

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, January 18, 2023

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

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**SENATORS PRESENT** Chairman Lent, Vice Chairman Lenney, Semmelroth, Ward-engelking, Toews, Nichols, Carlson, Herndon, and Den Hartog

**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 Lent** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:01 p.m..

**WELCOME:** **Chairman Lent** welcomed all to the meeting.

**PRESENTATION:** **Student Achievement. Mr. Cantrell** talked about the Comprehensive Support and Improvement Under performing program (CSI Up). CSI Up looked at the Idaho Standard Achievement Test scores of students to identify which schools needed help. **Mr. Cantrell** identified principals and vice principals as the most common theme in success and failure in student achievement.

**Chairman Lent** asked him if these principles would be successful in other schools and settings. **Mr. Cantrell** answered that indeed it was a successful model of principles based on his experience with different schools and settings. He referred the Chairman to the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model that he had implemented to help successfully address student achievement.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Lenney** asked Mr. Cantrell if he had any current data to support the PLC and CSI Up Programs. He replied that he could not provide current data on the two programs.

**Senator Semmelroth** asked for more information about the difference between education leaders and education managers. **Mr. Cantrell** said that the biggest difference between education leaders and education managers was the mindset of the educator. **Senator Den Hartog** asked about the effectiveness of required performance evaluations in the schools he had visited, and whether or not they served their purpose. **Mr. Cantrell** replied they were effective when the principals were engaged with their teachers on a consistent basis.

**Senator Herndon** asked how taxpayer dollars went towards educational materials. **Mr. Cantrell** answered that State Superintendent Critchfield was in charge of providing those materials to schools. **Vice Chairman Toews** asked about the ways in which parents were involved with the administration and the direction of their schools. He replied district interaction with parents of students varied by district and school, based mostly on the overall size of the student population.

**Senator Nichols** asked him about learning expectation, and how CSI Up and PLC contributed to the retention of teachers using those models. **Mr. Cantrell**

said that the efforts to connect with parents, interacting with the community, and making sure the teachers felt like the administration had their back. He informed the Committee that the teacher turnover was cut in half from 30 percent to 15 percent. **Senator Nichols** followed up by asking him about how the retention rate of teachers was connected to the topic of learning expectations. **Mr. Cantrell** replied that the biggest contributor to learning expectations was from community input, especially from parents. **Chairman Lent** asked if there was anything else that he would like to pass on to the Committee in regards to policies and practices. **Mr. Cantrell** shared two pieces of advice to the Committee on this topic. One, that the better the school board was, the better the district. Two, the Superintendent was a very important position that played a key role in the success of Idaho students.

**PRESENTATION:** **Constitutional Authority.** **Matt Freeman**, Executive Director, Idaho State Board of Education (ISBE), gave a presentation on the Constitution of the United States and of the State of Idaho and how state education interacted with both of these constitutions. **Mr. Freeman** covered Section II of Article IX of the Idaho constitution, in which Mr. Freeman demonstrated that the article delegated state authority to the ISBE. The section read, "The general supervision of the state educational institutions and public school system of the State of Idaho, shall be vested in a state board of education, the membership, powers and duties of which shall be prescribed by law." **Mr. Freeman** informed the Committee that all school districts in Idaho, including specially chartered school districts, would be under the supervision and control of the ISBE. He informed the Committee that public colleges and universities were public entities and therefore were subject to governance and maintenance by the ISBE and the Board of Regents.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Nichols** asked Mr. Freeman why the school districts were under the authority of the ISBE when it was unelected. **Mr. Freeman** referred to the constitution and replied that it was that way because the statute was written in Idaho Code § 33-1612.

**Chairman Lent** asked whether or not the County commissioners had any constitutional authority over local school boards. **Mr. Freeman** replied that he could not give a definitive answer on that question.

**Vice Chairman Toews** asked Mr. Freeman about the constitutional role of the superintendent of the State and the district superintendent. **Mr. Freeman** informed the Committee the district superintendents reported to the State Superintendent.

**PRESENTATION:** **Performance Evaluations.** **Rakesh Mohan**, Director of Performance Evaluations (OPE), and **Casey Petti**, Senior Evaluator, OPE, gave a presentation on performance evaluations.

**Mr. Petti** informed the Committee that from 1994 to 2021, the number of paraprofessionals in Idaho almost doubled. **Mr. Petti** explained that according to his numbers, 71 percent of Leadership Effectiveness Analysis (LEA) business managers believed the funding given to LEA by the State were not enough to cover the costs of classified employee salaries. Only 25 percent of LEA business managers believed they had the appropriate amount of funding for LEA's. **Mr. Petti** revealed that in 2021, the State of Idaho allocated \$138.1 million for classified employees salaries, but LEA's ended up paying \$219.5 million that year. He said that the way in which LEA's typically made up the difference in costs was by local districts using supplemental levies, special property tax levies, and discretionary funding allotments. He said that for every dollar that LEA's received, they had to spend \$1.59 on qualifying classified employees. Part of the reason for this was the need for classified employees was much greater than

other positions. **Mr. Petti** informed the Committee of the disparity in pay and pay increase between the public and private sectors in Idaho. **Mr. Petti** advocated to create another class of employees called "super classified" jobs designated for classified employees who were engaged in more technical and difficult jobs, and advocated for incorporating cost-of-living adjustments, which states like Wyoming and Washington currently used. He also recommended that teachers and employees with master's degrees or experience received an increase in pay.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Senator Lenney** asked Mr. Petti about whether the fiscal recommendations were responsible given the 42 percent increase in education spending over the past three years. **Mr. Petti** admitted that a one-size-fits-all increase might not be the only solution, but a broad pay increase would solve a lot of problems. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if the increase in funds from 1994 to 2021 totaling \$22,761 was due mostly to Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER) Funds which were COVID-19 relief related. Mr. Petti answered that she was correct in that analysis.

**Senator Carlson** asked how special property tax levies were collected by the charter districts, especially in Lewiston where part of her district covered. **Mr. Petti** informed the Committee that Lewiston was a unique case because it existed before the State of Idaho. However, they had the power to tax local property to raise funds for district purposes independent of the state tax. In regards to the local levies, **Mr. Petti** was not able to speak directly to that because he said he was not aware of the specific district levies. **Senator Carlson** asked to clarify the levy issue in Lewiston to his best ability. **Mr. Petti** stated that Lewiston had a permanent supplemental levy that allowed a levy if more than 20 percent of operating expenses were used, the voters of a district could make the levy permanent. **Mr. Petti** revealed that he may be wrong in this assessment.

**Senator Nichols** asked if the figures he presented for income possibilities and if the cost-of-living adjustments were figured into that assessment. **Mr. Petti** replied that there were no cost-of-living adjustments in the figures he presented.

**Vice Chairman Toews** then asked two questions. First, how Mr. Petti defined classified employees, and second, whether or not technology cut costs or increased costs because of Informational Technology (IT) support staff. In response to the first question, **Mr. Petti** stated that classified employees would include paraprofessionals and those who assisted in the classroom. In response to the second question, he revealed that the State of Idaho had spent \$4 million since 2014 for a liaison for IT staffing. He mentioned on top of that \$4 million, only a small portion of that had gone to the costs of IT employees. **Senator Semmelroth** agreed that while extra funding would not necessarily fix everything, it would fix a lot of things such as the 230 openings for West Ada County educators. **Senator Ward-Engelking** echoed the concerns of Senator Semmelroth, when she added that in rural communities when there was a shortage of paraprofessionals that teachers, principals, and vice principals had to take on extra duties, which was difficult for them.

**ADJOURNED:**

There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

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Senator Lent  
Chair

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Linette Grantham  
Secretary

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James Nelson  
Assistant Secretary