of funding and personnel to do this level of work statewide.

**Senator Ward Engelking** asked if addressing this bill is something that we need to start on due to critical nature of this issue. **Ms. Knopp** replied that this does need to be addressed, and currently, there is a robust K-3 early literacy project called Idaho Smart that addresses early literacy needs.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked for additional clarification on what objections there were with **S 1280** besides the fiscal note. **Ms. Knopp** replied that the multidisciplinary team within the school districts could cause inequity due to a lack of staffing in rural areas.

**Senator Cook** asked what the process difference would be if this bill was passed. **Ms. Knopp** explained that there is an additional tier two assessment that the state does not currently support or provide. Additionally, the current IRI data does not include fourth or fifth grade students, which would be a new inclusion in tier one.

**Senator Nelson** asked for clarification on the tier one testing, and if it was an effective screener for dyslexia. **Ms. Knopp** explained that the current testing has an at-risk report built in that might point to a student that shows characteristics of dyslexia.

**Robin Sigmund**, testified in support of **S 1280** because of a lack of a dyslexia specific screener as well as effective, evidence-based professional development and interventions that are appropriate for dyslexic students.

**Dr. Sally Brown** testified in support of **S 1280** because it will help close the gaps in the Literacy Achievement Act currently in place. Additionally, a key reason for support is to improve reading instruction for all students over time.

**Senator Cook** asked if educators without special training or additional money could give the IRI test and determine which students are facing dyslexia challenges. **Dr. Brown** explained that K-3 screenings at the tier one level have had training for dyslexia determinations, however, the tier two screening would be able to identify the additional students in need of intervention.

**Senator Nelson** asked if there were examples from other states that are doing a better job in determining dyslexia have had investment savings in special education costs. **Dr. Brown** explained that specific dyslexia intervention is best when kids are young. As the student matriculates into middle school, intervention is not happening for the most part.

**Chairman Thayn** asked if Dr. Brown could expand on the multi-sensory literacy program. **Dr. Brown** provided more detail regarding the multi-sensory structured literacy program, including several components that make up good literacy instruction, such as phonemic awareness and an understanding of syntax, semantics and phonics. **Chairman Thayn** asked how many teachers would be needed that are trained in dyslexia reading techniques or can there be a more specialized focus. **Dr. Brown** stated that a good place to start would be with every general education teacher, and the key personnel will be interventionist and special educators.

**Senator Woodward** asked what happens to those students who are identified as needing intervention through the tier one screening of the IRI. **Dr. Brown** explained that each school district handles the identification differently. For example, some districts provide intervention in a homogeneous group.

**Senator Den Hartog** inquired if the time frame was reasonable. **Dr. Brown** stated that the time-line was fluid and comfortable and would be a good start for continued training to build on what the educator already knows.

**Jordan Atnip** testified in support of **S 1280** due to the support from teachers in the state of Idaho who are craving more information and more of the right kind of training and resources in regards to dyslexia.

**MOTION:** **Senator Lent** moved to send **S 1280** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. **Senator Woodward** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**H 461:** **Representative Chris Mathias** presented **H 461** which is relating to changing the eligibility requirements for the State Board of Education's Armed Forces and Public Safety Officers Scholarship.

**MOTION:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **H 461** to the floor with a do pass recommendation. **Senator Woodward** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 4:28 p.m.

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Senator Thayn  
Chair

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Katy Morden  
Secretary