

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 06, 2020

**TIME:** 3:00 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 3:02 p.m.

**PRESENTATION:** **Beth Oppenheimer**, Executive Director of the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC), opened her presentation with a description of the application process for IAEYC's application for a federal preschool grant (see Attachment 1). She shared the history of the purpose of the Preschool Development Grant. **Ms. Oppenheimer** went on to describe the actions required by the grant and IAEYC's plans for fulfilling those requirements. She outlined a timeline for the completion of this plan, which must be completed by December 30, 2020. She concluded her presentation with a video she had received from U.S. Senator Jim Risch.

**DISCUSSION:** **Chairman Mortimer** asked how Ms. Oppenheimer hoped to involve parents in the pre-school process. **Ms. Oppenheimer** responded that in the needs assessment stage of the grant, there would be multiple surveys and focus groups of parents to identify where work needs to be done to improve parent engagement.

**GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT VOTE:** **Senator Winder** moved to send the Gubernatorial appointment of Kurt Liebich to the State Board of Education to the floor with recommendation that he be confirmed by the Senate. **Senator Ward-Engelking** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. **Senator Winder** agreed to sponsor the appointment on the floor.

**RS 27619** **Senator Souza** shared that many education stakeholders have expressed concern that there are no classes addressing personal financial learning. She continued that the resolution was meant to start the conversation around financial literacy education.

**MOTION:** **Senator Crabtree** moved to send **RS 27619** to print. **Senator Winder** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**RS 27602C1** **Senator Den Hartog** told the Committee that the legislation is meant to provide grandfather rights for when an educator has an endorsement that is no longer offered in Idaho, so that the educator may continue to display the endorsement.

**MOTION:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **RS 27602C1** to print. **Senator Woodward** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**SCR 122** **Vice Chairman Thayn** told the Committee that the resolution asks the State Board of Education and State Department of Education to review graduation requirements. He went on that current requirements are centered around university preparation, and many students' goals do not include four-year university. **Vice Chairman Thayn** told the Committee that some states had created different pathways to graduate high school (see Attachment 2). He continued that this would particularly serve career-technical high schools and that he believed it was time for Idaho to examine the possibility.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Lent** commented that in order to improve the educational situation of Idaho students, the Legislature must be open to growth and flexibility in the education system.

**MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **SCR 122** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**S 1285:** **Senator Lent** opened his presentation with a description of his experience working in school boards and his time working in training development. He went on to describe the role of school boards working with unions, school facilities, and other highly regulated activities. He continued that school boards need to have a high degree of knowledge about all of these activities and the regulations involved. **Senator Lent** told the Committee that he had seen school board members whose knowledge base prevented them from feeling comfortable contributing to conversations. **S 1285** requires school board members to complete training and meet with their superintendent in order to ensure they have a deep understanding of the concepts which school boards must deal with.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Crabtree** asked if Senator Lent had any data to suggest that the training would translate into higher-performing school board members. **Senator Lent** referenced the Lighthouse Project, which had proven just that.

**TESTIMONY:** **Quinn Perry**, Policy and Government Affairs Director for the Idaho School Boards Association (Association), shared that the Association is taking a neutral position on **S 1285** and thanked Senator Lent for involving the Association in the bill's development. She went on that the Association supports educating school board members, but has a slight concern that an imposition of training may discourage future candidates from running for the school board. **Ms. Perry** responded to Committee questions that she agreed that an electronic training would increase accessibility and that the Association is working with Idaho Digital Learning Academy to create an online school board training platform.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Lent** concluded with a discussion on the importance of moving forward to improve Idaho education.

**MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **S 1285** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 3:47 p.m.

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Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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Morgan Howard  
Secretary