

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Tuesday, March 08, 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.
- PASSED THE GAVEL:** Chairman Thayn passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Lent.
- S 1373** **Vice Chairman Lent** said **S 1373** amends existing law to provide for certain state funding distributions. Chairman Thayn and Senator Crabtree presented it.
- PRESENTATION:** **Chairman Thayn** stated he and Vice Chairman Lent, along with the House Education chairman and vice chairman, worked with the Governor and his staff to address the funding formula for all day kindergarten. The policy statement is to prioritize economically disadvantaged students and the funding distributed according to enrollment.
- DISCUSSION:** Testifying in favor of **S 1373** were Rod Gramer, Senator Den Hartog, Donna Looze, Quinn Perry, Peggy Hoy, Laurie Erickson, Marilyn Whitney, Dale Layne, Kathy Dawes, Blake Youde, and Kurt Liebich.
- Some of their reasons for supporting full day kindergarten were:
- contributes to school readiness;
 - leads to higher academic achievement;
 - improves literacy and mathematical skill development;
 - benefits children socially and emotionally; and
 - additional opportunities for intervention.
- Several committee members had concerns. They were:
- the effects of the funding formula;
 - the predictability and stability of the programs;
 - the needed help for all students through their school years; and
 - the impact on rural schools versus the larger districts.

Ms. Dawes, testifying on behalf of Betsy McBride, president of the League of Womens Voters of Idaho (League), said they were in favor of the bill, but the League is in favor of amending it for the following reasons: 1). There is no evidence that the timeline for children achieving the stated reading proficiency levels is reasonable or achievable. 2). The intellectual and social skills children aspire in full day kindergarten go far beyond reading. 3). Full day kindergarten contributes to higher academic achievement over time. Others in favor of amending **S 1373** were Senators Cook, Nelson, and Ward-Engleking.

In closing, **Chairman Thayn** said **S 1373** is one of the most important bills that is being dealt with in the Education Committee this year. It strikes a good balance with different views. He thanked Governor Little and his staff for their efforts they put into the bill, as well as Representative Kerby.

- MOTION:** **Senator Crabtree** moved that **S 1373** be referred to the 14th Order for possible amendment. **Senator Ward-Engleking** seconded the motion.
- DISCUSSION:** There was much discussion regarding funding and how it affects rural schools.
- SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** **Chairman Thayn** moved to send **S 1373** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion.
- PASSED THE GAVEL:** Due to time constraints, Vice Chairman Lent passed the gavel to Chairman Thayn.
- ANNOUNCEMENTS:** **Chairman Thayn** announced that voting on **S 1373** will be held at the next meeting, as well as hearing **S 1374**, **H 685**, and **H 650**.
- ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 4:26 p.m.

Senator Thayn
Chair

Katy Morden
Secretary

Juanita Budell
Majority Staff Assistant