

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Performance Evaluations
Idaho Legislature
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 12, 2013

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Meeting Location: State Capitol, Capitol Auditorium
Meeting Time: 9:30 a.m.

(BOISE) Today, the Legislature's independent, nonpartisan Office of Performance Evaluations released four follow-up reports to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee:

- *Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education*
- *Equity in Higher Education Funding*
- *Governance of EMS Agencies in Idaho*
- *Lottery Options and Charitable Gaming*

The follow-up reports are on the Office of Performance Evaluations' website at <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/ope/>.

Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education

The evaluation report *Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education*, released in 2012, explored why relatively few Idaho residents complete postsecondary education. Evaluators had outlined recommendations aimed to better position the state to meet its goal of increasing the number of residents with postsecondary degrees. In their follow-up report released today, evaluators highlight the steps agencies have taken to implement the recommendations. Most notably, the Department of Labor created the Educational Attainment Task Force and charged the task force with recommending policies and strategies to the Governor and the Board of Education to strengthen the link between education and the workforce. The taskforce presented their final recommendations to the Governor last month and plans to present them to the board in June. Further, legislation passed during the 2013 session significantly reorganized the state's scholarship program to better direct scholarship money.

Equity in Higher Education Funding

After the release of a 2011 evaluation report on funding equity for Idaho's four-year higher education institutions, evaluators concluded today that the State Board of Education and the institutions have made significant progress implementing recommendations. The two recommendations called for the State Board of Education to establish a standard for equity and to develop a plan to meet that standard. The board, with input and agreement from the institutions, has now defined a standard for equity but still needs to determine an acceptable level of variance from the standard. As they did in the evaluation report, evaluators cautioned the board not to rely too heavily on new funds from the legislature to meet the new standard.

Governance of EMS Agencies

In their evaluation report from 2010, evaluators recommended the legislature make statutory changes to Idaho Code to establish well-functioning, local EMS systems to address long-running problems that have hampered the state's ability to provide or guarantee quality emergency medical services. In their follow-up report released today, evaluators highlighted that although no legislative action has been taken, local governments and their counterpart EMS agencies have come together voluntarily in areas across the state to design the type of systems originally recommended by evaluators. Evaluators found that the level of recent collaboration among these stakeholders has resulted in major progress toward solving historical problems.

Lottery Options and Charitable Gaming

Evaluators' follow-up work to their 2012 evaluation report found that Senate Bill 1127, passed during the 2013 legislative session, clarified statutory language pertaining to the operations of the Lottery. Evaluators concluded that no further action on the part of the legislature or the Lottery is necessary.