

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 01, 2023

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Lent, Vice Chairman Toews, Senators Den Hartog, Nichols, Herndon, Lenney, Ward-Engelking, and Semmelroth

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Carlson

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 Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:05 p.m.

WELCOME: **Chairman Lent** welcomed the guests that were in attendance.

PRESENTATION: Budget Goals and Vision. **Debbie Critchfield**, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Department of Education (SDE), presented an overview of the budget goals for the SDE and what some of the funding priorities should be for education in the state of Idaho. She specifically highlighted how career technical programs in Idaho high schools were funded by both the state government and the federal government through the Carl Perkins Fund. She pointed out that there were around 20 school districts that did not apply for federal funding, mainly because the application process was long and typically did not produce a substantial enough return for the school. Many of these districts were in rural areas. She emphasized the importance of working together with local industries for career technical programs so students right out of high school could have the opportunity to get a good paying job in their community. **Ms. Critchfield** mentioned how increased funding for career technical programs in secondary education could benefit students across Idaho and provided some anecdotes of students that benefited from their own experience with career technical education.

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Lent** requested that the members of the committee share their own experiences of career technical education with Ms. Critchfield in addition to any questions they might have for her. **Senator Herndon** discussed why he believes career technical education is so important especially for the members of his district where there was a high demand for technical service jobs. **Senator Nichols** told the committee about her children's experience with career technical education and how it has benefited their lives. She highlighted the need for manufacturing and trade jobs in her district and endorsed greater support for career technical education as an alternative to a four year university program. **Ms. Critchfield** commented on how Idaho colleges were becoming more responsive to high school career technical education programs and were working with students in these programs.

Senator Den Hartog shared how a school in her district was beginning to partner with a Boise welding business which gave students career technical education. She mentioned how local businesses were asking for more partnerships with local school districts and threw her support behind removing barriers for school districts to partner with these companies. **Senator Semmelroth** asked Ms. Critchfield if there were any other examples of successful school partnerships with local businesses. **Ms. Critchfield** explained that she did not have anymore examples

to share. **Senator Semmelroth** inquired what legislators could do to support the career technical education partnerships between schools and businesses. **Ms. Critchfield** responded that legislators could create and vote on budgets as well as work together with constituents to agree upon which academic pathways they want to see enacted.

RS 30092 **Charter School Credit Enhancement.** **Senator Den Hartog** presented **RS 30092** which would increase the cap for the credit enhancement tool that had been used to finance public charter schools in Idaho. She claimed that this proposed legislation would allow more public charter schools to participate in this tool and save Idaho taxpayer dollars.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Toews** moved to send **RS 30092** to print. **Senator Nichols** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 30094 **Charter School Revolving Loan Funding.** **Senator Den Hartog** provided an overview of **RS 30094** which would establish a Revolving Loan Fund for qualified public charter schools. This fund would provide down payments for loans on facilities that public charter schools need to start up. The proposed legislation would require a one time expenditure of \$50 million dollar from the general fund.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Herndon** asked whether Senator Den Hartog foresaw a potential future increase in demand on the Revolving Loan Fund so that the legislature would need to appropriate more money for the program in the future. **Senator Den Hartog** responded by saying that it might be a possibility depending on future demand but mentioned that there would be narrow eligibility requirements for schools who wanted to take advantage of this fund.

MOTION: **Senator Herndon** moved to send **RS 30094** to print. **Senator Nichols** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Senator Lent
Chair

Linette Grantham
Secretary

Tyler Allen
Assistant Secretary