

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 05, 2015

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Keough, Nonini, Patrick, Souza, Den Hartog, Buckner-Webb and Ward-Engelking

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Mortimer** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m. and welcomed Roger Quarles for his presentation.

PRESENTATION: **Roger Quarles**, Executive Director of the J. A. and Kathryn Albertson's Foundation (Foundation), reviewed the history of the Foundation, which was formed to honor the legacy of Joe and Kathryn Albertson. He spoke of Mr. Albertson's tenet that a good education leads to individual prosperity and translates to economic prosperity for the State.

Mr. Quarles said although Idaho is currently ranked at the bottom on several key education markers, the Foundation has learned valuable lessons since its establishment, one of which is the importance of leadership. **Mr. Quarles** introduced his associates who would be part of the presentation and stated they are all leaders and experts in their fields. He noted that intrusive or proactive advising is a key component to a student's success and recognized Tambra Gaskins of the Go On Schools Initiative (Go On) for her presentation.

Tambra Gaskin, guidance counselor at New Plymouth High School outlined the history of Go On , the purpose of which is to resource and equip schools and the community to effectively support, counsel, guide and/or mentor all students so they can continue their education or training beyond high school. Accredited public or private high schools, grades 6 through 12, are invited to participate, and successful applicants receive one-year renewable grants between \$10,000 and \$40,000.

Go On asks schools to track key data, work as a team and focus students on four goals: (1) aim high, (2) make a plan, (3) get ready, and (4) go on, which is intended to change the culture of the school so that going on to higher education becomes the norm. **Ms. Gaskin** said counseling students about taking college classes begins in the 5th grade, along with parent meetings. The Dual Credit program is built into the core classes at high school's, and students can opt in or opt out depending on personal choice.

Ms. Gaskin described New Plymouth's successes with Go On and said it has been a catalyst in supporting innovative ideas and programs and giving students a blueprint of how to help themselves meet their educational objectives. She said in 2014, 69 seniors were in the class; they graduated with 927 college credits, and the class earned about \$320,000 in scholarships. She said 94 percent of those students are now enrolled in higher education or trade schools.

Graydon Stanley from North Idaho College, presented the Continuous Enrollment Initiative and the Village Project, which is in its inaugural year (see attachment 1). He said the program supports older nontraditional students by placing them in cohorts, or groups of 15. The structure provides a learning community and opportunity for students to work in consistent teams and gather support from one another. The intrusive advising model includes an early alert system where a coordinated intervention occurs so the student can get back on course when he encounters difficulties.

Ken Price, Managing Director of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLA) in Marsing, Idaho, described the "Kahn Academy in Idaho" initiative and its successes. As an illustration he related the story of a student from Coeur d'Alene who harbored a long-standing hatred of school but quickly became interested and engaged when he learned how to write enough code to create a detailed twirling ice cream cone in one afternoon.

Mr. Price said the Foundation funded his proposal to take the Khan Academy to six 21st CCLA sites to replicate Marsing's in-school success and help more students build mastery and confidence in their math and technology skills.

Mr. Price said 21st CCLA's federally-funded, competitive grant programs are administered by each state's Department of Education. There are 37 grantees in Idaho. He described the Khan Academy's and Chromebooks' positive impact on students and said teachers do not need to learn to code, but they must trust and believe in disruptive change.

Mr. Price said Khan Academy and Chromebooks are here to stay in 14 schools in Idaho, and more schools are waiting to make the transition.

Mr. Quarles introduced Dr. Royce Kimmons for his presentation on the Doceō Centers for Innovation + Learning.

Royce Kimmons, PhD, University of Idaho Doceō Center for Innovation + Learning (Doceō) said Doceō's mission is to improve P-12 teaching and learning through effective technology integration achieved by (1) effectively training teacher candidates, (2) supporting in-service teachers, and (3) building an evidence base for others to follow.

Dr. Kimmons reviewed examples of Doceō's successes and said they have learned three lessons: (1) technology access is varied and unpredictable, (2) vendor-driven (rather than evidence-based) technology decision-making is rampant, and (3) innovation with technology requires redefining teachers as competent professionals who understand the needs of their students and how best to serve them.

Dr. Kimmons said at the most basic level, each classroom needs (1) Internet access, (2) an Internet-capable teacher device (e.g., laptop, Chromebook), (3) a projector and screen, and (4) a document camera. He stressed that technology alone has no impact on student outcomes unless it is coupled with innovative pedagogy and content. He noted that teachers need allocated time to become limitless learners themselves.

Senator Souza asked if the organization has discovered any unique or surprising teaching methods. **Dr. Kimmons** said professional development needs to be embedded in teachers' jobs but, as educators, that component must be connected to content.

Mr. Quarles spoke of the Foundation's mission to discover, develop and expand environments of limitless learning for all Idahoans by focusing on three key areas: (1) learning innovations, (2) awareness and (3) community investments. He then introduced Alan Millar for his presentation.

Alan Millar, Executive Director of the Idaho PTECH Network (Pathways in Technology Early College High School) said PTECH creates bridges from high school to community college to an entry-level job in the high-growth areas in Idaho, which are: (1) technology, (2) health care, and (3) aerospace/high tech manufacturing.

Mr. Millar explained that PTECH focuses on the forgotten middle 50 percent of students who encounter the complexities of college enrollment and registration, costs of student loans, or lack of parental support. He said these students may begin to go on to higher education but life too often intervenes.

Mr. Millar said the PTECH services stay with students through high school graduation and program completion, to on-the-job training and a link to an Idaho company that may offer them a job. He described the growth of school and student participation in the program and the participating companies, colleges and state agencies. He said 95 students in eight rural high schools are enrolled in PTECH's program. Those students have earned 278 college credits with a cumulative GPA of 2.75. He said PTECH is on track to enlist 8 new high schools which will add 150 to 200 students to the program.

Mr. Millar said PTECH businesses do not care about a GPA score or other school assessment, but they do care about teamwork, persistence, collaboration and leadership. He said PTECH students receive remote coaching in those soft skills and guidance and support from Inside Track, a PTECH partner. **Mr. Millar** commented on the population's changing demographics and concluded with the message that PTECH wants to change the economic arc of Idaho by matching up the education of students with the fastest growing sectors of Idaho's economy.

Terry Ryan, President of the Idaho Charter School Network (ICSN), described the nature and partnership arrangement between ICSN and BLUUM (see attachment 3). ICSN will focus exclusively on charter school advocacy and policy issues, and BLUUM will focus on expanding high-quality public school seats across Idaho.

Mr. Ryan described BLUUM's mission, which is to: (1) improve student achievement, (2) work with local, regional and national partners to grow the number of students attending high-performing schools, (3) advocate for the right of every family to attend high-performing schools of their choice, (4) share all lessons learned to help others, and (5) make Idaho a national model for how to create and nurture excellent learning opportunities.

Tony Ashton, Executive Director of Teach for America (TFA) said millions of children are growing up in low-income or remote communities that lack access to high quality education opportunities. As a result, just 6 percent of Idaho's children in the bottom 10th of income levels will graduate from college, compared to 61 percent from the top 10th.

Mr. Ashton said TFA has played a role in eliminating this inequality by bringing a diverse group of emerging leaders into the field of education. This group is referred to as corps members. He described the training process including a two-year commitment to a professional development program after the corp member is in a classroom. He said corps members must meet the same licensure requirements as all other teachers and noted the 2015 school year will be TFA's first year to have corps members in Idaho.

Senator Keough asked how TFA interacts with higher education teaching programs in Idaho. **Mr. Ashton** said TFA is seeking to establish partnerships to provide continuing ongoing professional development to its teachers. **Senator Keough** asked about TFA's degree program. **Mr. Ashton** replied that all TFA teachers have college degrees, but not all of those degrees are in education. He explained that TFA is an alternative route toward education certification.

Senator Souza asked for more information on classroom experience and preparation time. **Mr. Ashton** explained more fully and said teachers without initial certification in education receive training at a summer institute, along with classroom observation and feedback.

Chairman Mortimer asked about TFA's expectations in Idaho for the next 12 months. **Mr. Ashton** said TFA will have 15 teachers in Idaho in the fall of 2015. He added that TFA tries to develop teachers who want to work in low income and rural schools.

Mr. Quarles concluded the presentation and asked for questions. Several Committee members expressed frustration with the Foundation's negative ad campaign. **Senators Keough, Ward-Engelking, Buckner-Webb, Nonini and Patrick** all hoped the Foundation would balance the negativity of the Go On campaign by featuring some successes. **Senator Souza** suggested using the innovative and salutary topics presented at the meeting as part of the Foundation's ad campaign.

Chairman Mortimer expressed the Committee's appreciation for the Foundation's hard work and philanthropy and thanked the presenters for bringing in new ideas on the educational process.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

Senator Mortimer
Chair

LeAnn South
Secretary

Jeanne' Clayton
Assistant Secretary