

MINUTES  
JOINT MEETING  
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, February 01, 2016

**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** WW02

**MEMBERS:** Chairman DeMordaunt, Vice Chairman VanOrden, Representatives Shepherd, Wills, Boyle, Clow, Gestrin, Harris, Mendive, McDonald, Dixon, Kerby, Pence, Kloc, Rubel

Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Nonini, Patrick, Souza, Den Hartog, Anthon, Buckner-Webb, Ward-Engelking

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None

**GUESTS:** Tim Hill, Marcco Bucknon, Doug Scott, Collen Surne, Karen Slay, Chuck Zimmseul, Tony Pirc, Chris Campbell, Michelle Clement Taylor, Scott Cede, Superintendent Sherri Ybarra, Matt Mcseler, Lisa Colon, Christra Nau, Charlie Silva, State Department of Education; Daley Kleinert, Northwest Accreditation and Advance Ed; Byron Yackey, Matt Freeman, Linda Clark, State Board of Education; Rod Grammer, Idaho Business for Education; Mark Browning, N. Idaho College; Harold Ott, Phil Homer, Idaho Association of School Administrators; Clark Corbin, Idaho Educational News; Megan Raile, Convene; Dwight Johnson, Div. of Professional-Technical Education

**Chairman Mortimer** called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**SCR 134:** **Lieutenant Governor Brad Little** spoke to **SCR 134**, supporting Idaho's goal of achieving 60 percent of the state's 25- to 34-year-old citizens holding some form of postsecondary degree or certificate by the year 2020. Lt. Gov. Little said there are many pieces to achieving this goal, and much work will need to be done in this area, such as improving reading proficiency by third grade, providing career counselors at high schools, and creating a certification program. The resolution allows citizens to prioritize the scarce resources for achieving this goal.

In response to questions from the committee members, **Lt. Gov. Little** said professional-technical education, and the certification program, will be a large part of achieving this goal. The legislature has done good work already. Areas which need improvement to reach the goal are a certification program, better access to community colleges, a higher rate of high school students who continue post-secondary education, incentives to finish post-secondary education, and the Division of Professional-Technical Education "badge" proposal.

**Rod Grammer**, Idaho Businesses for Education, spoke to **support SCR 134**. He said sixty to seventy percent of jobs will require post-secondary education, and only forty percent of the workforce currently has a post-secondary certificate or degree. If businesses cannot find a trained workforce, the current businesses will have difficulty growing, Idaho risks losing its best companies to other states, and it will be more difficult to attract good companies to Idaho. Human talent will be the number one driver of economic growth, and reaching the sixty percent goal is imperative to economic growth for Idaho.

In response to questions from committee members, **Mr. Grammer** said that reaching the goal requires looking at the problem as a continuum. Fifty percent of kindergarten children cannot recognize basic letters and colors. Two thirds of students are not reading at grade level by fourth grade, and less than twenty percent of high school students have the skills necessary for post-secondary education, based on SAT scores. The world has changed dramatically and is more complex, and students and workers need a higher skill set than a generation ago. Early childhood education is a good investment.

**Mr. Grammer** added that support for initiatives such as the Completion Scholarship is important. Employers are already helping their employees by providing tuition reimbursement. Idaho needs a system for employers to contribute in a more systematic approach, such as a matching scholarship.

**Matt Freeman**, State Board of Education, spoke to **support SCR 134**. He said initiatives which would help Idaho reach the sixty percent goal by 2020 are keeping tuitions low, increasing financial aid opportunities, such as the Opportunity Scholarship, and sponsoring college week at high schools. The State Board of Education has been keeping track of the sixty percent goal and Idaho's progress. The Board's initiatives will help Idaho reach that goal. In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Freeman said the Board will provide current figures regarding the number and percent of students who will be aided by the Completion Scholarship. After the cut-off date for college applications, the Board can provide the committees with the number of students who responded to the colleges' acceptance letters.

**Dwight Johnson**, Division of Professional-Technical Education spoke in **support of SCR 134**. He said reaching this goal is critically important for students and businesses. The package of initiatives the governor proposed includes more access to advising for students and parents, improving access to post-secondary education, a tuition lock, post-secondary PTE programs, partnerships with businesses and secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, and credit for prior learning.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Thayne** made a motion to introduce **SCR 134** with a **Do Pass** recommendation. **Senator Souza** seconded the motion. **The motion carried by voice vote. Chairman Mortimer** will be the floor sponsor.

**Melyssa Ferro**, 2014 Teacher of the Year, explained how ecology terms relate to public education. Symbiosis refers to the interaction between organisms. She explained teaching is a collaborative effort, and asked the legislators to avoid a pay system which creates competition. Quality teachers already exist in Idaho, she added, and they just need to be given adequate resources. She gave examples of resources, not all of which cost money, such as professional development, an adequate classroom budget, decision-making authority, collaboration, respect, field trips, a voice, and flexibility.

**Ms. Ferro** stated collaborative partnerships are a key to providing resources, such as with other educational institutions and businesses. She gave examples of partnerships her classroom had with community partners. She explained that students need to see themselves as scientists and engineers, so one mentor program matches kids to mentors of the same ethnicity and socioeconomic background. Ms. Ferro added that abiotic factors are the non-living things which can affect an ecosystem, and that education needs to be engaging and hands-on learning teaching twenty-first century skills. The new science standards should emphasize procedures and skills, not knowledge. Ms. Ferro asked the committee members to remember that teaching is collaborative, and partnerships are important to public education.

**Kim Zydel**, 2015 Teacher of the Year, introduced two of her students to the committee members. In response to questions from the committee, the students said they did not like school before they went to the Meridian Academy, but they enjoy school at Meridian Academy. The differences are that classes are smaller, so students have more help from teachers, and classes are structured to give students more than one day on an assignment.

**Ms. Zydel** explained online learning is not as effective with the students at Meridian Academy. Giving students enough time to master lessons, and having a flexible classroom time model, is more effective. Learning at the school is based on mastering concepts, not seat time. Students go to four classes for nine weeks, and another four classes for the next nine weeks, which is effective for this population of students, but makes it difficult for transfer students to transfer in the middle of a quarter.

In response to questions from the committee members, **Ms. Zydel** said almost one hundred percent of students who drop out come back to Meridian Academy. Students who are in trouble with the law are given a chance to complete school rather than go to jail, and are put on probation. Seventy-five percent are successful in getting off probation, unless drugs are involved, which makes it more difficult. Public schools would benefit from more flexibility in how they can use funds, she added. **Ms. Zydel** has used her award money to purchase a math program for students. She concluded that there are several ways the legislature can help public education, such as not blaming alternative schools for high drop out rates, congratulating the five-year graduates from the program, encouraging a mastery-based grading system, promoting preschool, and providing financial assistance for educational materials. She added that students who leave school in second grade to be home schooled often come back to fifth grade with second-grade skills, and parents should be required to prove their child is being educated.

**Superintendent Sherri Ybarra**, State Department of Education, shared her vision for public education. She said the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives more flexibility to states and allows Idaho to keep what is best for Idaho's children. It also moves away from over testing and a one-size-fits-all accountability structure. She outlined the goals of the strategic plan as helping students be ready for colleges and careers, holding all stakeholders mutually responsible, and attracting and retaining great teachers to Idaho.

**Ms. Ybarra** explained the sixteen remaining task force recommendations. One recommendation is to restore operational funds to account for inflation and an increased number of students. She also asked for an increase of \$800,000 to fund mastery-based education. Currently, Idaho Schools have one counselor for every 434 students. The ASCA recommends a ratio of one to 250, so she is requesting \$1,750,000. The technology request of \$15 million is an increase of two million to support teachers and students with common-sense technology. The request of \$2.2 million will be used to support wireless infrastructure.

The request of \$2.6 million is a reduction of \$985,000.00 from FY16. It removes Schoolnet from the State Budget. **Ms. Ybarra** said she believes this information does the most good at the local level, not the state level, and each district has unique needs. The request for \$1.7 million is to fund math coaches. The nine language arts coaches worked well, and the Department wants to replicate what has worked. The request for \$700,400 is an increase of \$400,400 from FY16 for evaluation, training and development.

The request of \$5 million for literacy proficiency was based on collaborative effort and input. Funds may be used for optional full-day kindergarten, early intervention, and professional development. **Ms. Ybarra** explained over seventy percent of Idaho's school districts are rural, and experience professional isolation and a lack of extra-curricular resources. The request of \$300,000 for rural school centers can be used for what each individual district needs.

**Superintendent Ybarra** requested a 13.9% increase in funding for the career ladder, and a net increase of 5.8% for salary, benefits and apportionment. The Department is working on reviewing current evaluation tools to address the teacher shortage, and establishing Idaho's first rural education center. It is also working on removing SBAC requirements at the high school level and permanently removing SBAC from the high school graduation requirements.

In response to questions from members of the committees, **Ms. Ybarra** said the academic college and advising piece of the Department's plan will address school districts which do not currently offer advanced placement classes. The Department has started initiatives to address the high rates of remedial classes needed at the post-secondary level, but it will need three years of data using the new ISAT test scores to know if the initiatives are working. Ms. Ybarra said she believes a lot of professional training needs should come from the individual to the districts, and the rural education centers can help with this. When operational funding is increased, she added, the Department can determine which programs most districts are using, and eliminate programs which are less successful. She said more data is needed, as well as the ability to affect change at the local level. Individual student data is not helpful at the national level. Members of the measurement team in the Department know the goals, direction and information needed for strategic plans, as well as how to measure effectiveness.

**Superintendent Ybarra** explained the SAT is supported by 60% to 70% of superintendents. The SBAC measures standards, but school districts need a tool to measure college and career readiness. The U.S. Department of Education is advocating mastery-based education, and discussions at the State Board of Education level have started, but no decisions have been made. The problems with SBAC will not be solved this year or next, but they can be addressed.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, **Senator Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

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Representative DeMordaunt  
Chair

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Jenifer Cavaness-Williams  
Secretary