

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 03, 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 Ward-Engelking** moved to approve the Minutes of January 24, 2022. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 29271: **RS 29271, Relating to Education and the Educational Support Program** was presented by **Senator Nelson**. **RS 29271** will place a win win opportunity for the Legislature to help our public schools. **Senator Nelson** pointed out that the property tax levies have been steadily climbing. This places a large burden on property taxpayers in certain districts. This piece of legislation will appropriate money. Typically, a percent of the appropriated money to a school district is used for levy reduction. The school board does have the authority to reduce a levy in current statute, however if no levy is in place, the district can use that to improve their school at their discretion.

MOTION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send **RS 29271** to print. **Senator Crabtree** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: A presentation regarding the **Next Steps Idaho Website Expansion** was given by **Sara Scudder**, Career Information Systems Program Manager, Office of the State Board of Education (SBOE). **Ms. Scudder** shared a brief history of a statewide core information system which was a main resource for Idahoans. In 2019 SBOE and the Idaho Workforce Development Council (WDC) partnered to deliver a new Next Steps Idaho website that would serve as a clearinghouse for the most timely and accurate information, tools and resources available to students. **Ms. Scudder** explained that the Next Steps Idaho has five goals that guide their work. The first goal is to seamlessly incorporate career development resources on the Next Steps Idaho site. The second goal is to increase ability to meet stakeholder needs. The third goal is to engage students and professionals with Next Steps Idaho. The fourth goal is to expand marketing and outreach. The last goal is to strategically engage business and partner agencies. (See Attachment 1)

DISCUSSION: **Senator Lent** inquired what the primary source of funding is for the Next Steps Idaho website. **Ms. Scudder** replied that this is finding that is obtained from system-wide needs through SBOE as well as some support from outreach grants received through WDC. **Senator Lent** followed up with an inquiry regarding what tools are available as part of the program. **Ms. Scudder** explained that there are several different interactive assessment tools, planning tools, connections to careers, and college cost options. **Senator Lent** asked if there were any regulations or codes that drive the Next Steps Idaho program. **Ms. Scudder** stated that prior statutes were in place, however this was removed and the system was moved to SBOE. **Senator Lent** asked how the effectiveness of the program is measured. **Ms. Scudder** replied that the new portfolio system is helping with the monthly analytics. **Senator Lent** also inquired how the program is institutionalized to ensure the students who need it most are fully engaged. **Ms. Scudder** explained that a majority of work that is done is to make sure that the teachers and counselors at the schools are able to use the tools on the website. Additionally, training is done with the Idaho Library Commission, WDC, and businesses.

Senator Cook commented that the website was user friendly and nicely done. He also asked if the Next Steps Idaho Website is available to out-of-state students as well looking to attend an Idaho school. **Ms. Scudder** said that anyone is welcome to use the website, and with the new portfolio system, the user can choose to save their progress.

Chairman Thayn asked about short-term training numbers, and the people who might be accessing and following leads. **Ms. Scudder** pointed out the training directory that provides access to the short term training that the workforce training centers use, however until the portfolio tool is more established, there are currently no numbers of those people who accessed leads. Chairman Thayn wanted to know who inputs all of the data into the Next Steps website. **Ms. Scudder** explained that there are a few different ways that the data is collected. The federal government, the Idaho Department of Labor, Career and Technical Education (CTE) and the Idaho institutions to find the most current data as well as to help answer questions.

PRESENTATION: The **Idaho Literacy Intervention Program Evaluation for 2020-21** was given by Matthew May, Boise State School of Public Service. **Mr. May** introduced the program evaluation by explaining that this has been a result of an appropriation section that called for independent external evaluation of the state's literacy intervention program. This evaluation includes the use of funds, including the use of funding amounts and local education agencies that have utilized all-day kindergarten program effectiveness and any other relevant matters. Three main data sources were used for the analysis, the first was student level scores and demographic data. The second data source is all day care enrollment data, and the last is early literacy intervention program expenditure data. (See Attachment 2)

PRESENTATION: **McAllister Hall**, Boise State School of Public Service, went over additional evaluation criteria including the program design. The tests are accurately identifying student need when administrators and teachers were surveyed. **Ms. Hall** noted that the use of funds specified by category are evident in student learning and instruction. Personnel is the most commonly spent category, followed by professional development. All-day kindergarten was looked into from the literacy funds program perspective, and overall has increased in the past few years.

DISCUSSION: **Mr. May** continued the presentation with program effectiveness measures and the proficiency of literacy throughout Idaho. **Mr. May** explained that the focus was more about percentages and the numbers themselves which are provided for context. **Mr. May** also pointed out that the data regarding certain characteristics of a school as urban or rural may have different access to resources which impact proficiency levels. **Senator Blair** asked what the range is on what a city, suburb, town or rural would be classified as, and if it would be based on population density. **Mr. May** clarified that for ease of analysis subdivisions of cities are defined by large, midsize and small. Suburbs are defined as territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area and is defined as a territory inside an urban cluster. Lastly rural is defined as census rural territory.

Senator Ward-Engelking wanted to know if hybrid schools were taken under consideration for the analysis. Mr. Hall explained that the determination was based on statewide schools. **Senator Ward-Engelking** wanted to know if there was any consideration for the schools that were doing hybrid because of the pandemic. **Mr. May** explained that the virtual category refers solely to statewide schools, because virtual charter schools were not calculated for this analysis. **Senator Ward-Engelking** inquired about the consideration of diversity, which was not included in the analysis. A discussion was held regarding the accuracy of the data given due to the population change and the utilization of testing to measure student proficiency. **Mr. May** explained that conversations with teachers and the State Board of Education (SBOE) agree that they are fairly confident that the identification of students most in need have targeted resources available. Overall the Committee agreed that the data presented could be property manipulated over the course of time. A request was made to highlight any successes that were made from a school district that had high scoring test results to inform how the data is moved forward in the future.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 4:12 p.m.

Senator Thayn
Chair

Katy Morden
Secretary