

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, January 12, 2022
TIME: 9:00 A.M.
PLACE: Room EW41
MEMBERS: Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Representatives Boyle, Mendive, DeMordaunt, Moon, Ehardt, Marshall, Wisniewski, Galloway, Yamamoto, McCann, McCrostie, Berch, Toone
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Reps. Moon and Galloway
GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of the session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Clow called the meeting to order at 9:01 am.

Chairman Clow introduced the new secretary **Elbia Christensen**.

Sherri Ybarra, Superintendent, State Department of Education, presented the State Department of Education report to the Legislature. She recognized the dedication and hard work of her team before the Committee. Ms. Ybarra shared the impact that COVID-19 has had on schools and short-term school closures. There was discussion on how Idaho is rising in national education standards.

Louie Konkol, Chief Financial Office of Accounting, State Department of Education, discussed how his department maintains Grants Reimbursement Application (GRA), processes and makes payments to various programs, vendors, contractors, and school districts.

Kevin Chandler, Director of Assessment and Accountability, State Department of Education, discussed how his department provides assessment and accountability to schools through Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISATs) and college entrance exams. Mr. Chandler discussed the Idaho Report Card and other programs he is involved with and shared how they are helping students prepare for testing.

In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Chandler** stated the test scores from different programs will be used to show teachers where students need to study. This would enable teachers to focus on specific areas, making students better prepared for later testing.

Dr. Bethani Studebaker, Director of Certification and Professional Standards, State Department of Education, discussed the processes behind teachers receiving a certification. She shared details on how prospective educators are held to a high standard and the rigorous application process is designed to only let qualified people receive a certification. During 2020-2021 the Professional Standards Commission received 39 written complaints of alleged educator misconduct, out of which 24 cases were opened. Dr. Studebaker stated the rigorous certification process is keeping that number low.

In response to Committee questions, **Dr. Studebaker** discussed the nontraditional certification routes and the expected increase of applications to fill vacant teacher positions.

Dr. Colleen Asumendi Filmore, Director of Child Nutrition, State Department of Education, discussed changes made to food programs during COVID-19 and how they are helping with food insecurity. Through COVID-19 relief funds school age children were given free breakfast, lunch, and two snacks. She reviewed federally funded food programs and shared how several programs are being expanded to better serve communities.

In response to Committee questions, **Dr. Asumendi Filmore**, discussed that food insecurity is usually caused by lack of means not neglect. She stated how local school districts are keeping track of meal debt and talked about how children have been eating for free through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marilyn Whitney, Deputy Superintendent of Communications and Policy, State Department of Education, discussed how her staff supports the other State Board of Education teams. Ms. Whitney shared how they are growing their social media presence to better reach and support parents.

Todd Driver, Director of Content and Curriculum, State Department of Education, shared that English Language Arts/Literacy, Math and Science content are currently being reviewed and the different standards for content development. Mr. Driver also discussed how his department provides services and support to districts, charters, and teachers.

Rick Kennedy, Chief Procurement Officer, State Department of Education, discussed the technical certification program and different ways they are reducing costs to Idaho taxpayers by negotiating contracts with vendors.

Karen Seay, Director of Federal Programs, State Department of Education, discussed federal funding coming from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and other federal programs her department is involved in. Ms. Seay also explained to the Committee how the pandemic relief fund programs are being distributed to schools.

In response to Committee questions, **Ms. Seay** discussed the data collection requirements associated with the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) and how there are two rounds of data collection over a period of time. She shared that the information being collected is general school and district information not private information.

Johanna Jones, Office of Indian Education Coordinator, State Department of Education, discussed which resources she is providing to Native American Schools. Ms. Jones shared how she is collaborating with the Office of Indian Education (OIE) to provide services which are helping students succeed and eliminating the gap within education. She spoke to how OIE is helping improve access for students to scholarships and direct admissions.

Julie Oberle, Chief Financial Officer for Public Schools, State Department of Education, discussed the processes behind reviewing data and distributing funds to public schools. Ms. Oberle also discussed reporting under statutory or legislative appropriation requirements and shared the reports are online within the State Department of Education website.

Dr. Charlie Silva, Director of Special Education, State Department of Education, discussed how they are spending their funding to help parents and students. She shared how the Idaho Pyramid Model Collaborative and Cultivating Readers program is making a difference and helping students succeed at school. Dr. Silva also shared parent and family resources found on the Idaho Training Clearinghouse website.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:47 am.

Representative Clow
Chair

Elbia Christensen
Secretary