

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 07, 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.

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

GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT VOTE: **Committee Vote on the Gubernatorial Reappointment of Alan Reed. Senator Ward-Engelking** moved to send the Gubernatorial Reappointment of Alan Reed to the Public Charter School Commission to the floor with the recommendation he be confirmed. **Senator Herndon** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: **Introduction of Superintendents. Andy Grover**, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA), gave a brief overview of the IASA and introduced the group of Superintendents that were scheduled to present in front of the Committee.

PRESENTATION: **Reporting on School Districts. Dr. Wendy Moore**, Superintendent, Genesee School District, reported on behalf of Region 2, which consisted of 14 schools, 12 of which were classified as rural. **Dr. Moore** emphasized the fact that rural districts like hers lacked the finances and resources that urban districts had, which forced them to be flexible and learn to share resources with neighboring districts. She noted those districts also had to leverage community assets. Examples of her district doing that included a partnership with local veteran groups, a pen pal program for second graders and seniors, and trips for music students to perform at senior centers. **Dr. Moore** said it was important for the District to give back to the community. She said they awarded over \$40,000 in local scholarships in the previous year alone for graduating seniors to pursue higher education or enter trade programs, administered professional development programs for adults, and operated a daycare center. **Dr. Moore** said her District's goal was to continue to provide all those great services for the community.

Dr. Becky Meyer, Superintendent, Lake Pend Oreille School District, reported on behalf of Region 1, which consisted of 13 districts, whose student bodies ranged from 6 students to 11,000. One of the greatest success stories from Region 1 she spoke about the Kootenai Technical Education Campus (KTEC). She said KTEC was a joint venture between several school districts and local industry that provided tuition-free technical training, dual-enrollment credits, and certifications for 11th and 12th graders. **Dr. Meyer** said KTEC had a student population that exceeded 600, and a waitlist over 100. She gladly reported KTEC maintained a 100 percent placement rate, and near 100 percent attendance, which was a testament to the success of the program and the passion its students had for learning skilled trades.

Dr. Brady Dickinson, Superintendent, Twin Falls School District, reported on behalf of Region 4, which consisted of 20 school districts in the Magic Valley. **Dr. Dickinson** said the primary focuses in his Region were K-3 literacy, mental health, and workforce development. He praised the Legislature for its work in the previous Legislative Session in the area of K-3 literacy. He said those dollars were used to help hire instructional coaches for K-3 educators, because many were underqualified due to the severity of the teacher shortage issue in the Region. Another new benefit was the expansion of full-day kindergarten opportunities. In the area of workforce development, **Dr. Dickinson** lauded the Region's work to expand dual-credit opportunities - he said 35 students received their high school diploma and associate's degree on the same day. **Dr. Dickinson** stressed the significance of the mental health crisis, especially in rural areas. He said his Region had done work to facilitate partnerships with local organizations for counselor access and free telehealth, since there was a shortage of clinicians. The final challenge he cited was the difficulty many districts had in their attempts to navigate the regulatory landscape of public education, and asked the Legislature to think of solutions.

Norm Stewart, Superintendent, Marsing School District, reported on behalf of Region 3, which consisted of 33 school districts that ranged from 12 students to over 40,000. **Mr. Stewart** spoke to the many accomplishments of the school districts in his region from the Nampa, Kuna, Caldwell, Parma, Cascade, Pleasant Valley, and Marsing school districts. He said Sherman Elementary School in Nampa was one of 650 schools across the nation to receive the prestigious Apple Distinguished School for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). In Kuna, **Mr. Stewart** said 347 certificates and 1,018 dual-credits were awarded in the last year. The Caldwell School District implemented a joint orchestra program for several schools to coordinate the travel and instruction of orchestra for fifth graders. In Parma, graduation rates were 93 percent, 98.8 percent, and 97.8 over the last three years. Cascade School District touted a top-10 percent rating among Idaho schools for math proficiency. In the State's smallest district, Pleasant Valley, with 12 students, a successful mixed-age learning culture was created to maximize resources and efficiency. **Mr. Stewart** said his school district, Marsing, established 56 dual-credit offerings for high school students, and was one of 35 school districts in the State to adopt a community school model. Their community school, The Hub, was established to address negative barriers like food insecurity, mental health challenges, and more. He said the Marsing School District was able to provide mental health services, primary care nursing, early childhood education, head start preschool, developmental preschool, adult English as a second language (ESL) courses, hunter safety classes, fall prevention for seniors, and more over the last three years, a total of \$3.2 million in services to the community. **Mr. Stewart** said the greatest challenges facing his district were shortages of teachers and paraprofessionals, and asked the Legislature to consider solutions.

Dr. Spencer Barzee, Superintendent, West Side School District, reported on behalf of Region 5, which consisted of 15 school districts. **Dr. Barzee** touted many national Future Farmers of America (FFA) competition success stories from Region 5 schools. He said high schoolers in his Region earned an average of 19 college credits by the time they graduated. In the Pocatello School District, a new building was purchased for the expansion of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to create the Portneuf Valley Technical Education and Career Campus, otherwise known as P-V Tech. Other notable achievements he highlighted were the establishment of a family and consumer sciences program in the Bear Lake School District, the near doubling of dual-credit enrollment in Snake River

School District, and a partnership between Soda Springs High School and the Department of Labor to create apprenticeship programs. **Dr. Barzee** cited a reported \$100 million deficiency in classified position funding for Idaho school districts from an Office of Performance Evaluations (OPE) study. He said that number came from a formula established in 1994, and the real figure was much higher. He asked the Legislature to consider solutions for the classified position shortages and help with funding for outdated facilities.

Brian Kress, Superintendent, Blackfoot School District, reported on behalf of Region 6, which consisted of 18 school districts he said were incredibly diverse, and had student populations that ranged from third most populous to third least populous. **Mr. Kress** emphasized the great success Region 6 schools had with their dual-credit offerings and how they prepared high schoolers well for their futures. Another success he cited was a significant expansion of extracurricular offerings beyond sports, which included activities like band, choir, and drama. He said his districts did a great job of improved academic flexibility, with the continued operation of online schools and hybrid learning opportunities to help students with different learning styles. **Mr. Kress** had several highlights to share from Region 6 schools, which included several FFA national champions from Rigby High School, the creation of a new CTE facility at Idaho Falls High School, the plans for Fremont County School District to run CTE facilities bonds, and Blackfoot School District's award of a \$3.3 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) for adult professional training programs. He then asked the Legislature for support, on behalf of the rural schools and districts in his Region, for support for CTE. He said they suffered from financial hardships, and they struggled to maintain or create CTE programs for students.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Lenney asked Dr. Dickinson to clarify what federal and state regulations he wanted help with. **Dr. Dickinson** cited an example as transgender bathroom access, and conflict between state and federal rules proved to be a challenge for districts, especially small ones, to navigate.

Senator Nichols asked Mr. Stewart, Marsing School District, to elaborate more on the community school model, what the inspiration for it was, and what plans he had in store for The Hub. **Mr. Stewart** said the community school model had been implemented in many states across the country, but it was a fairly new development in Idaho. He said there were many ways those schools could be adapted to meet the needs of its community, and cited the integration of a primary care clinic, food pantry, and senior center because all of those amenities had closed. He said partnerships and community outreach made community schools much more successful and responsive to the people's needs.

Senator Nichols asked about the partnerships The Hub had made. **Mr. Stewart** said they partnered with and received support from the Idaho Food Bank, the Project Aware Grant, Boise State University (BSU), Owyhee County Sheriff's Department, Insight Counseling Services, Head Start, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and more. **Senator Nichols** asked how to gauge the success of a community school model, and if there were lessons to learn from other states. **Mr. Stewart** said the National Community Schools Coalition and the Idaho Community Schools Coalition provided the models, and independent needs assessments determined a school's priorities. He said the ability to meet those needs determined the success of the school.

Senator Semmelroth asked Dr. Dickinson if the best way to address the teacher and paraprofessional shortage crisis was to focus on recruitment or retention.

Dr. Dickinson said it was a combination of the two, because many quality, experienced teachers were retiring and the few positions that schools were able to fill were filled by younger, less experienced teachers. He said the biggest issue

for Idaho schools was the lack of a pipeline from Idaho universities and colleges into the teaching profession.

Senator Carlson asked for clarity on the federal versus state regulation consistency issue. **Mr. Kress** said a lack of clear guidance concerned many superintendents and school administrators because they did not want to deal with any legal problems.

Senator Herndon asked Dr. Meyer, Lake Pend Oreille School District, how programs like that at KTEC could be emulated in other, more rural parts of the State like in Boundary County. **Dr. Meyer** said there were several strategies to consider, which included school district levies, business incentives, and collaboration between counties and school districts for cost and resource sharing. **Senator Herndon** asked what the statewide proficiency scores were for Idaho students. **Dr. Meyer** said it was her hope that education partners could work with the Legislature to establish better performance metrics that demonstrated student growth in different subject areas. **Senator Herndon** asked for Dr. Meyer's perspective on enrollment-based funding versus average daily attendance. **Dr. Meyer** stated her belief was that enrollment funding provided stability and a sense of calm for administrators.

RULES REVIEW: **Administrative Rules Review.** **Chairman Lent** announced, due to a lack of time, the Rules Review would be continued at a later date.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 4:28 p.m.

Senator Lent
Chair

Linette Grantham
Secretary

Kieran Sprague
Assistant Secretary