

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Thursday, February 09, 2012
- TIME:** 9:00 A.M.
- PLACE:** Room EW41
- MEMBERS:** Chairman Nonini, Vice Chairman Shirley, Representative(s) Trail, Block, Nielsen, Chadderdon, Shepherd, Wills, Marriott, Thayn, Hartgen, Bateman, Boyle, DeMordaunt, Nessel, Pence, Chew, Cronin
- ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None
- GUESTS:** Jason Hancock and Michelle C. Taylor, State Department of Education (SDE); Tamara Baysinger and Alan Reed, Public Charter School Commission (PCSC); Bob Kustra, Boise State University (BSU); Rob Winslow and Harold Ott, Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA); Max Greenlee, Risch Pisca; Tracie Bent, State Board of Education (SBE); Bert Marley, Idaho Education Association (IEA); Jess Harrison, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA); Suzanne Budge, SBS Associates, LLC
- MOTION:** **Chairman Nonini** called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.
- Rep. Thayn** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 8, 2012. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- Chairman Nonini** announced that the order of agenda items will be changed in order to allow President Bob Kustra, Boise State University (BSU) to attend a funeral.
- President Bob Kustra**, President, Boise State University (BSU), gave a presentation to the committee. He said that approximately sixty percent (60%) of out-of-state students will live and contribute in the community where they receive their college degrees. He spoke of Steve Appleton, who came from California to attend college and then began working on the production line at Micron. By the age of thirty-four (34), Mr. Appleton was Micron's CEO. President Kustra said he is grateful to the State of Idaho for its welcoming attitude toward out-of-state students.
- President Kustra** shared highlights of recent events at BSU. The Greenspeed Student Club built the world's fastest vehicle that runs on vegetable oil. A new Veteran's Service Center opened in November and BSU was named a military friendly school by G.I. Jobs magazine for the third year, placing the university in the top fifteen percent (15%) of schools. The Talkin' Broncos, BSU's speech and debate team, won the Pi Kappa Delta national title last April and have finished first or second in the last four national forensics tournaments. President Kustra discussed the research projects taking place at BSU, which include a project to develop a simple device that can detect up to 250 diseases. This project is being funded by a grant from the W.M. Keck Foundation. Another area of focus is the storage of nuclear fuels. New programs have been added to include doctoral programs in Education Technology, Materials and Science Engineering, and Biomolecular Sciences. Core curriculum has been completely reorganized with the following goal in mind: to promote skills in problem solving, communication, innovation, teamwork, ethics and diversity, and disciplinary knowledge. These skills begin to be developed during each student's first year of college and continue throughout their educational process.

President Kustra discussed effectively managing the demands associated with growth and progress. Since 2006, seventy-one percent (71%) of new students enrolling in academic programs in Idaho have enrolled at BSU. Also since 2006, the number of junior, senior, and second degree students increased by thirty-one percent (31%). Graduate student enrollment increased by twenty-nine percent (29%). In response, BSU has increased admission standards to the highest among Idaho's public universities. BSU has decreased the number of credits required for graduation from 128 to the industry standard of 120, and has restructured degree programs to ensure that this change has not resulted in a loss of quality. Additionally, BSU has added online courses, focused on dual enrollment and has combined class sections. Part-time faculty members have been hired to meet peak demands, and some programs have been eliminated. President Kustra briefly mentioned the funding inequity that exists in higher education.

In response to questions, **President Kustra** stated that in the past, great emphasis has been placed on graduation rates. He said that getting a student through in four years has benefits, however, getting the student through successfully might take longer. BSU has looked into the Boise community to find innovators and entrepreneurs. Their examples have helped BSU connect research with practical applications. Faculty and staff members seek to identify ways that research can move from the lab to the marketplace. It is necessary to have faculty members who are committed to helping students succeed. Advisors are important for student success. An advisor's consent can be programmed into each student's online course enrollment to ensure that each student is taking the classes that are needed to meet graduation requirements.

Responding to additional questions, **President Kustra** stated that IGEM (Idaho Global Entrepreneurial Mission) and collaborative efforts with groups including the National Institute of Health are important. BSU faculty members work on research projects with faculty members of other universities. BSU maintains a faculty senate to ensure that ratios of faculty, staff and students are respected.

Alan Reed, Public Charter School Commission (PCSC), gave a presentation to the committee. He stated that the growth rate of charter schools in Idaho has been around three (3) to five (5) per year. The chartering process is challenging and expensive, as is finding facilities. National research suggests that increasing autonomy and accountability will result in increased quality. Meridian Technical Charter School implements many of the best practices of the Meridian School District; this is something Mr. Reed would like to see happen more often. He stated that partnerships with local districts are important.

In response to questions, **Mr. Reed** said that if the State of Idaho could lend its credit rating to charter schools, it would make a considerable difference in those schools' ability to function. There are children on waiting lists for charter schools because of the funding challenges faced by these schools. Mr. Reed stated that having a quality school program is more important than exponential growth, and unless there is increased funding, charter school growth will continue at the current slow pace. Competition between charter schools and local school districts is problematic; Mr. Reed would like to see partnerships continue to develop. He believes that children should have equal access to charter school programs regardless of their parents' work status and corresponding ability (or inability) to actively participate in school founding, programs and services. Most charter schools do not have a large administrative staff; generally the principal is the superintendent and may also teach.

Tamara Baysinger, Public Charter School Commission (PCSC), responded to a question. She stated that nationwide, proponents of charter schools are very determined to keep those schools public.

Alan Reed, Public Charter School Commission (PCSC), responded to additional questions. He stated that the PCSC is required to follow statute. In some other states, a fee is paid to the chartering entity. The fee creates an opportunity for school districts to consider the approval of a charter that they oversee. With legislative help, the PCSC could examine other charter school funding across the nation in order to consider changes that could help Idaho's charter schools. Idaho's charter schools are unique and offer various focuses. Partnerships with local school districts are beneficial because the districts are aware of local communities' needs. The PCSC would like to see highly successful, progressive schools that have the ability to duplicate themselves through an easier chartering process. There are some Idaho charter schools that continue to struggle with governance and/or their teaching philosophies and approach. As with any business, charter schools are run by individuals, and those individuals might be good or not so good at what they're trying to accomplish. Successful schools can offer a model of what is necessary in order to be effective.

RS 21187: **Chairman Nonini** presented **RS 21187**. He stated that this legislation was heard by the committee last year but did not have adequate time to get through the legislative process. The State Department of Education is requesting that this legislation be heard this year. It would remove the statutory requirement that the SDE maintain a curriculum library.

MOTION: **Rep. Shirley** made a motion to introduce **RS 21187**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

Representative Nonini
Chair

Mary Tipps
Secretary