

MINUTES  
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 15, 2012  
**TIME:** 9:00 A.M.  
**PLACE:** Senate Auditorium  
**MEMBERS:** Chairman Nonini, Vice Chairman Shirley, Representative(s) Trail, Block, Nielsen, Chadderdon (Malek), Shepherd, Wills, Marriott, Thayn, Hartgen, Bateman, Boyle, DeMordaunt, Nessel, Pence, Chew, Cronin  
**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Representatives Trail and Wills  
**GUESTS:**

The sign-in sheets will be retained with the minutes in the committee secretary's office until the end of the session. Following the end of the session, the sign-in sheets will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

**Chairman Nonini** called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

**Richard Westerberg**, President, State Board of Education (SBE), spoke to the committee. He said that currently the primary focus of the SBE is to achieve a goal of at least sixty percent (60%) of working age Idaho citizens having some type of college certificate or degree by the year 2020. Almost ninety percent (90%) of Idaho's K-12 students graduate from high school, but currently only around thirty-four percent (34%) go on to college. Strategies to increase that number include dual enrollment, mandatory college entrance exams, and remediation.

Most states have two governing bodies for their public education systems: one for K-12, and another for higher education. Idaho is unique in having one governing body that addresses education across the board. This is beneficial in that the single body is able to recognize and address challenges with a lifetime of education in mind.

In response to questions, **President Westerberg** said that there are many jobs that require less than four years of college, however, a majority of jobs require at least some type of specialized training. Certificated education provides opportunities for many job seekers who do not want or need a college degree. Keeping educational costs affordable is paramount, and concurrent enrollment during high school is a key part of allowing students to complete college courses in a cost effective manner. Idaho institutions have been challenged to find a way to reduce costs per credit hour. Historically, as appropriations from the Legislature are higher, tuition has been lower by percentage. There are no cost estimates related to doubling the number of incoming college students, however, under the current system the State does not have the necessary funds.

Responding to additional questions, **President Westerberg** stated that the SBE has included a wide range of community members and partners in order to find ways to reduce the need for remediation. Steady school counseling assists students in making the decision to pursue higher education. Many students select community colleges because they do not feel ready to move from high school to a university. The new college entrance exam requirement can motivate students to believe they can go on to college, and might also provide information to districts as to where there is a need for improved focus in their programs.

**Dallas Clinger**, President, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), gave a presentation to the committee. He stated that the ISBA is a non-profit organization that includes 550 trustees and 113 member districts. The ISBA is broken down into eight (8) regions. Each region has a chairman and a vice chairman. The ISBA began in 1942, when there were 1,150 school districts. At the ISBA's inception, there were 111,331 K-12 students in Idaho. Currently there are over 281,000. President Clinger said that good things are happening across the State. In Boundary County, grants have been implemented to allow teachers to bring technology to classrooms. In Troy School District, a science teacher has assisted students in developing an alternative biofuel. Students in that district have also created a biofuel production plant. In Idaho Falls, a magnet school that will bring new and broader course offerings is being opened. In American Falls, Hillcrest Elementary School's student body is made up of 57% minority students, 12% special education, with many non-English speaking students entering kindergarten. Despite these challenges, Hillcrest is one of the top achieving elementary schools in the State. While Idaho ranks 50th out of 51 in per student spending, great things are happening with very little money. President Clinger believes this is due to the commitment and dedication that Idaho teachers, parents, administrators and trustees have to each child.

In response to questions, **President Clinger** stated that in Hillcrest Elementary School, teachers must provide instruction in basic English language skills as well as other course requirements.

**Rep. DeMordaunt** stated that he has been exposed to a program in Texas that does not begin teaching English until 4th grade. Students receive all of their K-3 instruction in their native tongue. He explained a theory that it is easier for a child to learn a second language after he or she has gained an understanding of the basic structure of their first language.

**Karen Echeverria**, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), responded to a question. She stated that many districts are seeking to gain additional parental involvement and input.

**President Clinger** responded to additional questions. He said that in his experience, many Hispanic parents have only allowed their children to attend school during the off season and have pulled them out when it's time to go to work in the fields. He is seeing a shift in this practice, with more Hispanic students remaining in school year round. However, without examples of family members who have received full and complete education, these students often don't have the desire or knowledge of how to continue their education past high school. In his district, a program exists whereby a group of teachers takes these students to colleges for tours as part of an effort to encourage post-secondary education. He stated that bilingual teachers can be difficult to find in Southeast Idaho.

**Rep. Block** stated that during her time as a kindergarten teacher, she had many young students who did not speak English when they arrived in her classroom. She said that professional development is very important for teachers. Learning methods to teach English to these students, and learning alternate ways to communicate until English is learned, would be very helpful to teachers and their students.

**President Clinger** responded to additional questions. He said that when districts are unable to pass bonds, they may not be funded at the same level as neighboring districts. Charter school legislation needs to have a holistic view. He believes there are several Charter School issues that need to be addressed including differences in how trustees are put in place.

**Chairman Nonini** stated that the Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy is ranked in the top sixty (60) in the nation and expressed his support for charter schools.

**President Clinger** responded to additional questions. He stated that if Idaho is going to provide a 21st century education to its students, it needs to embrace technology in schools. He acknowledged that a fear of technology might exist, however, there is broad agreement that technology is vital in today's educational systems. He said that a computer will not teach a student; teachers are needed to teach students.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:11 a.m.

---

Representative Nonini  
Chair

---

Mary Tipps  
Secretary