

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 16, 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.

**CONVENED:** **Chairman Thayn** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to approve the Minutes of February 03, 2022. **Senator Blair** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**S 1290:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** presented **S 1290** by explaining that this would help move Idaho forward on recruitment and retention for rural school districts and high-needs school districts. She stated that the legislation would work by allowing a teacher in a rural area who has a loan, to be eligible for prepayment assistance. **Senator Ward-Engelking** further explained that this would incentivize teachers to stay in a rural community.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Crabtree** asked how many teachers would benefit from this. **Senator Ward-Engelking** replied that roughly 250 teachers would apply and this would be based on appropriations from the legislature. **Senator Blair** asked for clarification on the statement of purpose language that states other education costs and if those funds could be used for emergency certifications. **Senator Ward-Engelking** replied that the applicant would already need to be certified, however it could cover additional endorsements. **Senator Cook** asked if there were any limits for the teacher to collect repayment, such as if they were to go get a master's or doctorate degree. **Senator Ward-Engelking** explained that these rules would be promulgated by the State Board of Education (SBOE). **Senator Woodward** asked what the distinction is between helping people pay off debt and incentivizing teacher to teach in a rural district that's having a hard time bringing people in. **Senator Ward-Engelking** explained that this would be used as a recruitment tool. **Chairman Thayn** asked for clarification on whether or not a teacher would have to have a loan to qualify. **Senator Ward-Engelking** replied that the applicant would not need a loan to apply, and would be able to use funds for additional endorsements and training. **Chairman Thayn** asked for clarification regarding the federal loan program definition. **Senator Ward-Engelking** clarified that this would exclude parental loans. **Senator Den Hartog** pointed out that this incentive program is not new, that this has been employed in other fields such as physicians. **Senator Ward-Engelking** replied that this is something that was a program through SBOE in the past, but the tracking component of loans was too cumbersome,

instead the applicant would receive funds directly. **Senator Den Hartog** asked if the received funds would be income. **Senator Ward-Engelking** confirmed that it would be considered income.

**TESTIMONY:**

**Rod Grammar**, President, Business Education is in support of **S 1290** due to teacher burn-out and labor force challenges, especially in rural areas. **Dale Lane**, Idaho rural schools' association is in support of **S 1290**. due to rural schools having difficult times with filling positions, as well as attracting and retaining teachers. . **Quinn Perry** is in support of **S 1290** because this can be a tool to have certificated teachers in classrooms. **Caitlyn Shepherd**, Idaho Freedom Foundation (IFF) in opposition to **S 1290**. To pay loans as an incentive, further subsidizes student loans and brings up demand. Socializing cost in universities and colleges is unjust, especially to take on someone else's student debt. **Kris Perry**, Idaho Education Association (IEA) is in support of **S 1290** as a step to attract educators to rural areas and to grow your own program for teacher pipeline.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Blair** moved to send **S 1290** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Nelson** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senator Den Hartog** votes Nay.

**GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT:**

**Gubernatorial Appointment of Cynthia Siddoway of Terreton, Idaho to be appointed to the Idaho State Board of Education.** Ms. Siddoway introduced herself and a provided a brief overview of her interest in education. **Senator Den Hartog** asked what would be one of the greatest challenges or opportunities, particularly in K-12 education, that might be addressed at the board level. **Ms. Siddoway** replied that there are a lot of serious issues right now, and getting the students in any type of education that is going to benefit them as well as the state. **Senator Cook** asked how the dropout rates could be addressed. **Ms. Siddoway** replied that any incentive that we can provide for students to go on would allow them to make more money in the long run. **Senator Blair** asked a question regarding the go on rates and if career and technical education could possibly solve this issue. **Ms. Siddoway** said that this would provide opportunities for students that don't want to go on a traditional path.

**ADJOURNED:**

There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 3:58 p.m.

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Senator Thayn  
Chair

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Katy Morden  
Secretary