

TESTIMONY FOR INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS HB570

Mr. Chair, members of the Committee. My name is Karen Echeverria. I am the Executive Director of the Idaho School Boards Association. I'm here today representing school districts, charter schools, and the Board members who govern them.

ISBA has long held a belief that we support local governance and closer to the student the decision is made the better. In addition, this legislation certainly makes a rapid step toward the autonomy that our Board President, John Menter, spoke to you about when our members were here in February. Because of the local school district's ability to decide whether or not an innovative school would work in their district, ISBA stands in support of HB570.

With that said, the decision by my Governmental Affairs Committee was not unanimous and came with many questions. As such, I need to express the concerns we have with the bill as well.

- There are no outcomes associated with the legislation. How will we know if the innovative schools are being successful? We understand that outcomes will likely be crafted in the final agreement between the school and the Board, but we would like to see some more specific outcomes and reporting.
- Again, we support the concept of autonomy but wonder if a sudden removal of all laws, rules, and regulations is the best approach. The State Board of Education has committed to working with us to change laws and rules that are a hindrance to school districts and charters and we plan to begin that work as soon as the session is over. We believe it might be better to take a more measured approach to the autonomy recommendation rather than throwing the baby out with the bath water.
- We believe this legislation will add even more to the inequality from district/charter to district/charter? If we can only allow ten schools to have all this autonomy, won't those ten now have more advantages than others?
- Finally, we see no need for giving each school \$10,000. If they are ready and prepared to be an innovative school, they should not need any additional dollars.

Once again, despite our concerns, ISBA believes that, in the end, this bill will provide the autonomy and local governance that we have long believed is best for the student. As such, we ask that you send HB570 to the floor with a do pass recommendation.

Thank you Mr. Chair and members of the committee. I appreciate your time today and we would be glad to stand for any questions.