

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, January 29, 2014
TIME: 9:00 A.M.
PLACE: Room EW41
MEMBERS: Chairman DeMordaunt, Vice Chairman Nielsen, Representatives Shepherd, Wills, Bateman, Boyle, Clow, Gestrin, Harris, Horman, Mendive, VanOrden, McDonald, Pence, Kloc, Rubel
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None
GUESTS: Robin Nettinga and Matt Compton, IEA; Suzanne Budge, SBS & Associates; Tamara Baysinger, Public Charter School Commission; Luci Willits, SDE; Marilyn Whitney, SBOE; Brennah Vogt, Jennifer and Graydon LeGault, Alyssa, Quinton and Elliott Antoniuk, Sonya Vogt, Dave and Lori Malnes, Kelly Edginton, and Mike Groshong, Idaho Virtual Academy

Chairman DeMordaunt called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Jane Wittmeyer, President, Idaho Coalition for Charter School Families, told the committee January is Virtual School Month. She introduced **Dave Malnes**, Chairman of the Board, Idaho Digital Virtual Academy (IDVA).

Dave Malnes explained how the current funding formula is placing 3,000 public school students enrolled with IDVA at a disadvantage compared to the other public school students. He requested the per student funding be equitable. He told of his families journey in finding public education to fit the learning styles of his children. He said virtual education fills the gaps that exist in traditional public schools and the parent, who becomes the learning coach, is probably the key to success in virtual schooling. He also said the shift in acceptance of virtual education has been significant.

Jennifer LeGault, parent of IDVA students, said the curriculum is rigorous and the choice offerings are broad. She said her son, who has speech problems, has been able to learn with confidence. She asked for an increase in per student funding.

Graydon LeGault, IDVA high school student, described his experience with virtual learning. He said the flexibility gives him a chance to pursue his art ambitions more rigorously, and allows him the opportunity to learn time management.

Brennah Vogt, IDVA middle school student, said the virtual charter school has given her more one-on-one time with her online teachers. It has also allowed her more quality time with her family to travel, which in turn, helped her see the value of learning a second language.

Alyssa Antoniuk, parent of IDVA students, explained her introduction to the school choice issue. She said IDVA offers richness in curriculum and the flexibility to learn at an individual pace. She described the success of her oldest son, who went from an average student in traditional public school to an excellent student with IDVA. She said her son is currently enrolled in the Treasure Valley Math and Science Center, taking high school level courses in math and science.

Quinton Antoniuk, IDVA middle school student, said he liked being a part of an IDVA Cooperative. He said the distractions that he had in the traditional public school were no longer a problem at IDVA. He likes having more time for extracurricular activities.

Kelly Edginton, Finance Manager, IDVA, was called upon to answer questions from the committee, said the funding per student is \$3,700 which is about \$1,000 below that of traditional public school per student funding. She said the teacher/student ratio is one teacher to 240 students. Teachers at IDVA do not create their own curriculum; everything is taught from the IDVA materials. Ms. Edginton said the entire spectrum of public school populations is represented in IDVA enrollment. They have 11 percent special education, 60 percent would qualify for free or reduced lunch, and IDVA serves "at risk" students at their online alternative high school. Other students are dually enrolled: participating in sports, music or other courses at traditional high schools.

In response to a question regarding the turnover rate at IDVA, **Ms. Edginton** explained the robust "on boarding" program. She said IDVA has a high number of students transferring in throughout the year. **Mr. Malnes** said those coming into the program have to learn the virtual school model. He said the reality of online learning is that parents must be involved, and "on boarding" lessons instruct parents on becoming learning coaches.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

Representative DeMordaunt
Chair

Jean Vance
Secretary