Minutes of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
August 7, 2026
EW42, Capitol, Boise, Idaho

Senator Melissa Wintrow, presiding cochair

Committee members in attendance: Senators Melissa Wintrow (cochair), C. Scott Grow, Dave Lent, Representatives Jordan Redman (cochair), Douglas T. Pickett, and Steve Berch. Also present were Ryan Langrill, Director of the Office of Performance Evaluations; and Office of Performance Evaluations (OPE) staff.

Senator Wintrow called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

Representative Berch moved that the committee release minutes from March 13, 2026. Representative Pickett seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

Representative Pickett moved that the committee approve an evaluation for Medicaid hospital billing. Senator Grow seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

Follow-up report presentation: *Children's Residential Care*

Representative Berch moved that the committee release the OPE follow-up report for *Children's Residential Care*. Senator Lent seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

Tasha Schreiter, Senior Evaluator, presented the OPE follow-up report for *Children's Residential Care*.

Senator Grow asked if the department was only doing unannounced surveys now. Ms. Schreiter said they are doing at least one annual unannounced survey plus regular scheduled surveys.

Senator Grow asked if the follow-up had any information on the impact on the budget of facilities when they have more licensed staff and how it might affect their pricing. Ms. Schreiter said the follow-up did not have that information. Senator Grow commented that these facilities are price sensitive for those who are putting children there and it should be looked at if we are going to be raising the cost as we look at licensing.

Senator Wintrow asked if one option was for the department to create clinical standards so the department wouldn't just have to take the facilities' word that they are following standards. Ms. Schreiter said there currently wasn't any oversight of clinical standards, and if implemented, that this could be structured in different ways.

Representative Berch asked if there were national standard ratios of providers to children. Ms. Schreiter said she had not encountered one but could look into it.

Representative Redman asked if restraint and seclusion was being reported to the department by facilities. Ms. Schreiter said they are reporting to Licensing as of July 1, 2026. Senator Wintrow said that the policy change would be for the department to report to the Legislature. She asked if it would affect facility ratings. Ms. Schreiter deferred to the department, noting that her impression was that the ratings came from the surveys.

Monty Prow, Deputy Director of the Department of Health and Welfare, spoke about the history of OPE reports on child welfare and how the department has been steadily making positive changes due to this relationship. He spoke on the current improvements in available foster parents.

Senator Grow asked how the funding increase provided in 2025 to the department has helped. Deputy Director Prow said that there has been a payoff, noting the improvement in foster care. Senator Grow asked if this has helped the department keep kids out of facilities and hotels. Director Prow said this led to a 30% reduction in congregate care overall. As of fall 2025 the department has no children doing hotel or Airbnb stays. The department has had a two-third reduction of kids sent out of state.

Senator Wintrow asked about how kids with disabilities are finding appropriate treatment and being helped to transition back home. She also asked about the challenges due to the number of children with disabilities that are in facilities versus at home. Director Prow said it is about matching need to resources. He noted a mantra of “Right kid, right place, right time”. The department makes efforts to keep kids close to home as possible. Complex cases mean it is harder to find the right locations to serve the need, but he said providers are stepping up. He said there is a roadmap to do this, but the biggest hurdle can be the geographic aspect.

Representative Berch asked how much money would be needed to close the four gaps identified in the follow-up report. Director Prow said it’s multilayered and did not have an answer at present. He commented on the need for legislative action for these gaps to close.

Laura Studie, Administrator for the Division of Licensing and Certification, talked about the new matrix and how it applied to star ratings regarding restraint use. She said that inappropriate restraint use would have an impact on a star rating. She explained the difference between unannounced and announced surveys. She also noted that all complaint investigations are unannounced.

Senator Wintrow commented that the recommendation for restraint to be reported to the legislature would be simple to implement and not cost extra. Administrator Studie agreed. Senator Wintrow said the recommendation to investigate abuse at facilities would likely take more legislative authority and more funds. Administrator Studie agreed but said it would depend on how broadly the directive was defined.

Trevor Sparrow, Health and Social Services Ombudsman, spoke about the Ombudsman office's first full year in operation. The office took a tour of all residential facilities and overall care seems to be increasing. The bill of rights has led to communications from staff, children, and parents. He talked about the office's cooperation with the department and with Licensing. He encouraged legislators to call and request the office look at specific issues. He said the office is working on establishing their overall standards of care and investigation.

Representative Berch asked if the Ombudsman would be the right entity to assign the registry recommendation from the OPE report, if given the proper legislative authority and budget. Director Sparrow agreed that this would be appropriate oversight with the authority and budget, but not with their current small staff.

Representative Redman talked about the committee members working together to cosponsor legislation to cover the last remaining recommendations.

Director Langrill recommended that the report be closed in this meeting, since all items open for the report are only for the legislature.

Senator Grow moved that the committee close the *Children's Residential Care* report. Representative Pickett seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

Report presentation: *Career Technical Education Teachers and Funding*

Senator Lent moved that the committee release the OPE report *Career Technical Education Teachers and Funding*. Senator Grow seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

Casey Petti, Principal Evaluator, presented the OPE report *Career Technical Education Teachers and Funding*.

Representative Berch asked if an issue was flexibility to use funds or just not enough funds. Mr. Petti said that flexibility can impact fund usage and create gaps. Representative Berch if the report breaks down traditional public schools and charter schools. Mr. Petti explained the breakdowns available in the report, including this option.

Senator Grow asked if there are options available for industry professionals to teach on a one-time or limited basis. Mr. Petti said if they meet the requirements for Occupational Specialist or Content Specialist, this could be an option. He deferred to the department for more complex cases.

Representative Berch asked what mean teacher salary needed to be to adequately staff positions and still compete with industry salaries. Mr. Petti said the report does not cover what CTE teachers should make in relation to their industry, since this is often dependent on specific pathways, such as nurses in rural areas. Representative Berch commented that this information could help close the gap between the pay and the number of positions needed.

Senator Lent talked about the entry-level aspect of the industry wage, noting the median wage represented in the report and how the pay can get higher. Mr. Petti agreed and emphasized that this is a snapshot.

Representative Pickett asked what is meant in the report by "district settings" when discussing the need for and the pay for Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources. Mr. Petti said district settings is where the district is located, which could be city, town, rural, or remote settings. Rural and remote districts pay the least, but have the most teachers in Agriculture, which might be a factor in the lower pay. Representative Pickett asked if this was lack of funding due to efficiencies of scale. Mr. Petti said this report didn't look at this, but previous OPE reports have shown this as an issue. Senator Wintrow asked about HB 521, which took away the equalization formula and how that might be impacting funding in relation to Representative Pickett's question. Mr. Petti said it's been repurposed toward the school facilities fund, but any district with an active bond before the bill passed will still have it paid out.

State Superintendent Debbie Critchfield spoke about the high degrees of growth, popularity, and success of CTE classes in Idaho. She spoke about non-typical programs which are centered on regional and local industries. She encouraged that the barriers to these programs be removed.

Representative Berch asked how much additional money might be needed for CTE growth. Superintendent Critchfield said the funding the Legislature provided was spent quickly and demand grew as more districts learned about the funding.

Representative Redman asked if Idaho has looked at making the certification requirements less difficult. Superintendent Critchfield said yes, but that this is an ongoing conversation and is not a one-size-fits-all situation. She said that in the last session a bill was introduced to help remove the one-size-fits-all barrier.

Peter Risse, State Administrator for the Division of Career Technical Education, spoke about the expanding demand and increasing need for CTE. He emphasized the needs of smaller and rural CTE programs. He said the Division and the Board of Education will be working to make changes to policy this fall.

Senator Lent asked Director Risse to talk about his vision of CTE in the next 10 years. Director Risse talked about a goal for CTE to be a full life-cycle experience that can start in middle school and can allow graduates to come back and upskill. Senator Lent emphasized earlier career explorations and high school with more outcomes-based education toward a career. Director Risse talked about the challenges of combining CTE and general education. Representative Berch talked about the state revenue being reduced and how it is hard to forecast 10 years out. Senator Wintrow ask if CTE had been cut. Director Risse said it was.

Director Langrill recommended the report remain open until the next meeting.

Updates on the 911 reports

Ben Roeber, Bureau Chief of the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, introduced Donny Lane, the brand new 911 program manager.

Payette County Sheriff, Andy Creech, Chairman of the Idaho Public Safety Communications Commission Board, spoke on the progress made by the committee on Next Gen 911.

Senator Wintrow asked for an update on the contract that went out to Lewis County and the report recommendations for a centralized contract process. Sheriff Creech explained that IPSCC lacks the authority to enter into contracts, so Lewis County wrote a state-wide grant. He said that granting IPSCC the authority to enter contracts would create more transparency, but under current law it cannot be done. Representative Berch asked why Lewis County was chosen. Sheriff Creech said this was due to pressure from other counties.

Senator Grow asked if IPSCC is working with any committees in the House or Senate to get this fixed. Creech said they are trying to start discussions this fall, but he is unsure if there will be anything ready by this coming session. Senator Wintrow encouraged the committee to use their resources to support further progress.

Berch spoke about 911 being designated as an essential service so that funding was done at the state level. Mr. Roeber said they are figuring out the next steps for 911 services, and this could be included as a possibility. Senator Grow emphasized that policy should lead the conversation about budgeting.

Donald Lane, the new program manager of the 911 program, introduced himself to the committee and talked about his next steps as he starts working on the program.

Criminal Justice Commission Coroner System Subcommittee update

Kelli Brassfield, Policy Advisor of the Idaho Association of Counties and co-chair of the Criminal Justice Commission Coroner System Subcommittee, spoke about the progress made on changes to the coroner system. She spoke about the passing of SB 1250, for confidentiality of decedent photos and SB 1101 which helped with modernization. The Coroner's Association is working on an MOU to allow counties to work together. There are three draft legislation proposals in progress: certification of newly elected coroners happening in a specific timeframe, establishing when autopsies should be required, and options for sustainable funding.

Senator Grow suggested applying the inflationary rate to the $16 death certificate fee instead of a flat $1. Ms. Brassfield said they did consider it, but the flat rate increase was more palatable.

Representative Pickett asked if there are any federal funding options available to help finance a facility in Eastern Idaho. Ms. Brassfield said she is working with her federal contacts.

Representative Berch asked about changing coroners from elected positions to professional. Ms. Brassfield noted difficulty in finding professional coroners, especially considering the number of positions needed. She also noted that it would be very expensive for the state.

OPE updates

Director Langrill shared OPE's FY27-FY28 budget request. In FY29 OPE will need enhancements to update their technology. The office is restricting out-of-state travel in the coming year.

Director Langrill provided an update on OPE's current projects and their timelines. The committee will look at scheduling the next meeting in mid to late November.

OPE is working on a yearly publication focused on opportunities for legislative action that will be made available to the legislators. Senator Lent & Representative Berch encouraged this to continue. OPE's website is being redesigned to be more accessible, in line with LSO's website updates.

Senator Wintrow adjourned the meeting at 1:59 p.m.