

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, January 22, 2020

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Mendive, DeMordaunt, Moon, Ehardt, Goesling, Marshall, Raymond, Wisniewski, McCrostie, Abernathy, Berch

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the Committee secretary's office until the end of the session. 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 9:00 am.

Erin McCandless, State President, Idaho Parent Teacher Association (PTA), introduced members of her Board of Directors and discussed the PTA's current areas of focus. They will be involved with the upcoming implementation of a federal Preschool Development Grant and she stated their support of Idaho's Science Content Standards.

Chairman Clow turned the gavel over to **Vice Chairman Kerby**.

**DOCKET NO.
08-0000-1900:** **Rep. Moon** testified **in opposition** to the science standards. She argued the standards and supporting content explain the negative impacts of fossil fuels and mining, but don't do enough to promote positive things humans do for the environment.

Dr. Melyssa Ferro, the 2016 Idaho Teacher of the Year and co-chair of the Idaho Science Standards Adoption Committee, spoke **in support**. She stated the standards go beyond knowing science to encourage doing science. They serve as a framework to allow high-quality science education to occur in every classroom in Idaho. She said they also help close equity gaps among students.

In response to Committee questions, **Dr. Ferro** said the standards allow teachers to look at science from an evidence standpoint, present the information to students and allow the students to draw their own conclusions. Statewide standards allow teachers to share resources across urban and rural districts, so each student can make local, place-based STEM connections.

Janae Wilkerson, Development Communications Specialist, Idaho Freedom Foundation, read remarks by Rigby Mayor **Jason Richardson**. He remarked students were successful before Common Core requirements and said the standards dominate everything, including assessments.

Layne McInelly, President, Idaho Education Association, spoke **in support** of the science standards and encouraged Committee members to ask a teacher if they had concerns.

Fred Birnbaum, Idaho Freedom Foundation, spoke **in opposition**, arguing the supporting content delves into content and curriculum. He highlighted language regarding what the assessments do or do not include and what their limits are, creating a one-size-fits-all approach.

Eric Thies, a physics teacher, spoke **in support** and said implementing the science standards resulted in greater educational alignment between grade levels, saving him two days of filling in knowledge gaps. Now he is able to use that time for additional enrichment. He stated removing the standards would throw the school system into chaos.

In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Thies** said he has heard parental feedback about students hating science, but the standards allow for authentic experiences, meaning fewer students now feel that way.

Rep. Wisniewski testified **in opposition**, stating climate change is not a settled issue and the standards must teach students to discern scientific fact from theory.

Chris Taylor, K-12 Curriculum Supervisor for Science, Boise School District, remarked that the standards teach scientific inquiry, critical thinking and problem solving. He said the standards are consistent with high-performing countries and argued a lot of time and money has been spent to help districts implement these standards. Mr. Taylor served on the committee that wrote the standards

In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Taylor** stated a new assessment will be used this year. It was piloted last year and although the questions were not written by Idaho teachers, they hand picked the questions that fit Idaho best. Regarding concerns about the supporting content, he stated the standards committee felt they had to include some information, particularly for elementary teachers, to clearly show which content would cover a particular standard. He said he was open to moving the supporting content to an incorporated by reference document.

Vice Chairman Kerby called a recess of the Committee at 10:29 am.

Vice Chairman Kerby resumed the meeting at 10:36 am.

Dr. Michelle Van Beek, Casey Hedrick, Professor Matthew Kohn, Jonathan Oppenheimer, Jenna Raino, Colleen Lewis, Jay Larsen, Sylvia Chariton, William Hussman, Garrett Castle and Greg Stone spoke **in support** of the science standards. They testified the standards are accurate, consistent, high, and helpful to teachers, who have already invested a significant amount of time to adopt them. They argued the standards will prepare students to fill STEM jobs and face new challenges.

Paula Ryan, Carrie Andelin, Roger Kenyon, Patricia Kenyon, Katie Donahue and Rep. Nichols spoke **in opposition** to the science standards. They testified the standards decrease students' enjoyment of school and create a disconnect with parents.

Vice Chairman Kerby turned the gavel over to **Chairman Clow**.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:21 am.

Representative Kerby
Chair

Erica McGinnis
Secretary