



NAMPA SCHOOL DISTRICT #131

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March 15, 2016

Testimony FOR House Bill No. 570

Chairman Mortimer and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

It is my honor to serve as superintendent of the Nampa School District. I appreciate this opportunity to share our district's strong support for Representative Horman's proposed **Local Innovation School Act**.

This September, I had the privilege of traveling to Denver with Representative Horman and Representative Boyle to see exciting and highly effective examples of Colorado's innovation law. Colorado is one of several states that have implemented this system of district-sponsored and supported, yet quite autonomous schools.

We are passionate about improving our schools. We have some terrific ideas. However, many of our ideas cannot be implemented under current provisions of Idaho Code and state rules and regulations. While these rules and requirements were good and helpful at the time, when equity and consistency needed to be established, the conformity they engender is now a problem.

Requirements regarding seat-time, staffing ratios, teacher evaluation and compensation, and graduation compel us to behave traditionally, when many of our families and staff are itching to pioneer new and better ways. Charter schools already enjoy many of the provisions of the proposed Act. Charters shouldn't get all of the fun of "out of the box" innovation.

So why support this, rather than start a new charter? First, the original intention of charters as incubators of ideas that would spread to legacy schools has proven false. The characteristics, demographics, special rules and funding, and philanthropic support of charter schools make them – by definition – unsuccessful models for legacy schools. We need innovative legacy school districts to serve as lighthouses. Second, when students move from a legacy school to a charter school, the reduced enrollment results in a significant reduction in revenue to the legacy district, without a proportional reduction in infrastructure costs. We lose kids, but have the same scale of services in the finance, human resources, nutrition, maintenance, grounds, security, transportation, and administration functions. Third, we have great talent and energy within our district that the Local Innovation School Act would unleash.

We have worked with Representative Horman to address each of our concerns, and would like to thank her for addressing each. This is a strong bill, with strong accountability.

We find ourselves in a time where everything is consumer driven and customization and personalization are expected. With the adoption of the Act, we will be able to work with our families to create far more responsive and personalized schools. The challenges of modern times are great, which means the opportunities are great. We are excited about the potential of this Act and urge your support. Thank you.

Respectfully,

David L. Peterson, Superintendent