

MINUTES
JOINT MEETING
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, January 22, 2014

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Lincoln Auditorium

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Goedde, Vice Chairman Mortimer, Senators Pearce, Fulcher, Nonini, Thayn, Patrick, Ward-Engelking

Chairman DeMordaunt, Vice Chairman Nielsen, Representatives Shepherd, Wills, Bateman, Boyle, Clow, Gestrin, Harris, Horman, Mendive, VanOrden, McDonald, Pence, Kloc, Rubel

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Buckner-Webb

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet 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 sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

Chairman DeMordaunt called the joint session to order at 3:05 p.m.

Chairman DeMordaunt welcomed all in attendance and expressed appreciation for the panelists, and for citizens submitting questions for the Idaho Common Core Forum. He explained the questioning procedure during the Forum. He said all panelists were not required to answer all questions and could simply agree with another panelist.

Senator Goedde explained the expectations for the audience and panelists when participating in legislative assemblies. He said the purpose of the Forum was to determine facts from opinion or misinformation.

The panelists introduced themselves to the committees and to the audience: **Tom Luna**, Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction; **Bruce Cook**, Program Director of Madison School District; **Stephanie Rice**, English teacher, grades 7-12, Council School District; **Dorothy Moon**, retired special education teacher from Challis School District; **Steve Labau**, Sunny Ridge Elementary Principal, Nampa School District; and **Stephanie Zimmerman**, mother and founder of Idahoans for Local Education

In response to questions regarding total implementation of the Idaho Core Standards (ICS), **Supt. Luna** said the state did not receive federal dollars for adopting new standards. He indicated \$11 million was made available by the state last year for transitioning. **Mr. Cook** said his district had received some Title II money but it went quickly. He explained the dilemma of teachers to realign with the standards and to find textbooks. **Ms. Rice** said that resources need to be updated on a regular basis. **Mr. Labau** said the process is ongoing. He said for students to show evidence of learning is a major benefit for them. He said teachers, collaborating to develop assessments, are also beneficial for students.

To a question regarding ICS dictation of curriculum and textbooks, **Mr. Cook** said ICS does not specify the textbooks, however ICS drives instruction. To the question regarding autonomy for local districts, **Ms. Rice** said the teacher chooses the writing topics and the literature. **Ms. Moon** said local school boards do have control, however there is fear the mandates will dampen choice. **Mr. Labau** said having a certain amount of standards is preferable because the artistry and creativity of local teachers then comes into play. **Ms. Zimmerman** said the state board holds the control. **Supt. Luna** asked, "Should the state set academic standards?" He said last spring the State Department of Education was told the curriculum was being dictated by them. When school started they found that was not the case.

In response to questions regarding cost/benefit analysis, plus trials showing ICS and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) showing significant gains in student learning, **Ms. Moon, Mr. Cook** and **Ms. Zimmerman** agreed they had found no cost/benefit analysis and the standards and the test had not been piloted or field tested. Mr. Cook said his district is improving and has 5-Star Schools without ICS. Ms. Zimmerman opposed data driven education. **Mr. Labau** said his school had started implementation two years ago and students' Idaho Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) scores had gone up, especially in math. **Supt. Luna** said standards result in improvement; higher standards lead to better improvement. He cited the student success in Kentucky after the state adopted the ICS. He also said Idaho employers have asked more of Idaho's high school graduates, especially in math.

In response to the question of ICS being age appropriate, **Ms. Moon** said there is no proof behind the science standards. **Mr. Labau** said some alignment is looking at sequence in learning. He said the rigor was beneficial. **Ms. Zimmerman** said ICS set algebraic concepts to be taught in kindergarten. She said that was developmentally inappropriate. **Supt. Luna** said in July of 2010, Idaho teachers thoroughly vetted ICS and it was from their recommendations that the state had moved on. He said the ICS were age appropriate. **Mr. Cook** questioned the kindergarten standards. He said the SBAC is very difficult and in New York, proficiency scores fell dramatically. **Ms. Rice** said there will be a gap in the proficiency scores for a few years. However, she cited her students progress in English since the implementation of ICS, as phenomenal.

In response to the question regarding how quickly students, teachers and schools will be held accountable for all of the new standards, **Mr. Labau** said accountability for teaching standards is happening now. He said the assessment accountability will come later. **Ms. Zimmerman** said it was her understanding the schools will be fully accountable in school year 2014-2015. **Supt. Luna** said student achievement is currently part of teacher evaluation. He said ICS have a five year phase in period. They had two years to prepare. This year the standards are being used; there is another year before the testing. He said teacher accountability is based on multiple measures and how students perform on ICS is one of those measures. **Mr. Cook** said teachers are accountable now; rewards and sanctions begin in 2015. He said ICS was a paradigm shift of NCLB teaching and failing. He said with the new SBAC is so difficult, he fears teachers will teach to the test. There is concern it could be used to punish as well as reward.

To a question regarding the portfolio system of assessment, providing multiple opportunities during the school year for student assessment, **Ms. Zimmerman** said it was not possible with the SBAC. **Supt. Luna** said ICS is in line with a mastery based system of testing. With ISAT the emphasis was on how many students can pass the test. Now the heavy emphasis is on growth. **Mr. Cook** said the ISAT Alt Portfolio Assessment provides uploads of student work throughout the year to prove proficiency; that would be preferred over the SBAC. He said instructors want to know immediately how kids are doing. District teachers fear the turnaround time for the SBAC results will not be timely. **Mr. Labau** said multiple assessments are used currently and will continue with SBAC.

In regard to the question concerning constitutionality and the United Nations' role in the development of ICS, **Supt. Luna** said the UN played no role. He said the constitutional authority comes from the 10th Amendment which gives states the jurisdiction to establish, maintain and conduct a general, uniform system of education. He said the state has always had standards to determine what level of achievement is necessary for its citizens. He said the rest is left to local school districts with guidance from the legislative body. **Mr. Cook** said if a local district feels a level in ICS does not fit, the districts would like power to remove the standard. **Ms. Moon** said she believes the federal government along with the Bill Gates Foundation, is involved through funding. She said Idaho has the power to ignore or embrace; but if embraced, not in it's entirety. **Mr. Labau** and **Ms. Rice** agreed ICS to be constitutional. **Ms. Zimmerman** said **Bill Gates** was the instigator of the Common Core School Standards. She said Bill Gates has a position with UNESCO, thus giving the UN influence. She said a memorandum of agreement was signed in 2009 connecting ICS to the federal government, thus making the standards unconstitutional.

In regard to which states are opting out of ICS, **Ms. Moon** said Texas, Nebraska, Alaska, Georgia, and Virginia have opted out. Minnesota has only adopted the English standards. **Ms. Zimmerman** said seventeen states from the testing consortium are leaving. She stated that Kentucky, Massachusetts and North Carolina have governors who want out. **Supt. Luna** said none of the states had opted out. He said many have revisited ICS and SBAC, and some, like Minnesota, have recommitted. He said the same people who claim states are opting out are saying ICS is not voluntary. If states can opt out; the standards, then, are voluntary.

Answering the question as to the comparison of ICS to previous Idaho standards, **Ms. Rice** said they are more rigorous and rather than simply produce an answer, the student must identify the thinking and reasoning process in finding an answer. She said ICS are more cohesive than previous standards, giving more opportunity to teachers for collaboration in interdisciplinary teams. She said it is a more holistic approach rather than one of isolation. **Ms. Moon** said some standards are lowering the bar instead of raising it. She said frustration is coming from both students and parents. Parents are not able to work through the problems as they are now; they cannot help their student with math. **Mr. Labau** agreed with Ms. Rice. He also said the advantage of higher expectations is that the "end game" of college and "career ready" is the goal. **Ms. Zimmerman** said ICS was not the best option for change. She asked why Idaho did not choose to teach the math program used by Massachusetts. **Supt. Luna** agreed on the rigor of the new standards. He said the standards are not more rigorous than other countries' standards, and Idaho students are just as capable. He said remediation needed by Idaho students when entering college or the work force should be greatly diminished by reaching ICS prior to graduating high school. **Mr. Cook** said ICS are not set up to help a child who is struggling. He said students in other countries are faced with extended school hours and Saturday school, and teachers receive higher wages.

With regard to teachers being involved in the creation of standards and concurrent implementation, **Ms. Moon** said the Bill Gates Foundation, and **Arne Duncan**, US Secretary of Education, agree that the federal government must have more to do in setting standards. She said corporate giants, not teachers were involved. She said kids are going to lose their love of learning and that textbooks were scarce, only computers are being made available. **Ms. Zimmerman** said teachers were not involved; they were brought in to be window dressing. **Supt. Luna** said he was involved from the beginning. **Bill Gates** and Arne Duncan were not present. He said a small number of state superintendents tried to figure out how to improve learning because the college success rate was poor. He said administrators agreed to the approach and the Idaho Education Association (IEA) knows the names of the teachers who were involved in giving suggestions for standards and improvement. **Ms. Rice** said the teachers take a very large role in implementation. She said with standards as guidelines, we want to make sure learning opportunities are aligned with standards. She said it is vital to have teachers accountable to their students.

Regarding a question speaking to local control of curriculum, reading materials and text selections, **Mr. Labau** said materials are a local choice; standards are not. He said the beauty in that, is how the teachers choose to teach the standards. **Ms. Zimmerman** said the State Board adopted standards with suggested curriculum. **Supt. Luna** said the adoption of standards provides for review and a list of suggestions. The districts are not required to choose from the list. **Mr. Cook** and **Ms. Moon** agreed textbooks are a local choice; standards are not. **Ms. Rice** said standards are a list of skills, not how teachers will teach. She said she has not changed her curriculum.

In response to a question regarding time requirements of ICS on a day to day basis, **Ms. Zimmerman** said first grade lunch recess has been cut in half in order to prepare for SBAC. **Mr. Cook** said the hours for test prepping has increased and teachers feel pressure to prepare for the SBAC. **Ms. Rice** and **Mr. Labau** agreed teachers and students should focus on building skills everyday. If there is proper implementation of ICS teaching strategies, the students should be prepared without sacrificing additional time. **Ms. Moon** said there is concern that keyboarding skills are not in place and additional time improving on keyboarding skills will jeopardize basic courses.

The question to the panelists was: How will the state ensure that elementary students have the keyboarding skills necessary to take the exam without reducing instructional time in core subject areas? **Supt. Luna** said it differs from district to district depending on local policies. He said the SBAC questions are simpler in early grades requiring only short answers. He said in the 120 schools that piloted the SBAC, none had problems with keyboarding issues. **Mr. Cook** said money and time for keyboarding programs were concerns in his district. He said they found an acceptable keyboarding program in use in Utah schools, however, 3rd and 4th grades require a half hour of daily practice. **Mr. Labau** said learning keyboarding may take extra time, but students are learning a necessary life skill.

In regard to a question asking if ICS moves Idaho's educational decisions closer or further away from parents and local schools, **Mr. Cook** and **Ms. Moon** agreed ICS moves parents and the community away from the decision making. Mr. Cook said he receives letters from parents asking to move the standards back to those which are more acceptable at grade level. **Ms. Rice** and **Mr. Labau** agreed there has been no real change. **Ms. Zimmerman** said parents and the community have no say in what is put on the tests; it is not part of Idaho's jurisdiction. **Supt. Luna** said Idaho had more influence on the SBAC than on the ISAT, ACT or SAT. He said some will always be opposed to state accountability and state assessments; it's a philosophical difference. The resistance to standards goes back long before the ICS. Natural friction will always be there.

In regard to a question regarding the impact of test scores on student progression and teacher's merit pay, **Ms. Rice** said the SBAC will have the same influence as the ISAT. However, the class of 2017 will have to pass the SBAC to graduate. **Ms. Moon** and **Ms. Zimmerman** agreed it would have the same policy on retention and would be used against merit pay. **Mr. Labau** said it depends on how the legislature approaches merit pay. **Supt. Luna** said it is a local decision. He said Idaho adopted teacher evaluation prior to the ICS. He said the 2013 Governor's Task Force Recommendations are quite specific. The tiered licensure and career ladder are part of those recommendations for which portion would be based on achievement. He said whether the SBAC is one of the measures for evaluation is a local decision.

Answering the question as to what proof there is that ICS will make any difference when poverty, second language, physical disabilities and lack of parent involvement are the contributing factors for student failure, **Ms. Moon** said that ten percent of Idaho's special education receive no benefit from ICS. **Mr. Labau** said there are high expectations, even with special education, but there are alternative paths to graduation. **Ms. Zimmerman** said there is no proof ICS will help any student. She said inter-city teachers are very concerned for students of poverty. **Supt. Luna** said there are accommodations for special education kids. He said we have public education for that reason. He said the quality of the teacher in the classroom is the most influential. He indicated that years ago, when math and science standards were raised, many people believed students would fail, but they did not. **Ms. Rice** said seventy-five percent of her students qualified for free or reduced lunch but they are successful. She said the standards provide cohesiveness. **Mr. Cook** said he would like to see monies go toward hiring and retaining good teachers instead of paying for the SBAC.

In response to a question citing no public forum prior to the adoption of ICS and if the legislature would be willing to halt the deadline in order for lawmakers to revisit their constituents, **Mr. Labau** said there were public forums prior to adoption and the districts were given two years to prepare. He said some districts did not prepare. **Ms. Zimmerman** said she was active in the education, but the public forums were ex post facto. **Supt. Luna** said 21 public meetings were held in 2010; Standards were adopted in 2011. He said there has been one election cycle with legislators facing their constituents since that time. **Mr. Cook** said he had heard of no public meetings. **Ms. Moon** asked the legislature to halt ICS and let legislators hear the dialogue coming from 2014 public meetings organized by citizens.

Responding to a question regarding a stellar education system of decentralized education similar to Finland, **Ms. Zimmerman** said Idaho does not have decentralized education. **Supt. Luna** said Finland has national standards.

In response to a question relating to the 15 percent latitude districts are given to vary from compliance to ICS, **Mr. Cook** said the percentage needs to be more lenient. **Supt. Luna** said in order to align to other states, 85% of the curriculum had to be standards driven. **Ms. Rice** said the percentage doesn't matter, the Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum can be at a different level of complexity. **Ms. Zimmerman** suggested the book, *Detracting for Success*, in order to address the subject of standards and accelerated classes more fully.

Answering a question relating to ACT and SAT exams being changed to accommodate the new standards, **Mr. Cook** said his district would rather use the ACT and SAT for an evaluation rather than ICS. **Ms. Zimmerman** said the processing has begun to align the national test to the SBAC. **Supt. Luna** said the companies are working to align the ACT and SAT with the ICS but have not completed anything. He said college and university presidents are saying Freshman students, who graduate with competency in ICS, will not need remediation.

To a question concerning alternative education such as home school and private school, **Supt. Luna** said Idaho will not regulate home schooling or private schools as to alignment with ICS.

In response to a question on the evaluation of essays within the SBAC and who will grade the tests, **Mr. Labau** said he would hope that teachers would be involved with scorers from across the state. **Ms. Zimmerman** said in math, more weight is put on process rather than on product. **Supt. Luna** said the test is a combination of multiple choice and essay, graded by the writing skills and thinking involved. He said the test will be graded much like the Direct Writing Assessment, by teachers from across the state. **Mr. Cook** said the process of assembling teachers as evaluators will cost money, and student feedback will not be fast. **Ms. Rice** said the test gives students a chance to respond to a two-sided question. Students are asked to reason and use critical thinking.

Massachusetts conducted a complete overhaul of its state education system and became the top state in the nation for education. Why not adopt that thoroughly proven set of standards? Can we change course? **Ms. Moon** said **Bill Gates** wants to sell computers. She would hope Idaho would change its course. **Ms. Zimmerman** said Massachusetts had higher scores before they adopted ICS. They are looking to change. **Supt. Luna** said Massachusetts is recognized as the leader in education. They vetted ICS thoroughly, and they may be reviewing the adoption, but have not changed. **Mr. Cook** asked the question: Can we change course? He said the decision rests with the legislature.

The question of partnering the federal department of education with copyrighters of ICS for standards and for data collection was given to the panel. **Ms. Zimmerman** said the role of the federal government in education is stated in a "Four Pillars" document on the White House website. She said **President Obama** has outlined the steps that include corporate interests. **Supt. Luna** said now that schools have had time to be involved with ICS, the fear of last spring is not there. ICS and the SBAC were copyrighted so that others could not make a profit from their existence, just like Idaho Code is copyrighted. In regard to data collection and security, there are bills forthcoming to strengthen the laws to protect the data. **Mr. Cook** said he is worried about the data collection and the increased data fields.

Chairman DeMordaunt informed panelists of time restraints. He said the next question would be the last question posed to the entire panel. He then asked panelists to choose one question, from the remaining question list, to which he or she would prefer to respond.

In response to a question regarding Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and collection of personal student information without parental consent, **Ms. Zimmerman** said parents have a right to protect student privacy. She said the state cannot opt out of the data collection portion of ICS. She said FERPA has been changed and data can be transferred. Student data is not safe. **Supt. Luna** said FERPA requires parents to give approval for data collection. He said the Idaho Attorney General's opinion said, this is public education and we need some transparency and accountability. If you participate, we must collect a certain amount of data. **Supt. Luna** said the program needs to have "side boards." **Mr. Cook** said parents should have the right to protect their child's privacy. He stated concerns over 288 fields of data. He said there are two people in his district whose total job is that of student data collection. **Ms. Moon** said she retired early because of data collection required for special education students. She felt frustrated having to give out information she judged to be private. She said information such as possession of weapons, one's religious and political preferences should not be collected. **Supt. Luna** said the state education programs do not collect data on religion and politics.

In regard to a question on math concepts and the "process" being more important than the answer, **Supt. Luna** said students are not forced to demonstrate different ways of reasoning for solving a math problem, just explain one reasoning process, the one he or she used. On the SBAC, a math question is worth three points each, two points for the correct answer and one point for the correct explanation of the process for solving it.

Mr. Cook and **Ms. Rice** each chose to answer the question regarding instructional days lost to testing. Mr. Cook said there are lost days to testing and no new money for computer labs. Existing labs are tied up for testing. He said history and fine arts are the losers; math and English are gaining. Ms. Rice said she thinks the assessment time is worth it. She says the preparation is more aligned with real world experience.

Ms. Moon said her concern focused on releasing Idaho from federal regulation.

Mr. Labau chose to answer the question regarding ICS cultivation of creativity and innovation. He said creativity and innovation are encouraged by teachers and students within ICS. He said traditional instruction was algorithm based for all students and was narrow in scope. It did not prepare students for college nor were they career ready.

Ms. Zimmerman related her answer to Kentucky and other states reviewing ICS. She said the fact that the states are reviewing their choice should mean something. She said student test results are lower, not only on the SBAC but other national tests.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committees, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Senator Goedde
Chairman

Elaine Leedy
Secretary

Representative DeMordaunt
Chair

Jean Vance
Secretary