

MINUTES  
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, February 10, 2014  
**TIME:** 9:00 A.M.  
**PLACE:** Room EW41  
**MEMBERS:** Chairman DeMordaunt, Vice Chairman Nielsen, Representative(s) Shepherd, Wills, Bateman, Boyle, Clow, Gestrin, Harris, Horman, Mendive, VanOrden, McDonald, Pence, Kloc, Rubel

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None

**GUESTS:** Sherawn Reberry, IDLA; Dave Davies and Wil Overgaard, Weiser School District; Brady Kraft, Michael Bartz, Julie Best, and Kristin Guidry, Idaho Education Network; Phil Homer and Rob Winslow, IASA; Harold Ott, Rural Schools; Karen Echeverria, ISBA; Brody Aston, Lobby Idaho; Luci Willits and TJ Bliss, SDE; Amy Nelms and Marilyn Whitney, SBOE

**Chairman DeMordaunt** called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Kloc** made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 4, and February 5, 2014 meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**Teresa Luna**, Director of the Department of Administration, explained to the committee the circumstances surrounding the \$14.5 million still owed the state from the federal government. Currently, Federal Communication Commission (FCC) officials are trying to determine if state officials broke their own contracting rules in early 2009 when they awarded work on the Idaho Education Network system to partners Century Link and Education Networks of America (ENA). She said the FCC hasn't made payments since March. That is when the Idaho Supreme Court remanded back to the lower court to review the contracting process. The lawsuit filed by telecommunication company Syringa Networks alleged then-Department of Administration Director, **Mike Gwartney**, illegally steered the work of connecting 218 Idaho high schools, allowing for video conferencing and distance-learning opportunities, toward Century Link and ENA. Director Luna said the state expects to recover the \$14.5 million, but there is a chance it will not be recovered.

A discussion was held concerning the ramifications of the decision by the FCC.

**Julie Best**, Idaho Education Network (IEN), Communication Director explained the IEN deployed video conference units to each public high school in Idaho. She said IEN is a private broadband network that offers school districts and charter schools high speed internet access critical to delivering online content and courses in addition to supporting video conference systems. IEN has also provided for teacher professional development, interactive collaborations and enrichment activities for students, educators, and community members. Ms. Best told legislators the project has brought national attention to the state of Idaho.

**Dr. Sherawn Reberry**, Director of Education Programs, Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA) explained the IDLA hybrid pilot was developed when a superintendent in Glenns Ferry was unable to hire a Spanish teacher. With the newly created hybrid model, students experience an asynchronous course (traditional online) and synchronous instruction which resembles face to face instruction. She said, this past fall, both Glenns Ferry and Filer School Districts received Spanish 1A where two days a week they have face-to-face instruction and then continue course work online. Dr. Reberry indicated the student survey reported a positive response. She said the most requested courses using the hybrid model include advanced placement, world languages, electives, English, math, science and social studies.

**Kristin Guidrey**, IEN Communication Specialist, explained her job is to interface with high schools and discover grassroots innovation using online and video tools. She highlighted Kamiah High School's 2013 graduates and their current achievement of 95 percent enrollment in higher education. She said the EMT, CNA and physical therapy aide certificates obtained with the assistance of IEN, Lewis & Clark College and the local community were the stimuli in that achievement.

**Dave Davies**, Principal, Weiser High School, described the many educational opportunities available since the installation of IEN. He said they have connected to interactive classes being offered from the College of Southern Idaho for dual credit. Also, classes originating from Weiser High School, have been offered to eight other high schools in the state. In addition, he described experiences of students and local business owners using IEN. As an example of community connection, Mr. Davies said the Weiser Police Department Reserves have been able to receive some POST training via IEN. Mr. Davies concluded by saying the students in rural communities are no longer at an educational disadvantage.

**Ms. Best** summarized the IEN presentation. She said providing broadband internet access for all Idaho schools lays the foundation for every student to engage in 21st Century learning experiences.

Addressing the questions from the committee concerning scheduling, tracking, and payment for course origination, the panel said scheduling is a challenge. However, schools with common interests and issues are solving those problems at the local level. They said district flexibility is key to making innovative moves in scheduling. They explained there is no origination fee for courses being taught via IEN, only textbooks fees. In addition, there are no charges for community use of IEN at the school sites. In response to a question concerning the passive format of online learning, it was explained that IEN is so close to live, interactive activities and full engagement of students is happening.

**Luci Willits**, Chief of Staff, State Department of Education (SDE), introduced the committee to the history and goals of statewide assessments in Idaho schools. In 1998, Idaho adopted its first set of standards in core subjects, and shortly thereafter, developed an assessment called the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). The ISAT was revised in 2006 to align with new standards in the form of a Direct Writing and Direct Math assessment and was a performance test, which meant students had to show their work. In 2010, Idaho adopted higher standards in math and English language arts by joining with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). In 2013, approximately 120 schools pilot tested the SBAC. In the Spring of 2014, every school in the state will field test the SBAC.

**Ms. Willits** described the difference between the ISAT and the SBAC. The ISAT is a summative test, the sum of what a student has learned throughout the year. The SBAC is a system, not just one test taken at one time. The foundation for the SBAC is the standards. She said the role of the assessment is to measure the standards. The focus of the standards is to ensure every student who leaves high school is college and career ready and does not need remediation. She stated the old standards were good, but they did not require students to learn the kind of reasoning skills that are present in the new standards. In order for Idaho to measure the deeper knowledge, Idaho needs an assessment that matches and aligns with the standards. Ms. Willits said under the ISAT, 90 percent of questions were multiple choice and required only lower level thinking. On the SBAC, 70 percent requires higher level critical thinking and only 30 percent includes lower thinking skills.

**Ms. Willits** explained the three types of assessments by which Idaho will achieve the new standards: (1) teacher resources for formative assessment practices to improve instruction, (2) interim assessments which are done periodically, and (3) summative assessments which measure college and career readiness on an annual basis. Regarding a unique quality of the SBAC assessment, Ms. Willits said it utilizes computer-adaptive testing. This means that the computer adapts to the student's answer. If the student answers correctly, his next question will be harder; if the question is answered incorrectly, the student will receive an easier next question. SBAC measures how high or how low a student can go. She indicated the SBAC was developed with broad input from Idaho stakeholders. She also indicated passing the SBAC in the 11th grade guarantees admission into any public university in Idaho without need for remediation.

Responding to questions from the committee regarding the need for SBAC, **Ms. Willits** said **Supt. Luna** wanted to move away from multiple choice into the performance models. **Dr. T. J. Bliss**, SDE, said considerable research has been conducted about performance testing, which is the new component being added. He said although Idaho used the Direct Writing and Direct Math tests, which produced some benefits, the logistics outweighed the benefits and those tests were eliminated. He indicated field-tested performance exams measure deeper learning and deeper thinking. To answer a question relating to graduating seniors and remediation, Ms. Willits said college presidents signed off on the non-remediation agreement for those graduating seniors with SBAC credentials. She said, there will always be a need for remediation at the university level because students may return after a lapse of many years.

In response to data collection and student privacy questions from the committee, **Ms. Willits**, explained the data required to administer SBAC will be nearly identical to what was required to administer the ISAT. It includes: (1) an identification number, which only the state can tie back to the student's official education record; (2) information on student race/ethnicity, gender, grade level, and school attended; (3) data regarding eligibility for English language development services or special education services; (4) data regarding eligibility for Title I compensatory programs; and (5) test scores, achievement levels, and responses to test items. She added the data required for the ISAT, SBAC, or SAT is never sent to the federal government. This data is only sent to the contracted vendor that the state has chosen to administer the assessment. The vendor must always adhere to strict privacy conditions as outlined in the statewide contract.

**Tom Luna**, Superintendent of Public Instruction, SDE was called upon to answer the question regarding regulations governing home schooled students or students in private schools. He said they are not required to take the assessment exams nor to have data collected on their students. To another question relating to data collection he said there is a 95 percent student participation rate. He said data helps the teacher to know how an individual student is doing on a specific standard. Every child can be taught; the data provides accountability for student and teacher.

**Supt. Luna** concluded the segment on SBAC. and said bringing Idaho Common Core Standards to Idaho has been a 5-year process. He said many concerns were addressed. He said in the Spring of 2013, educators and parents were very concerned, however, after school started and the implementation began, fewer and fewer concerns were voiced. After the SBAC is field tested in Idaho, in the Spring of 2014, the answers will be forthcoming. He requested that law-makers wait for those results before coming to conclusions.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

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Representative DeMordaunt  
Chair

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Jean Vance  
Secretary