



Mission

Promote confidence and accountability in state government through evaluation of programs and policies.

Performance Highlights

Annual Newsletter

Office of Performance Evaluations

October 2017

Sustained Interest in Our Work

After the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee selects evaluation topics, we focus on how to conduct those evaluations in a way that will be valuable and useful to policymakers, state agencies, and the public. We are always pleased when our work is relevant and beneficial to the legislature, the governor, and state agencies, but we are especially pleased when our work strengthens citizens' confidence and involvement in state government.

Complexities in government can make implementing our findings and recommendations difficult. Those complexities also challenge our ability to communicate effectively to citizens. During the past year, we have been honored by the sustained interest in our work from policymakers and the public, even when issues have been incredibly complex.

Ongoing public interest and use

Two of our reports released during the 2017 legislative session, *State Jurisdiction in Indian Country* and *Child Welfare System*, provided information to the press and the public that has resulted in ongoing interest and, in some cases, increased public involvement.

State Jurisdiction in Indian Country explores the unique legal relationship between Idaho and the five tribal governments in Idaho. We found that shared jurisdiction complicates relationships among stakeholders working in Indian Country. State jurisdiction may be returned to the federal government by a process known as retrocession. Because retrocession is a complex issue with complications for public safety services and intergovernmental cooperation, our report offers guidance that can make the process smoother.

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee (JLOC)

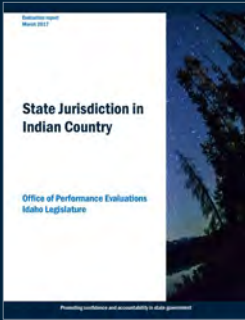
Our equally bipartisan committee is crucial to independent evaluation.

Senators

Clifford Bayer, cochair
Mark Harris
Michelle Stennett
Cherie Buckner-Webb

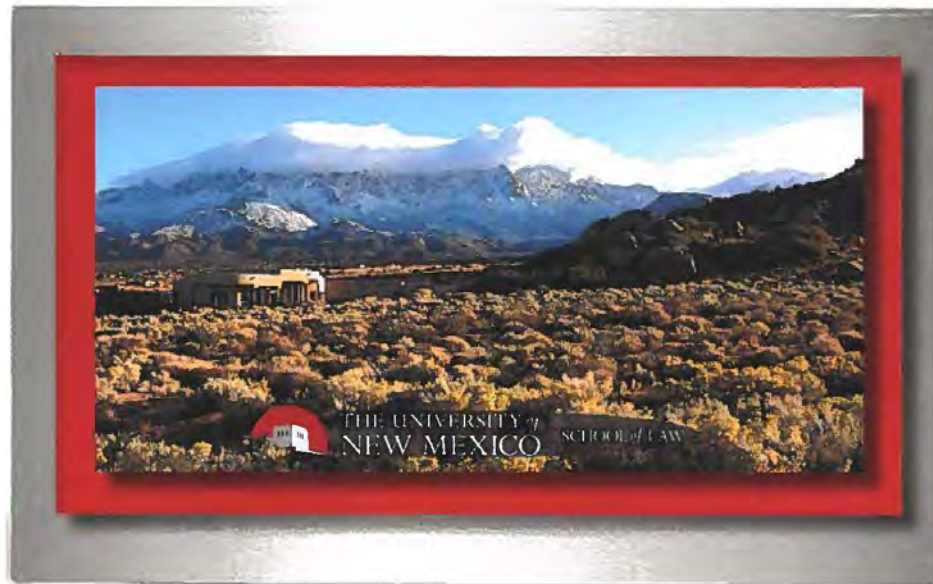
Representatives

Mat Erpelding, cochair
Maxine Bell
Caroline Nilsson Troy
Elaine Smith



After the report release, we received a note from the former US Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Professor Kevin Washburn of the University of New Mexico. He complimented us on the thoughtfulness of the evaluation.

Boise State University invited our director and evaluation team to lead a graduate class discussion about working with the tribes and some of the challenges that shared jurisdiction creates for the tribes and the State. Our report serves as required reading in the class.



Dear Director Mohan -

Please pass along my regards to the members of your staff who produced the March 2017 study on Public Law 280 jurisdiction in Indian Country in ID! It is a beautiful piece of work, both thoughtful and readable! I am quite impressed.

Kevin Washburn



KEVIN K. WASHBURN

After the release of *Child Welfare System*, the Times-News in Twin Falls published a three-part series on foster care. Its stories continued our report discussion on two important topics: (1) challenges of recruiting, training, and retaining foster parents and (2) how Idaho can improve its overloaded foster care system. The Times-News also reported that in response to its stories about our report's findings and recommendations, recruiters in the Magic Valley had seen a significant increase of interest in foster parenting.

In addition to media and public interest, our work has been used by nonprofits that serve youth and children in the community. After hearing our report findings about the ongoing needs of children and youth in child protection, the Idaho Youth Ranch expanded the scope of its mission to help fill those gaps.

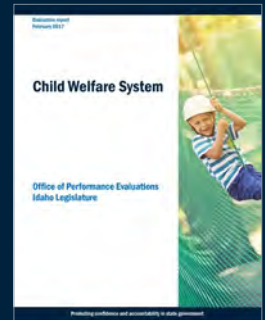
Ongoing policymaker interest and use

In the past year, multiple interim committees have used our work.

The Foster Care Study Committee, established for the 2016 interim, was reestablished for 2017 to continue its work on the child protection system and to address recommendations made in *Child Welfare System*. Three members of the interim committee requested and JLOC selected two additional studies that will build upon the findings of our report.

The July 19 meeting of the Idaho Council on Indian Affairs was dedicated to topics and recommendations discussed in *State Jurisdiction in Indian Country*. The council spoke with Professor Robert Anderson of the University of Washington, who drafted legislation in Washington for retrocession. A representative from the Yakama Nation, which retroceded using that legislation, discussed the practical implications of retrocession. The council also heard from the director of the Montana Governor's Office on Indian Affairs and from a former Kootenai County sheriff about options for intergovernmental cooperation, as discussed in our report.

Findings of *Risk of Bias in Administrative Hearings* (2016) were used as the basis for convening the Administrative Hearing Officer Committee in the 2016 and 2017 interim sessions. The report has been a platform for discussing and debating policies that establish a fair hearing process and bolster citizen's confidence in that process. The committee has drafted legislation for the 2018 session that addresses many of the findings of our report.



Recruiters in the Magic Valley have seen an increased interest in foster parenting since the release of our report.



Staff

Director

Rakesh Mohan

Admin. Coordinator

Margaret Campbell

Principal Evaluators

Amanda Bartlett

Lance McCleve

Bryon Welch

Senior Evaluators

Hannah Crumrine

Tony Grange

Ryan Langrill

Associate Evaluator

Lauren Bailey



Office of
Performance Evaluations
954 W Jefferson Street
Suite 202
Boise, ID 83702

208-332-1470
legislature.idaho.gov/ope

Reports that informed legislation

The Legislature passed two pieces of legislation in 2017 that were relevant to findings and recommendations in our reports.

Child Welfare System (2016): We reported that Idaho needed to increase the number of available placements for children and youth in care by improving recruitment and retention of foster parents. Idaho's maintenance payments to foster parents covered an estimated 52–62 percent of room and board expenses per child, which may have contributed to the decline of foster parents in the system.

We also reported that workload is an ongoing concern in the Department of Health and Welfare. We found social workers carried on average 28–38 percent more cases than what can be served effectively.

In the appropriation of Health and Welfare, Senate Bill 1164 increased the foster care reimbursement rates by 20 percent and added funding for two additional social workers.

Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education (2012): We recommended that school districts employ more college and career counselors to increase the number of high school graduates who enter postsecondary education institutions.

House Bill 262 increased the minimum funding that a district or charter receives for counseling support.

Awards from staff sections of NCSL

The National Legislative Program Evaluation Society's Impact Award for *Idaho's Instructional Management System (Schoolnet)*

The Legislative Research Librarians' Notable Document Awards for *State Jurisdiction in Indian Country* and *Distribution of State Funds for K–12 Public Education*

Evaluation reports for the upcoming session

JLOC received nine requests from 30 legislators. In March, the committee selected the following four requests for us to study:

Residential Care
Court Appointed Special Advocates
Child Welfare System: Reducing the Risk of Adverse Outcomes
Commission of Pardons and Parole