

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 22, 2017

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman VanOrden, Vice Chairman McDonald, Representative(s) Shepherd, Boyle, Clow, Mendive, Kerby, Cheatham, Amador, DeMordaunt, Moon, Syme, Kloc, McCrostie, Toone

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Shepherd

GUESTS: Wayne Rush, Emmett School Dist; Ann Joslin, ID Comm for Libraries; Bron Roberts, AAUW; Linda Anderson, AAUW; Paul Stark, IIEA; Mary Jo Prokup, Lee Pesty; Jeanne Hayden, YMCA; Teresa Wood-Adams, Parent and YMCA; Norma Lloyd, AAUW; James Gilbert; Julie Custer, AAUW; Wendy Rancourt, AAUW; Shelia Dengler-Shaw, Boise School Dist; Clark Corbin, ID Ed News

Chairman VanOrden called the meeting to order at 8:03 am.

Rep. Christy Perry presented Idaho School Readiness. She stated the best investment we can make is for our children. Rep. Perry introduced **Beth Oppenheimer**, Executive Director Idaho Assoc. for the Education of Young Children. Ms. Oppenheimer explained ensuring our children are ready for school academically and socially is the responsibility of family, community, and schools. The most successful children are those who start out with a strong family foundation with their parents.

Dr. Dean Cloward, Teacher Education Dept, BYU-Idaho. He explained how learning and brain development go hand in hand. Brains are built from the bottom up. Early brains form up to 700 new neural connections every second and then after this period are pruned back. Early influences of biology(genes) and experiences shape the developing brain. Neural circuits, which create the foundation for learning, behavior, and health, are most flexible during the first 3 years of life. Over time, they become increasingly difficult to change. Toxic stress, such as extreme poverty, abuse and neglect can damage the developing brain, leading to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health. The brain is strengthened by positive early experiences, especially stable relationships with caring and responsive adults, safe and supportive environments, and appropriate nutrition which provides upon which cognitive and language skills develop. High quality early intervention services can change a child's developmental trajectory and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities. Intervention is likely to be more effective and less costly when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.

Dr. David Allen, Early Education Program, BYU-Idaho, works with children, and knows how important early learning programs are for their success throughout their lives. He believes early learning should be funded to ensure success for the child as well as the economic investment. A dollar invested from 1 to 3 years old is returned seven-fold, a dollar invested from 3 to 5 years old is returned five-fold. There is reduced juvenile delinquency, drug use, school problems, and adult crime, thereby a reduced dependence on social programs later in life. He explained that investment in our children reduces educational demands and behavioral problems in schools in older grades.

Alyssa Townsend, teacher; **Shelia Dengler-Shaw**, teacher; **John McFarlane**, Superintendent; **Shalene French**, Superintendent, **Dr. Don Coberly**, Superintendent, all spoke in full support of the importance of early learning programs before kindergarten. Pre-schoolers are more successful socially, emotionally, and academically. They become eager and excited to attend their class and interact with other children. Those children who are not English speaking, learn the English language faster in pre-school programs, so they are better prepared when they enter kindergarten.

Park Price, Idaho Business for Education, supports the adoption of the Idaho School Readiness Act which gives the choice between home and off-site programs to get their 4-year old children prepared to learn in kindergarten. He explained Idaho needs talented students to become the future successful workforce. This starts in pre-Kindergarten and goes through postsecondary schools. The most disadvantaged students who are not ready to come into the school system have a high percentage of high school drop-outs. They are not able to keep up in reading and math and either get discouraged, join gangs, or get involved in drugs, etc.

Gary Raney, Former Ada County Sheriff, explained for every dollar invested on school readiness, taxpayers can save many times that amount down the road on remediation, incarceration, and social services. The population in jails from high school drop-outs is significantly higher than those that graduate. The criminal problems start as juveniles lose interest in school and their future.

Bryan Taylor, Canyon County Prosecuting Attorney, reported that criminal history relates directly back to early education failure. Especially with reading, as reading is the key to success in every other subject.

Gregory Culet, Retired Third District Judge, explained 30 years of experience as a judge has shown a link between the offender and their early learning history. One common denominator is the offenders were not ready or prepared for school. The gap between children ready to learn and those who are not is huge. Those who are not prepared drift into future criminal behavior. Those who drop out of high school have an 80% greater chance of a felony offense. The earlier we address the problem of early education the better off society will be.

Archie Clemens, Former Admiral U.S. Navy and member of IBE, explained that low test scores eliminates an applicant for the service. The applicants must be technically proficient in math and science. The military is not as it once was when young men went into the service rather than continue school. Early education is the key.

Sen. Steven Thayne explained the children who are not kindergarten ready usually have family structure disadvantages. These pre-K programs work with the parents as well as the children, and help support the parents in raising their children with more involvement. The options for in home or out of home programs depend on the areas in Idaho.

Rep. Hy Kloc stated that he is passionate about early education. He explained that in 2012 Idaho was one of eleven states that had no early learning program, and now in 2016, Idaho is one of six states with no early learning programs. Idaho should take full advantage of pre-K programs so that children are not behind and to make Idaho better.

Lt. Governor Brad Little reported that Idaho's goals to have reading proficiency by the end of third grade will have lifetime effects and outcomes in the lives of the children as well as Idaho as a whole, economically and socially. The science and study is overwhelming for the good it does for all concerned. Education and qualified teachers need to be valued.

Rep. Christy Perry stated the benefits of the programs are pre-literacy and numeracy skills, increased appropriate social behavior, mitigates impacts of poverty, increases parent involvement, builds parent trust to district, and increases kindergarten readiness.

Julie Bell, National Conferences of State Legislatures(NCSL), presented the NCSL Legislative Study Group Findings. NCSL was founded in 1975 to provide states support and connection with the federal government, and a voice on Capitol Hill. It is represented by all 50 state and territorial legislatures, and is bipartisan. It provides research, technical assistance and opportunities to exchange ideas. The NCSL International Education Study Group was made up of 22 legislators and 6 staff who are bipartisan, experienced education leaders. Phase I of the study entailed 18 months of work studying and consulting with the 10 top performing countries/provinces, those being Alberta, Ontario, Estonia, Finland, Hong Kong, Japan, Poland, Shanghai, Singapore and Taiwan. They discovered that other countries are moving all students upward but US students are stagnant. The top performing countries have strategically linked education reform to economic development and global competitiveness. This is not a national or federal problem, it is a state to state problem as the state is responsible for ensuring high quality education. States compare relatively more favorably with other countries than does the US as a whole.

Ms. Bell stated the study had good and bad news. The bad news is most state education systems are falling dangerously behind the world in a number of international comparisons and on assessment of educational progress, leaving the US overwhelmingly under-prepared to succeed in the 21st Century economy. The good news is by studying these high-performing systems, they are discovering what seems to work. If the states get to work right away, they can quickly turn this around as high-performing countries have. The common elements of high-performing systems are: Children come to school ready to learn, and extra support is given to struggling students that all have the opportunity to achieve high standards. A world-class teaching profession supports a world-class instructional system, where every student has access to highly effective teachers and is expected to succeed. A highly effective, intellectually rigorous system of career and technical education is available to those preferring an applied education. Individual reforms are connected and aligned as parts of a clearly planned and carefully designed comprehensive system.

Ms. Bell reported the action steps for states to build a high-performing system are as follows: Build an inclusive team and set priorities, study and learn from top performers, create a shared statewide vision, benchmark policies, get started on one piece, work through "messiness", and invest the time. She explained what is necessary to start the conversation or improving the education system with policy makers, educators, and citizens, then linking the conversation to major reform occurring in the state, as in ESSA and school finance reform, and finding an entity to sponsor or host it. Members of the study group have gone back to their own states to implement the lessons and knowledge they have learned. The second phase of the study is to learn more about specific implementation strategies in the top performing countries, both technical policy approaches and navigating major policy change, and to support state-based activity and study and learn about what works. She expressed the urgency of this action, and there is no time to lose. It is the states responsibility to provide our citizens with a world-class education, and cannot let another generation settle for anything less. The future workforce, national defense, economic vitality, and democratic foundation depend on the ability and willingness to get this done.

Rep. Horman stated that she is a member of the NCSL International Education Study Group representing the state of Idaho. She expressed how many great individuals, regardless of politics, culture, or religion, came from across the US to work in autonomy for the betterment of the education in the United States. Idaho must create an innovative school bill and a funding formula to allow each local district to take responsibility.

DOCKET NO. 08-0201-1602: **Tracie Bent**, State Board of Education, presented **Docket No. 08-0201-1602** pertaining to continuous improvement plans for reading readiness and literacy requirements for intervention plans.

Due to time constraints, **Docket No. 08-0201-1602** will be carried over to the meeting of February 24, 2017 at 8:30 am.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:26 am.

Representative VanOrden
Chair

Ann Tippetts
Secretary