

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 02, 2023

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

**PLACE:** Room WW55

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

**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.

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

**CONVENED:** **Chairman Lent** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.

**MOTION:** **Vice Chairman Toews** moved to remove **RS 30156**. **Senator Nichols** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PRESENTATION:** **K-12 Public School Facilities**. **Rakesh Mohan**, Director, Office of Performance Evaluation (OPE), gave a brief overview of the methods and materials of the presentation. He introduced Casey Petti, Senior Evaluator, OPE, to the Committee. He guided the Committee through the public K-12 school facilities report. He made two legislative recommendations to the Committee. First, he recommended that the Legislature commission a statewide facility condition assessment for school buildings. Second, he recommended that the Legislature create an office to receive maintenance plans for educational facilities (Attachments 1 and 1A).

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Carlson** asked what the cost was to commission a statewide facility. **Mr. Petti** estimated that it would cost \$0.10 per square foot for a statewide facility.

**Senator Semmelroth** asked him what the priorities were for public schools once the building needs had been met. **Mr. Petti** responded that he did not have that information on hand.

**Senator Lenney** asked if the Legislature was spending too much on public schools, using Valley View Middle School as an example. **Mr. Petti** replied that different states had different approaches, and that states like Wyoming and Utah were good examples to follow.

**Vice Chairman Toews** asked about the cost per student throughout the State, and whether or not the Legislature should adjust the spending on buildings based on the number of students in attendance. **Mr. Petti** was not able to provide that information to him.

**Senator Nichols** asked how he was able to define the conditions by which the schools were graded. **Mr. Petti** answered by saying that the definitions could be found in the literature that he had provided to the Committee. He also compared the definitions in the provided literature to a study conducted on Native American reservations.

**Senator Nichols** followed up by asking if the figures provided to the Committee for needed building upgrades factored in the savings that the school districts already had for renovations. **Mr. Petti** commented that they did not.

**Chairman Lent** asked for an explanation of how the Joint-Legislative Oversight Committee (JLOC) worked with the Committee. **Mr. Petti** explained that the JLOC was a bipartisan joint committee that was in charge of making performance evaluations of certain programs and policies in the State.

**Chairman Lent** asked Mr. Mohan to provide examples of what other research JLOC had done in the past. **Mr. Mohan** listed studies related to Alzheimer's, classified employees, and public schools buildings as a few examples.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked how the State prioritized state facility spending. **Mr. Petti** replied that there was no prioritization for school construction. He brought up states like Wyoming and Oregon who had a revolving door policy when it came to accessing funds for schools facilities.

**PRESENTATION:** **School Choice.** **Greg Wilson**, Chief of Staff, State Department of Education, gave a brief overview on the current school choice options available to parents through the Empowering Parents Program. **Michelle Clement Taylor**, School Choice Coordinator, State Department of Education, gave a presentation on the benefits of open enrollment and informed the Committee that at least 17 percent of the students who were enrolled in Idaho schools were participating in a school choice option.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Carlson** asked how much Idaho spent on each student per year. **Ms. Taylor** responded that it was \$4,125.

**Chairman Lent** asked Ms. Taylor how many students in Idaho were home schooled and attended private schools. **Ms. Taylor** responded that she did not know that figure.

**Senator Nichols** asked why Idaho was not included in the monthly Ed Choice Report if Idaho had the school choice programs that Mr. Wilson had discussed. **Mr. Wilson** answered that he was not familiar with that publication and asserted that Idaho had many school choice programs.

**Senator Herndon** asked about the utilization of open enrollment in Idaho. **Ms. Taylor** replied that she could not provide the details on the spot, but would provide the information about the open enrollment status to the Committee at a later time.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 4:31 p.m.

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Senator Lent  
Chair

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Linette Grantham  
Secretary

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James Nelson  
Assistant Secretary