

March 12, 2018
HB 566
Senate Education Committee
Boise, Idaho

Good afternoon. I'm Brad Petersen, co-founder of Future Public School, and father of two children about to enter the public education system. Future Public School is a charter school authorized by the state Public Charter School Commission to open in Garden City this upcoming fall, 2018. Future Public School's vision is to develop engineers of the future and of our community. We are a STEM school that takes a lab approach to learning. We intend to enroll a diverse group, including a high percentage of low-income and underserved students. Additionally, we stand as the first school in Idaho to form a robust partnership with a local Boys & Girls Club, including a long-term joint-use agreement that allows expanded capacity and services for both parties. I am here today because I support this bill for three primary reasons: innovation, growth, and flexibility.

In this moment, I'm reminded of my great grandmother, Maudell McVay, who moved to Weiser, Idaho in 1916. She was an innovator – working for years as the Washington County Public Health nurse. She also served as the anesthesiologist at Weiser Hospital from 1947 to 1975. During that time, as you can imagine, the medicine field evolved and innovated constantly. She embraced innovations and managed to treat countless Idahoans, employing her relentless drive help her fellow neighbors. This is a chance to embrace innovation and find a solution to help our neighbors, children, and students. Diverse perspectives and ideas drive innovation. Providing charter schools the ability to select diverse candidates for school leadership will do just that. For example, I hold a valid administrative certificate in the state of Texas, where I previously worked after graduating from BYU-Idaho. However, due to differences in state statutes, I would require an additional year of classroom experience in order to receive my Idaho administrator certificate under current statute. This, even though I have been a top-performing charter school teacher in Houston, founded / led several startup companies, and completed multiple educational fellowships and leadership training programs (Bluum's Idaho New School Fellowship, KIPP's Fisher Fellowship, and 4.0 Schools' Tiny Fellowship).

My second reason for supporting this bill is growth. Idaho continues to grow. According to the Census Bureau in December 2017, Idaho is now the fastest growing

state in the nation. Along with this population expansion we've also seen charter schools continue to grow. In 2018, six new charter schools will open across the state. With the state already facing excellent teacher and administrator shortages, as well as recruitment challenges, it is important to remove bureaucratic barriers to keep up with growth. The Idaho Department of Labor estimates our economy will continue to grow at an annual rate of 1.4 percent through 2025 – the growth is not stopping anytime soon. Similarly, the demand for charter schools will not slow down anytime soon. Our school has not yet held its lottery, and we can already predict a waitlist, like many charter schools across the state.

This brings me to flexibility. Charter schools were created to be flexible and provide alternative educational choices for families and students. Critics of this bill may argue how they think it might ^{power} ~~disrespect~~ the profession or somehow dilute the talent pool. I would argue the reverse is true. To be a charter school administrator is hard and the leaders must be strong and flexible. Whereas traditional districts often provide back office support and business management to schools, charter school administrators often do this all on their own. They also oversee teaching and learning, manage marketing efforts, coordinate community functions, and report on school progress to the state. This bill ensures that leaders are still held accountable, but allows charter school Boards the flexibility they need to hire for their educational niche. *→ state funding*

We know our education system, economy, and society will continue to change in the future. This bill provides the chance to be proactive rather than reactive. Peter Drucker, the acclaimed business management expert, said that the best way to predict the future is to create it. By supporting this bill we can predict an innovative, growth-filled, flexible future for many children throughout Idaho.

Thank you,

Brad Petersen
Co-Founder, Future Public School