

MINUTES

IDAHO COUNCIL ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

September 16, 2004

Senate Majority Caucus Room

State Capitol

Boise, Idaho

Draft subject to approval of the Council

In attendance were Chair Representative Hilde Kellogg; Vice-Chair Nancy Murillo, Shoshone-Bannock Tribe; Senators Joe Stegner and Marti Calabretta; Representative Joseph Cannon; Lance Giles, Office of the Governor; Chief J. Allan, Coeur d'Alene Tribe; Samuel Penny, Nez Perce Tribe; and Kyle Prior, Shoshone-Paiute Tribe.

Others in attendance were: Parra Byron, Office of the Governor; Harold Ott, Superintendent of Lapwai School district; Cliff Green, Idaho School Boards Administration; Leta Campbell, Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council; Sheila Hewett, Kathy Phelan, Jill Bonnel and Jim Shackelford, Idaho Education Association; Bob Nonini; Jan Studer; Tom Farley and Maria Delgado, State Department of Education; Bob Sobotta, Coeur d'Alene Tribal School; Ernie Stensgar and Terri Parr, Coeur d'Alene Tribe; Selene Hall, Plummer/Worley School District; Luci Willits and Carissa Miller, State Board of Education; Greg Hahn, Idaho Statesman; Bob Fick, Associated Press; Evelyn Small, Sho-Ban News; Julie Kane, Lapwai School District; Wayne Trottier, Jr., Plummer/Worley School District; Bryan Samuels, Lapwai School District; Francis Si John, Coeur d'Alene Tribal School; Garth Hansen, Blackfoot School District; Russell Westerberg, Kootenai Tribe; and Marjorie Zarate, Coeur d'Alene Tribe Director of Education.

Senator Stegner moved that the minutes of the June 10, 2004 meeting be approved; Nancy Murillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by a voice vote.

Parra Byron, Education Policy Advisor for the Governor, was introduced. She stated that she was formerly a high school teacher and viewed this meeting of the Council as a great opportunity for educational leaders to meet. Ms. Byron said that she acts as the liaison for the Governor on educational issues, and thanked the Council for the invitation to participate in the meeting.

Senator Stegner introduced the discussion topics for the meeting, which included:

1. How are Native American students performing in Idaho's public schools? Does their performance vary by Tribe and/or region?
2. What is being done to help these students succeed?
3. What are the Idaho Standard Achievement Test (ISAT), the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI), and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)?
4. What type of impacts will the ISAT and the NCLB have on the education of Native American students in Idaho?

5. How will the public education system respond to Native American students who fail the IRI or ISAT?
6. To what extent are Native American cultures and languages being incorporated into the curriculum of Idaho schools?

In response to a question from Senator Calabretta, Senator Stegner clarified that the goal of the Council was to review what the state of Idaho as well as individual school districts and tribal governments are doing to address Indian education.

Samuel Penny, Nez Perce Tribe, stated that most Indian students attend public schools, so it is important to realize that state policies affect Indian students at the local school board level. He noted that there seems to be some confusion regarding the organizational structure that is utilized to address Indian education issues. For instance, should concerns be directed to the Board of Education, the Department of Education, the Legislature, or local school boards?

Senator Stegner stated that tribal education is a timely concern but that educational statewide procedures for the development of policy at all levels are also pertinent.

Chief J. Allan, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, noted that he would like to hear from representatives of the schools themselves since they have a ground-level view on some of the problems Indian students are facing. Senator Stegner expressed that such testimony was welcomed and encouraged.

Kyle Prior, Shoshone-Paiute Tribe, stated that the Council needs to look at the rate of retention in higher education because most Indian students start in Idaho colleges but then transfer to smaller schools out of state. This analysis should also include drop-out rates for these students.

Vice-Chair Nancy Murillo, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, asked about the allocation of funds from the lottery to all schools, including tribal schools. She stated that Fort Hall School did not receive any lottery funds, and she would like this issue addressed by the Council.

Tom Farley, Bureau Chief of Federal Programs for the Idaho Department of Education, was the first presenter. Mr. Farley stated that he also served as the secretary for the Idaho Indian Education Committee (IIEC). Mr. Farley distributed a packet of materials to the Council which included the bylaws and a listing of the members of the IIEC, a summary of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and a series of assessment results. A copy of these materials is available in the Legislative Services Office.

Mr. Farley noted that in order to review how Indian students are performing, the Council members should take a look at the websites of the Board of Education and the Department of Education, which provide statistical layouts of comprehensive analysis of student performance. These statistics are broken down, for example, by economics and ethnicity.

Mr. Farley explained that the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) is one of three parts of a reading initiative put into place by the Idaho Legislature four years ago. He said the program was locally

developed and has seen tremendous success with impacts for students' reading abilities in grades kindergarten through third grade. He said the main components are: (1) retrain and test the teachers; (2) test the students; and (3) provide additional hours of teacher contact time if students are not at the appropriate reading level. Mr. Farley also discussed the Direct Math Assessment (DMA) and the Direct Writing Assessment (DWA), the latter of which has been in place for 22 years and gives insight into students' writing and reading ability. Mr. Farley stated that he was especially proud of the DMA because he authored it and he believes it provides valuable standards here in Idaho with high expectations. He noted that it is a performance assessment, meaning it doesn't test just what kids know, but rather what they can "do."

Mr. Farley continued by stating that in terms of helping Indian students, the State Superintendent has supported the IIEC and values the input of that group. He stated that the IIEC is successful because of the cooperation of the five tribes who host Indian education summits, which provide for a quality experience for educators. He noted that accreditation and reporting for targeted low-achieving schools is a primary focus of NCLB, so this will help the Department and educators target resources.

Mr. Farley explained that the Department is also developing "solution teams" which, pursuant to NCLB and Idaho law, are required to support low-achieving schools. He said that distinguished educators are being identified to serve as teams to work with schools in targeted areas. The law also requires adequate yearly progress (AYP) which means that *all* children will perform at proficient or higher levels on the state's assessment by the 2013/2014 school year. In order to do this, schools need to achieve a percentage growth in assessments each year. If schools do not attain AYP for two years, targets need to be implemented. Mr. Farley stated that they just finished their second year of NCLB testing and so they are putting together teams and plans so children who are not performing well can be targeted with resources such as time and money. If schools do not attain AYP for three years in a row, there are further repercussions, including paid transportation to better-performing schools.

Mr. Farley stated that the Department has contracted with the Northwest Educational Lab to develop Idaho Indian education teacher standards, as there needs to be an understanding and use of the diversity and culture of the Native students within the public schools. He noted that a federal reading grant is currently targeting the lowest 20% performing schools in the state.

According to Mr. Farley, the Department wants to start regionalizing Department employees to target each region's weaknesses and strengths. He explained that in the United States, children of color and poverty have less access to learning than other groups, and a regional approach might address these inadequacies.

Mr. Farley explained the new language learners assessment required by NCLB and stated that the Department is currently contracting for this component. He said that the federal government and the Idaho Legislature have been benevolent in approving Limited English Proficiency (LEP) funding. LEP means any child who lacks a command of the English language.

Mr. Farley referred to the national debate regarding NCLB, mainly whether it was a punitive rather than a supportive program because everyone hears about the sanctions for failing schools. Mr. Farley stated that the NCLB assessment program should be about supporting schools, not just ranking them. He said the data generated pursuant to NCLB can be collected and analyzed and then used to make better educational decisions for students. He mentioned that the new Idaho Student Information Management System is coming up and this will help track any gaps.

In response to a query relating to Indian language and culture in public school curricula, Mr. Farley referred Council members to Section 33-1280, Idaho Code, which expressly provides for American Indian languages teaching authorization. He said this section describes clearly how native languages are allowed in the curriculum. At the Department, in terms of teacher certification and graduation requirements, tribal language and culture classes are supported.

In response to a question from Ms. Murillo, Mr. Farley stated that the annual budget for the IIEC was \$9,000. Mr. Farley explained that this budget funds the Committee itself, but they also use the funding to support learning initiatives across the state. He cited as an example a Native American coloring book that was copyrighted and disseminated statewide.

Mr. Farley said that support teams are currently going out and talking to schools to determine planning strategies and the best allocation of resources. This effort is based on a \$4.8 million appropriation, the majority of which is from federal projects.

In response to a question from Ms. Murillo regarding the percentage growth that schools will be required to attain, Mr. Farley stated that if schools meet those targets, they must maintain them each year so they don't lose ground.

Ms. Murillo asked if any Indians were on the Board of Education. Mr. Farley said there were not; the Governor appoints those members. Ms. Murillo stated that it appeared they would have to lobby the Governor for some representation on the Board, and asked about any educational qualifications for Board membership. Parra Byron stated that members of the Board do not necessarily need to have an educational background in order to be appointed.

Mr. Farley then discussed the federal programs that are often cited in educational discussions. He said the largest was Title I, which dates from 1965. Title I is the federal government's major appropriation to support states' educational programs and is designed totally around economics. Title II applies to teacher training. Title III applies to LEP programs. Title IV provides funding for safe and drug free schools and communities. Title V funds innovative practices. There are also programs and funds specifically targeted at special education assessments.

Ms. Murillo stated that it was her understanding that Idaho was at the bottom of the states in education. Mr. Farley stated that this was incorrect; if one looked at student performance in schools, Idaho is above the national average on the ACT and SAT and other bell curves. Idaho is at the bottom, however, for teacher salaries and money for ancillary programs such as Head Start.

In response to a question from Ms. Murillo, Mr. Farley stated that students will have to meet tenth grade standards to graduate, so the first purpose of the earlier assessments is to target these students for extra help.

Lance Giles queried what happened to students who do not meet the tenth grade standards for purposes of graduating. Mr. Farley responded by stating that even if students do pass the tenth grade level test, they still have to meet other requirements for graduation such as credit minimums. He emphasized that the test must not be used as punishment, but rather as an indicator of where help is needed.

Senator Calabretta referred to a document entitled “Goals and Recommendations for Improving American Indian Education” prepared by the Idaho Committee on Indian Education. (A copy of this document is available in the Legislative Services Office.) She asked whether these goals were being implemented. Mr. Farley stated that those goals can be used to target many state efforts but that they have not done a good job of addressing the statements in that document.

Samuel Penny mentioned the disparity between school districts in the Boise area versus those in more rural areas and asked how small rural school districts are supposed to carry out the responsibilities of NCLB with limited resources.

Mr. Farley stated that the answer came in two parts. First, in relation to state funding, the equalization formula provides equitable funding based on enrollment across the state. He explained that Blaine County basically received no state money but instead received only what they generated. A poorer county would get more from the state. Second, in terms of federal funding, Mr. Farley stated that this funding was driven by poverty count in the census and that the state has no control once that money is delivered to the individual school districts. There is no state discretion for these federal funds.

Ms. Murillo asked whether the ISAT was comparable to tests given to students in other states. Mr. Farley said that the test is aligned to Idaho standards, which are rigorous and higher than those set by many other states across the country. He noted that some states have even lowered their standards so fewer schools would fail to make AYP.

Samuel Penny stated his concern that Indian children are being identified as special education students more commonly than non-Indian children. Mr. Farley stated that all states have over-identified special education children and this is particularly true of the Native American and non-English speaking student population. He said the state must do a better job of identifying LEP children so there can be a better allocation of resources.

Next to present were Carissa Miller and Luci Willits from the State Board of Education. Ms. Willits is the Communications Director for the Board; Ms. Miller is the Program Manager for assessment and accountability. Ms. Willits began by stating that the data they are collecting is critical and that Idaho has come a long way in the last ten years due to the efforts of both teachers and students. She explained that the standards outline what students should know at

each grade level and provide an important baseline. She said that Idaho was ahead of the curve by the time NCLB was enacted because the state had already developed an assessment program. She noted that the goal of NCLB is to improve the achievement of *all* students.

Ms. Miller discussed the ISAT program and explained that it is a group of tests in three subject areas: reading, math and language usage. These tests are given in the fall and spring in grades 2 through 10. According to Ms. Miller, some schools give the test as many as four times per year to check student improvement. There are two types of tests: adaptive and blended. The adaptive test adjusts to the student's ability and increases in difficulty when the student provides correct answers and decreases in difficulty with incorrect answers. The blended test is given in grades 3, 4, 7, 8 and 10. This test has the same core 42 questions for each student in a grade level with 20 adaptive items at the end. The state is currently moving toward the blended test in the spring for all grades. Ms. Miller explained that the blended test is used to show student proficiency for purposes of NCLB. The Board is currently working with the Northwest Evaluation Association to come up with a new test to simplify the blended test.

Ms. Miller distributed a handout showing the standards implementation chronology. A copy of this handout is available in the Legislative Services Office. She explained that in 1994, the Idaho Legislature directed the Board to set forth standards for purposes of assessment. In 2000, the Legislature approved the standards for grades 9-12. In 2001, standards were approved for kindergarten through grade 8. Until that time, Ms. Miller explained that schools had been using what is referred to as the Iowa Test, which just showed how the students were doing compared to students in other states; it did not illustrate how Idaho students were performing pursuant to Idaho standards. Ms. Miller added that a science test standard is set to be tested in the spring of 2005 for grades 5, 7 and 10.

Ms. Willits stated that the purpose of the test data is in part to satisfy NCLB requirements but the data can also be used as a diagnostic tool to help students achieve where they are having trouble. Now, schools can get the scores immediately which helps inform instruction. She noted that in the fall, students are tested on what they know. In the spring, they are tested on what they have learned. She noted that the new testing program is age-appropriate and can be used to challenge students who may be testing out far beyond their grade level.

In response to a question from Senator Calabretta, Mr. Farley stated that a similar presentation had been made to the Hispanic Commission. Ms. Willits added that the achievement gap among Hispanics and Native Americans is similar, and that Idaho is not unique in this. Other states have experienced gaps among minority populations.

Chief Allan said that it was his understanding that LEP testing is being done only for Native American students in the state. Ms. Miller said that no specific minority should be targeted, but that she would look into that concern. Mr. Farley stated that this concern was brought to the attention of the IIEC and explained that it was not the intent of the LEP assessment to single out any specific group. He stated that the Department would be looking into the matter.

Samuel Penny said that the purpose of the ISAT is purportedly to support teacher effectiveness; but some parts of the program seem to blame teachers and yet do not provide the needed financial resources. Mr. Farley added that most teachers spend their own money for at least some classroom supplies.

Ms. Miller provided a handout showing ISAT scores of Native American students, the data having been broken down by region and school district. A copy of this handout is available in the Legislative Services Office. She said that when compiling the data, she looked at school districts with ten or more Native American students. The handout shows the percentage of those students who are proficient or advanced. Ms. Miller also distributed a handout from the Board and noted that most of the information provided in the handout is available on the Board's website. She pointed out the statewide results for reading scores by ethnicity and noted that there was a gap in achievement particularly beginning in grades 7 and 8.

In response to a question from Senator Calabretta regarding student dropout rates before grade 10, Mr. Farley said that Idaho, like most states, is not allowed to collect dropout data from pre-secondary levels.

In response to a question from Senator Stegner, Ms. Willits said that there are only theories but no hard evidence as to why there are such drops in achievement beginning in grade 7. Ms. Miller stated that the Board is currently contracting for research on that achievement drop.

Representative Cannon stated that in looking at the handout, it appeared that 58.6% are reading at grade level, yet NCLB requires 100% proficiency. Ms. Miller explained that there are intermediate targets before the 100% proficiency must be obtained. Representative Cannon asked if some principals would look at the requirements and see that if kids fall way behind early on, then progress looks better at the tested levels in higher grades. Ms. Miller explained that this wouldn't happen in Idaho because there are harsh consequences for failing the projected goals even early on, so progress won't be inflated. She noted that some states may in fact be "backloading," meaning that the states set standards low in the earlier years so there is a big jump in student progress at the 10th grade level.

Wayne Trottier, Jr., Superintendent of the Plummer/Worley School District, asked who reads and approves school improvement plans and what qualifies them to make those determinations. Mr. Farley said that the law is clear in that the plans are the responsibility of the local school district. All the state does is require that the plans be done and then test students to make sure the programs are ensuring progress. Ms. Miller added that the Department does provide resources to help write those plans at the local level.

In response to another question from Mr. Trottier, Mr. Farley noted that the consolidated school reform plans are only for federal money and the Department reads these only to determine if they meet the seven goals needed to qualify for federal funding.

Ms. Murillo asked whether the intermediate targets for proficiency fluctuate by grade level. Ms.

Miller explained that they progress in a stair step fashion and increase incrementally to the 100% proficiency requirement. She stated that there is more room for growth in math, so the numbers will jump faster in that subject area. Ms. Miller explained that when looking at the ISAT scale of 150-300 points, each point represents a unit of knowledge.

Representative Cannon noted that the requirements in 2006 effectively change the 10th grade proficiency requirement to an 8th grade level.

Senator Calabretta stated that the state needs some accounting of students before they reach the high school levels. She said she is cynical in that she is afraid schools could discourage students from attending because the student would hurt the school's overall test performance.

Selene Hall, Plummer School Board, asked why there were two types of tests, i.e. the adaptive and the blended tests. Ms. Miller stated that the two tests exist because when the federal government looks at the tests they require the tests to show whether the students are on grade level. The power of the adaptive test has been retained so schools in Idaho could still see where students could be, meaning they might test above grade level and schools would want to know that. Ms. Willits noted that the Board would rather have the adaptive test because it shows the level the student tests at but also the level at which the student could be learning. Mr. Farley added that Congress simply did not care about the adaptive aspect of the tests; they simply wanted to know how the 4th grader is doing on the 4th grade level.

Selene Hall asked how the state is able to compare progress based upon adaptive tests since they are only given in the spring and thus any progress would be only year-to-year. Ms. Miller said that it was important to keep in mind that the testing is done based on Idaho standards so they still have an idea of how the student is progressing.

Senator Stegner asked about the extra work that automatically kicks in with lower performing students. He said the goal is assessment of performance and that the districts must target their resources to kids who are underperforming. Given this, Senator Stegner asked if it was the philosophy of the program that the district's efforts would be on individual students and not on specific groups. He asked about a collective effort for Indian students who are underperforming.

Ms. Miller said the answer is two-fold. First, at the student level, they look at the individual needs and the weaknesses and strengths of that student. Secondly, she said teachers do not always work with just one student; teachers may group students based on certain deficiencies in subject areas, but this is not done based upon ethnicity. Ms. Miller added that the tests are targeted toward the individual student, but the resulting extra help may be in the form of groups of students who are underperforming in specific skills.

In response to a question from Lance Giles, Ms. Miller stated that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools are not tracked by the state. The Board has tried to get some of that information and will forward it onto the Council if requested. She noted that BIA schools are required to follow NCLB guidelines, but they are not necessarily required to do so under Idaho standards;

nonetheless, she believed both the BIA schools were currently using the ISAT.

In response to a question from Samuel Penny regarding a disclaimer in one of the materials, Ms. Miller noted that the disclaimer is standard in that it recognizes that there can be factors other than ethnicity affecting student performance. The disclaimer is intended to prevent readers from drawing any specific conclusions regarding the performance of students based strictly upon their ethnicity group.

Mr. Penny stated that in some cases, a student might be the caretaker of younger siblings and would not test well as a result. He said the disclaimer makes him question the validity of the scoring itself.

Chief Allan asked how to qualify teachers for those teaching in schools with Native American students. Mr. Trottier added that if we generalize about how we certify highly qualified teachers, it is not clear what that is measuring in terms of them being a successful teacher in the Native American environment.

Ms. Murillo asked if the tests were developed by citizen groups. Ms. Miller answered that Idaho teachers and content specialists helped to create a “bank” of items to be included on the tests.

Ms. Murillo asked about a “sensitivity review” for the tests. Ms. Miller stated that once the tests are created by the Idaho teachers, they are reviewed and recommendations are made if there are some questions with poor sensitivity for certain groups. The reviewers can be citizens or teachers, and she generally contacts each tribe to get a representative to participate in the review.

Dr. Cliff Green, Idaho School Boards Association, introduced Selene Hall from the Plummer/Worley School District. Ms. Hall said that not too long ago, Indian students were sent to boarding schools and parents were not allowed input in their child’s education. Today, schools are having trouble getting Indian parents involved and this stems from this history. She said sending letters to the parents at home doesn’t work, and neither do phone calls; parents need a face-to-face invitation from the schools.

Ms. Hall continued by stating that socio-economic conditions are a big factor in Indian country, and Head Start should be a starting point for a child’s education in these areas. She said there is also a higher representative number of Native students in special education classes, and this comes in large part because traditional education is auditory but Indian students are more visual learners.

Ms. Hall stated that the standardized tests tend to be culturally biased and do not assess what Indian students really know. She said that the higher representation of Native students in LEP programs is also because of a lack of parental education. She then asked what the Council would be doing with the information it received at this meeting.

Senator Calabretta suggested that communities provide children’s books at food banks. She also

stated that history indicates that there are no role models for these parents in terms of school involvement and there is a need to teach people to get involved.

Chief Allan stated that his grandmother went to a boarding school and he is the first in his family to have graduated from college. He said the biggest program right now is peers. For instance, police officers need to be part of the community they protect. In the same way, teachers at Indian schools must reflect the makeup of those schools and they need more Indian teachers as a result.

Ms. Hall stated that they are trying to recruit more Indian teachers to be in the classroom.

Ms. Murillo noted that a Native parent's involvement in his or her child's education was limited in large part because they did not have accessibility to the boarding schools and mission schools. She said that the state needs to provide funds for Head Start, and asked why the IIEC's recommendations have not been implemented. She said that the \$9,000 budget for the IIEC was a shame, as are the Native student ISAT scores. She said they must teach some groups specifically, and they need a curriculum on Indian history specific to each tribe.

Leta Campbell, Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council, said that it was important for teachers to know the educational history of a region. She stated that the teachers need to learn how to go into the schools and be proactive.

Ms. Murillo stated that she had interactions with the Blackfoot School District twenty years ago and they need better customer service. She said her high school son told her that if she went to the teacher with her concerns, the teacher would retaliate against her son.

Mr. Trottier was the next to present. He stated that he was a member of the Standing Rock Lakota Tribe (South Dakota side) and that he has been involved in education for 26 years. He said that 90% of Native students attend public schools, and they need to think about how NCLB is or is not affecting Native students. He stated that one concern is the dropout rate, which is 50% today, and most of those students are Native students. He said that they need programs to target this extremely high dropout rate and they need to look at "inside" factors, for instance, such as staff and encouraging kids to like school. Studies show that cultural discontinuity is the main reason for dropouts, so there needs to be a recognition that the various tribes see things differently because they are unique and need to be treated accordingly. Mr. Trottier said that some leadership and teaching changes were also needed because there was a lack of commitment.

He said that while test scores have gone up, there are still some schools that will not make AYP. Mr. Trottier stated that the tribes should be able to incorporate their culture into NCLB. Mr. Trottier continued by saying that not much has changed for Native education in the last 75 years. He said the unique environment and culture in Plummer takes a special kind of highly qualified teacher.

Mr. Trottier then explained the grant-funded SWIMS (Students With Individual Mentor

Structures) program, which provided multiple safety nets so kids would not fail. He said the dropout rate is now 7-9%, but there was a high burnout for teachers with the program because they were having to give up their prep time and lunch hours to participate in the program. Mr. Trottier added that the attendance rate before the program was 86%; now it was 93% average daily attendance in the high school, and disciplinary referrals dropped from 1,200 in the first year of the program to less than 200 for mainly minor offenses in the last year of the program.

Mr. Trottier explained that expectations for the Native students have changed, and his school district introduced sensitivity training for all school staff last year. He offered a number of suggestions to ensure the success of Native students:

1. Refocus priorities. Politicians need to revisit education. Mr. Trottier noted that Plummer is in the heart of the Coeur d'Alene lands and 21 different tribes are represented in the school district.
2. Look at what does and does not work. They need to look at research-based best practices as applied to Indian students.
3. Parental involvement needs to increase.
4. Idaho needs to do what states like Arizona have done regarding statewide educational research for data specific to each community. ISAT data does not do this.
5. Propose legislation to mandate diversity courses before teachers can receive their certification.
6. Establish an office for Indian Affairs within the Department of Education to place primary focus on Indian students. Mr. Trottier said that he sent a letter regarding this matter two years ago to Superintendent Howard but has yet to receive a response.
7. Address the overpopulation of Native American students in special education. Mr. Trottier stated that two years ago, they looked into this but no suggestions were followed up on. He said that 23% of the Native students are in special education programs in Plummer and that this statistic is outrageous, especially since they are supposedly following the criteria and standards for qualifying students as learning disabled.
8. Recognize that statistical manipulation may not truly reflect Native education today.
9. Provide the IIEC with more authority so it can be the driving force to implement the published goals and recommendations.
10. Encourage more accurate media coverage. Mr. Trottier stated that the stigma needs to be shaken that Native American students are failures.

Chief Allan stated that sometimes the successes of Native American students are forgotten, and they need to encourage these and not allow ethnicity to allow students to fall into the stigma of failed education. Mr. Allan noted for example that a Native student graduated first with honors from Lakeside High School.

Ms. Murillo said that Indians are more brilliant than others. She also noted that North Dakota has been more progressive in Indian affairs than Idaho.

In response to a question from Senator Calabretta regarding concerns that “would-be dropouts” may drive down ISAT scores, Mr. Trottier said that most of those students are getting back on track and that the freshmen through junior classes are now largely intact.

Kyle Prior, Shoshone-Paiute Tribe, said that Duck Valley Reservation is unique in that it is on the Idaho and Nevada border. The school is on the Nevada side, and he said that the school is always ranked last in the region for academics but first for athletics. He added that they are fortunate in that they have a small population so they can get extra resources to the school. He noted that a graduate of Duck Valley High School was elected superintendent of the school district, where the board was all-white, and they need to highlight these kinds of successes.

In response to questions regarding a recent science project by Shoshone-Bannock students, Ms. Murillo said it was important to note that while the students should get the credit, it was the tribes who made contact with NASA for the project.

Mr. Trottier stated that in looking at the NCLB sanctions, AYP seemed to mean “all your possessions” because a school was doomed if it did not meet AYP.

Harold Ott, Superintendent of the Lapwai School District, was the next presenter. He noted that Hispanic students are in the same situation as Native American students in terms of test scores. He said there is no difference in brain power based upon ethnicity, so they need to look into other factors, including environmental factors, to explain why some students do well while others do not. Mr. Ott referred to a publication by Ruby Paine entitled “Working With Students/Adults From Poverty” and stated that it should be mandatory reading.

Mr. Ott stated that it was important for teachers to develop relationships of “mutual respect” with every student. He said that if teachers do not understand the student’s culture, they cannot make those relationships. He noted that 85% of the students in Lapwai are Native American. Mr. Ott stated that they need to train all staff regularly regarding Nez Perce traditions.

Mr. Ott explained that with a number of efforts, Lapwai School District has had excellent results. Elementary test scores are very good, and he differed greatly with a Lewiston Tribune editorial that was negative and dealt totally with junior high and high school test scores. The editorial said that Indian parents were indifferent, but Mr. Ott noted that 75% of the parents annually attend parent-teacher conferences and a recent bond passed with a 79% vote, showing that the community and parents do value education.

Mr. Ott said that partnering with the Head Start schools is part of the solution. He said that success leads to motivation, and therefore there is a problem with judging the students based on two or three tests. He said he welcomes NCLB because the teachers and the students are ready. In some grades at the elementary school, 90% of the students are proficient. He noted that there

are not research-based math or reading tests at the high school. At the secondary level, teachers specialize and are no longer teaching the kids how to learn. Another problem was that out of the roughly 180 days of the school year, research shows that only 13-15 of those days have uninterrupted instruction.

Mr. Ott continued by stating that education needs to go more toward student-led conferences, where kids are able to say what they learn each year. This is currently being done in kindergarten, but he said this needs to be done at higher grades because after elementary school, student learning decreases.

Mr. Farley added that a year ago Lapwai would have been a Blue Ribbon School, of which there are only 100 in the nation, but it lacked the two-year assessment needed to qualify. He said Lapwai is a success, but that it is important to note that a lot of resources have been spent to ensure this result.

Senator Stegner asked whether Idaho was doing things wrong in terms of how the state approaches Indian education. For instance, does Idaho need to modify testing protocol specific for Indian students or make specific efforts, such as expending resources, to Indian populations for purposes of bringing those students up to standards?

Mr. Ott responded by saying that Indian educators need to be looking at the test questions for bias and vocabulary. In response to a question from Senator Stegner, Mr. Farley said this was already being done. Mr. Ott stated that more people need to be involved in the process and more time needs to be given. He added that all-day kindergarten needs to be funded, and after school programs and summer school for kids that are behind need to be funded. He said summer schools currently receive federal funds but only for grades kindergarten through eighth grade. In response to a further question from Senator Stegner, Mr. Ott stated that these suggestions apply to every school in the state.

Sheila Hewett, a first grade teacher at Lapwai Elementary School, addressed the Council. She said that teachers are not effectively reaching students right now. She said the scores do not reflect student learning, and noted that in the 3rd and 10th grades, Native American students are still regularly low-performing based on the Department's data.

Ms. Hewett said that for schools to succeed, they must:

1. Align curriculum following research-based and data-driven information.
2. Hire highly qualified teachers and faculty members who reflect student diversity. Ms. Hewett stated that there are 17 Native American teachers in Idaho at the elementary level; six of these are at Lapwai Elementary, and four of these are Lapwai High School graduates.
3. Ensure smaller class sizes. Ms. Hewett noted that at Lapwai the teachers loop, meaning the first grade teacher follows her class up through the second grade.
4. Encourage parental involvement. Ms. Hewett stated that parents need to be partners.

5. Make a commitment to student attendance. Ms. Hewett said that Lapwai hired an attendance officer and teachers make second phone calls home to ensure attendance. She added that along these lines, Idaho needs stronger truancy laws.
6. Hold schools accountable to students and their parents.

Ms. Hewett stated that they need data-driven multiple methods of assessment because students should not be judged based upon only one test. She said she is cautious of both ISAT and NCLB because they fail to consider the vast diversity of Native American cultures and languages, and there is a cultural bias in the content, which makes her question the validity of the tests themselves. Ms. Hewett concluded by noting that a 1997 study found that environmental factors contribute to the underachievement of Native American students, and these factors need to be considered as well in order to advance student scores overall.

Kathy Phelan, Idaho Education Association, introduced Jill Bonnel, who is in her 16th year of teaching in the Blackfoot School District and her 11th year at Fort Hall Elementary School. Ms. Bonnel said that there needs to be a change in training teachers and retaining American Indian teachers. She stated that there were very few Native Americans in the area who were certified to teach, and this is because there is no funding for college education. She said there are so few Native American teachers because the funding that is available for college runs out in their junior or senior years and they cannot afford to continue.

Ms. Bonnel explained that once or twice per month, Shoshone linguists came to train Fort Hall Faculty about the tribal language. She said it was interesting that neither of the linguists was a Native person. She said that the enthusiasm of both parents and students increased as a result of the teachers knowing basic tribal words, but that the program stopped after just three years due to a lack of funding. She said there were also grants for programs, including after-school tutoring and parenting classes, but these also ran out of funding. Ms. Bonnel stated that there are programs out there that have worked for short periods of time but are stopped due to lack of funding, and that they need some permanent funding if students are to receive a consistently good education.

Jan Studer, who teaches 8th grade language arts at Boundary County Junior High School, addressed the Council. Ms. Studer stated there are thirty Native American students in her school and no Native American teachers or staff. She said that tribal members know what their children need. Teachers need “diversity” or “sensitivity” training to understand this. Ms. Studer noted that the Kootenai Tribe hired a tutor to work with students.

Ms. Studer continued by stating that early childhood education is critical and needs to be funded by the Legislature. Before and after-school programs are also critical, and Native American parents need to be invited back in. Ms. Studer stated that research demonstrates that declines in student performance begin showing up in the 4th and 5th grades, before the big dips seen in the 8th grade. Ms. Studer said that growing class sizes may be part of the reason for the decline.

Ms. Studer stated that Native American role models and tutors are necessary, as well as cultural

outreach and exchange programs. She said that Title I funding is not enough, and there were not enough of these funds to extend them to the junior high in her area. Ms. Studer agreed that the ISAT needs to be checked for cultural bias, and that the AYP status is somewhat deceiving. She also agreed that Idaho needs an Indian Education Office, much like the Migrant Council Office.

Maria Delgado, Department of Education, stated that the Migrant Council is a federally-funded program that has been successful in teaching students as well as helping students to apply for scholarships and other economic help. She said the Council helps in the promotion of minority students. Ms. Delgado said that she would also like to see more Native American teachers in the classroom, and for this scholarships are necessary. She said that Idaho is ten years behind Texas in terms of its education system.

Bryan Samuels, representing the IIEC, said that the IIEC's role is to review any educational issue in the state as it applies to Indian students. The IIEC is a vehicle for the Superintendent and the Department of Education to understand these issues. The IIEC had the following recommendations:

1. Appoint a Native American to the Board of Education.
2. Appoint a Native American to the State Department of Education.
3. Provide more resources to fund the IIEC. These funds currently come out of the Superintendent's budget.
4. Fund higher education for Native American teachers. Currently, Native American teachers receive financial assistance through scholarships and "soft money." These resources are effective but the state still needs to make a commitment to higher education.
5. Support educational summits. The next summit will be October 7-8 in Pocatello. The purpose of these summits is to review issues and help educators understand where students and teachers are at in terms of educational progress.
6. Fund the Summer Teacher Institute at Lewis-Clark State College, because teachers who have just graduated need training.

Bob Sobotta, Coeur d'Alene Tribal School, addressed the Council and stated that tribal schools receive aid because they cannot be supported solely by the Tribe. He said it is the responsibility of the state and the federal government to educate Indian children and to not leave this responsibility solely to the tribes.

In response to a question from Senator Stegner, Mr. Samuels explained that the IIEC meets four times a year, mainly in Boise. The tribal governments are invited to select a representative who deals in education. The Department provides staffing assistance such as providing notices and distributing publications.

Samuel Penny said that more Indian administrators are needed in schools and that Indian people are needed at all levels of education in Idaho.

Yolanda Bisbee stated that consistency and persistence are the reasons for the successes that Native American students have experienced. She said that an Indian Affairs Office at the Department of Education needs a staff, not just one person, to address Indian education concerns.

Senator Stegner said that the political reality is that the idea of a fully-funded Indian Education Office will not go far in the Legislature. He recommended that the Governor's office look into the matter and work with the Department to find the necessary support. They would need to see if it would require legislation to set up an Indian Education Office, and what type of funding would be necessary, e.g. appropriations, tribal contributions and grants.

Ernie Stensgar, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, said he has spoken with tribal leaders and teachers who talk about their dedication to the students. He said these are "our" students and the tribes need to look at all funding options for creating an Indian desk at the Department of Education.

Jan Studer added that the Kootenai Tribe gave the school district \$90,000 for the tutoring program she referenced in her presentation.

Senator Calabretta said that the ISAT numbers present a crisis and a need to promote and enhance the IIEC because the sole focus of that Committee is Indian Education.

Kathy Phelan stated that if the Governor takes the initiative, something can go through the Legislature in as little as four days.

Senator Stegner stated that it might be more significant if the state could achieve a full-time kindergarten. Right now, kindergarten is not even mandatory in Idaho. He said the Legislature might consider a pilot program for a full-time kindergarten in one of the schools identified as needing it. He would ask the Department to consider a small-scale full-time kindergarten pilot project for at-risk schools as one way to address the education gaps discussed today.

Ms. Bonnel said that a full-time kindergarten plus reading specialists has already been shown to raise student achievement standards. She said such a pilot program would be reinventing the wheel. Mr. Ott agreed that full-time kindergarten has already been shown to work.

Senator Stegner stated that they need small success stories to show that state support of a full-time kindergarten will yield results.

Representative Cannon stated that he was a firm supporter of making half-day kindergarten mandatory, but he would not be supportive of full-day everyday kindergarten. He said the state is strapped for cash and should not be starting new programs. They need to try to emphasize personal responsibility. He cited an example in another state where parents could choose half-day or full-day kindergarten. The half-day option included teaching children colors and the names of animals. The full-day option included reading. He reiterated that a full-time kindergarten proposal would not pass in the Legislature.

Samuel Penny requested that the urgency of the Indian education situation be related to the Governor. He said addressing the issue would not require a new program; they could work within the existing framework to make sure that existing programs work for Indian students.

Jan Studer queried the Council as to how long the excuse that the state has no money would be used.

Representative Cannon stated that he didn't believe Idaho was shortchanging education and he believed that the vast majority of Idaho legislators were concerned about education. He said there needs to be a team effort. More money won't make more parents care more. They need to recognize that not all problems can be solved by the Legislature.

Lance Giles indicated that he would research the possibility of creating an Indian Education Office within the Department of Education and would report back at the next meeting of the Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.