

## **INTRODUCTION AND PRIORITIES FOR SENATE EDUCATION**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I'm Karen Echeverria, Executive Director of the Idaho School Boards Association. I would like to introduce my colleagues Misty Swanson and Jessica. The three of us will be staffing this meeting so you will see at least one of us at each of your meetings.

Thank you for inviting us to present today about the legislative priorities that we see for this coming year.

While ISBA will have several small pieces of legislation that we will either support or carry, we will focus on six major issues.

1. We will work to make permanent three pieces of labor legislation that have had sunset clauses on them for the last two years. We have actually come to agreement with the IEA on two of those so we will combine those into one bill. Those two issues are reduction in force and the ability to reduce a teacher's salary from one year to the next.
2. The last piece of legislation with a sunset clause is the evergreen clause. That legislation removes the ability to allow master agreements to be perpetual but instead requires them to be effective from July 1 to June 30. We will work to make that legislation permanent.
3. Our last labor bill will be a new one and will address the need for school districts to have the ability to end negotiations on June 30. Currently, negotiations can go on forever. Because salaries and benefits make up around 85% of the school district budget and because school district budgets need to be set in July, it is important that negotiations be completed by July 1. This will be

permissive legislation but will allow school districts to end negotiations by July 1 under certain circumstances.

4. ISBA would like to offer our assistance in finding a permanent resolution for funding for the IEN. ISBA realizes the importance of continuing this valuable asset and service to local school districts. We are available should this committee or JFAC need input from Board members related to this issue. We would strongly encourage a quick and permanent resolution to this issue.
5. ISBA will also be involved in any resolution to the Career Ladder. We don't know if the current proposal is the right answer or not. What we do know is that this legislature is not likely to provide any substantial increases to teacher's salaries under the current system. We also know that it is imperative that we provide some significant increases in salaries for our teachers. ISBA wants to be a part of the solution and to hopefully find a way that will provide increases for teachers while at the same time providing the accountability that this body needs.
6. Finally, we will advocate for, and support, any increase in operational funding.

Thank you again for this opportunity to present the Idaho School Boards Association priorities for this upcoming year.

With that Mr. Chair, I would be glad to stand for any questions.