

KARI OVERALL-SENATE ED TESTIMONY, MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 2018

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR INVITING US TO SPEAK TODAY. MY NAME IS KARI OVERALL AND I AM THE PRESIDENT OF THE IDAHO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. I AM A 14 YEAR TEACHER FROM BOISE AND I AM HERE ON BEHALF OF IEA MEMBERS FROM ACROSS THE STATE. OUR MEMBERSHIP IS A TERRIFIC CROSS-SECTION OF EARLY CAREER AND VETERAN TEACHERS, ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS, BUS DRIVERS, CAFETERIA WORKERS, LIBRARIANS, PARAPROFESSIONALS, AND SCHOOL COUNSELORS. WE HAVE MEMBERS FROM LARGE, SMALL, URBAN, AND REMOTE DISTRICTS. WE VALUE THE EXPERTISE, INSIGHT, AND OPINIONS OF ALL OF THESE DEDICATED PROFESSIONALS. TEACHERS KNOW BEST WHAT THEY NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE CLASSROOM AND WHAT CAN HELP THEM REACH AND INSPIRE STUDENTS.

I AM EXCITED TODAY TO BE JOINED BY MEMBERS WHO SERVE ON OUR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO INTRODUCE THEM TO YOU.

-LAYNE MCINELLY- 6TH GRADE TEACHER FROM BOISE

-LORI STEINIKER, 8TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER FROM PAYETTE

-RUSS GEE, FROM LEWISTON

-JOEL WILLIAMS, BAND TEACHER FROM FRUITLAND

-PEGGY HOY, MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH TEACHER FROM TWIN FALLS

-SHAUNA WHEELWRIGHT, SPECIAL ED TEACHER FROM SNAKE RIVER

-CARLA CORBRIDGE, FROM JEFFERSON COUNTY

-ALLIE BINGHAM, INSTRUCTIONAL COACH FROM BOISE

-BOB SOLOMON, SCHOOL COUNSELOR FROM VALLIVUE

-JAMES ORR, ENGLISH TEACHER FROM WEST ADA

TIFFANY WATTS, SENIOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

YOU ASKED US TO ANSWER A COUPLE OF SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, AND WE HAVE PUT A GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT AND INTROSPECTION INTO THE FEEDBACK WE GIVE YOU TODAY.

THE PRIORITY OF THE IEA IS THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF QUALITY EDUCATORS AND WORKING TO ENSURE THEY ARE PROVIDED WITH THE TOOLS TO HELP THEM SUCCEED AND STAY IN THE CLASSROOM.

THE FIRST QUESTION YOU ASKED US TO RESPOND TO WAS: “WHAT ARE YOU NOW DOING DIFFERENTLY FROM LAST YEAR THAT ENHANCES STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT?”

WHILE NOT COMPLETELY NEW OR DIFFERENT, THE IEA CONTINUES TO RAMP UP ITS EFFORTS TO PROVIDE MEMBERS WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES. WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THE ASPECT OF OUR ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION, AND IT IS A BIG PART OF WHO WE ARE AS AN ASSOCIATION TODAY.

WE CONTINUE TO INCREASE THE SCOPE AND ACCESSIBILITY OF OFFERINGS AT OUR ANNUAL “SUMMER INSTITUTE A THREE-DAY CONFERENCE WHERE MEMBERS SHARE THEIR INSIGHT AND EXPERTISE WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES. TEACHERS LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER IS THE BEST TYPE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WE ARE PROUD TO BRING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EDUCATORS FROM ACROSS THE STATE. .

LET ME SHARE A COUPLE OF EXAMPLES OF THE COURSES OFFERED AT OUR SUMMER INSTITUTE, WITH THE CAVEAT THAT THIS IS BARELY SCRATCHING THE SURFACE OF WHAT IS AVAILABLE.

IEA MEMBER MEG ROWE OF BOISE LED A COURSE CALLED “ARITHMETALK: WHERE MATH AND LANGUAGE MEET. THE GOAL OF THIS PRESENTATION IS TO SHOW HOW POWERFUL THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND CORE CONTENT CAN BE, PARTICULARLY FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS; BUT THE SAME CONCEPTS APPLY FOR MORE TRADITIONAL STUDENTS AS WELL.

IEA MEMBER GREG FELTON OF WEST ADA LED A COURSE CALLED “TECHNOLOGY OPTIONS FOR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS”. WE KNOW THAT OBJECTIVE ARTIFACTS ABOUT STUDENT GROWTH ARE VALUED BY PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND ADMINISTRATORS. THIS COURSE FOCUSES ON IDEAS FOR COLLECTING DATA IN CLASS, AND THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY TOOLS SUCH AS KAHOOT, NEARPOD, PLICKERS, AND PROMETHEAN CLICKERS IN INCORPORATING THOSE IDEAS.

IN ADDITION TO OUR SUMMER INSTITUTE, WE ARE ALSO INCREASING ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. THESE INCLUDE:

- OUR NEW ADVANCED TRAININGS ON THE MASTER EDUCATOR PREMIUMS. ABOVE AND BEYOND TRYING TO HELP OUR MEMBERS OBTAIN THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO SUBMIT PORTFOLIOS WITH THE BEST CHANCE OF BEING AWARDED THE PREMIUMS, THESE TRAININGS FOCUS ON THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF BEING ORGANIZED AND STRATEGIC IN YOUR APPROACH, AS WELL AS HOW THE INFORMATION-GATHERING CAN BENEFIT, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND ADMINISTRATORS. THIS TRAINING ALSO HELPS TEACHERS PRACTICE REFLECTING ON STUDENT ARTIFACTS AND MEASURE HOW SUCCESSFUL A LESSON WORKED. THIS ENSURES LESSONS DAY IN AND DAY OUT INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.
- WE ALSO OFFER TRAINING SUCH AS THE ONE LED BY IEA MEMBER SHERRY BELKNAP OF WEST ADA ON “STUDENTS WITH DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS”. SHERRY SHOWS OTHER TEACHERS HOW TO LOOK DEEPER AT THE “LANGUAGE” UNDERNEATH THE BEHAVIOR SO THEY CAN APPLY THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE INSTEAD OF JUST REACTING IN THE MOMENT.

NEW AND DIFFERENT THIS YEAR IS A COLLABORATION WITH IDLA TO DEVELOP COURSES FOR OUR ONLINE PORTAL, WHERE ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATORS WILL BE READILY AVAILABLE. THE ADDITION OF THESE COURSES WILL HELP US REACH A WIDER ARRAY OF EDUCATORS TO ENSURE THEY HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WHICH IN TURN POSITIVELY AFFECTS STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT.

WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON A NEW PILOT PROGRAM WITH THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND IDLA TO CONNECT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH RETIRED TEACHERS IN AN ON LINE ENVIRONMENT. THESE RETIRED TEACHERS WILL PROVIDE INDIVIDUAL ONE ON ONE ASSISTANCE WITH COLLEGE AND CAREER QUESTIONS. THIS PROGRAM WILL BE HOUSED ON THE “NEXT STEPS IDAHO” WEBSITE AND WILL BE PILOTED IN FIVE OR SIX HIGH SCHOOLS WHERE THE ‘GO ON’ RATE COULD USE ASSISTANCE.

IN ITS MOST INFANT STAGES WE ARE PARTNERING WITH THE NEA FOUNDATION ON A PROGRAM TO PROVIDE PEER MENTORING FOR TEACHERS, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS. WE KNOW THAT GOOD MENTORING IS KEY TO ENSURING A TEACHER STAYS IN THE CLASSROOM AND WE ALSO KNOW RURAL DISTRICTS STRUGGLE THE MOST TO SUPPORT THEIR TEACHERS. WE WANT TO HELP LOWER IDAHO'S 15% TEACHER ATTRITION RATE, THUS ENSURING IDAHO'S STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT BY EXPERIENCED TEACHERS.

THE SECOND QUESTION POSED WAS, "NAME TWO THINGS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO THAT YOU ARE NOT CURRENTLY DOING THAT ENHANCES STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT."

WE HAVE A NUMBER OF IDEAS THAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS. FINDING SUFFICIENT RESOURCES AND APPROPRIATE PERSONNEL WILL BE CRITICAL IN TURNING THESE IDEAS INTO VIABLE, SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS.

THE FIRST DIRECTLY CORRELATES WITH OUR ONGOING WORK VIRTUAL MENTORING FOR EARLY CAREER EDUCATORS IN RURAL AREAS IS SOMETHING THAT CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON SUPPORTING OUR NEW TEACHERS AND KEEPING THEM IN THE CLASSROOM LONGTERM. LAST YEAR WE PARTNERED ON A PROGRAM WITH BETTER LESSON TO PROVIDE MENTORING TO TEN TEACHERS ACROSS THE STATE. THE MENTORING WAS ALL DONE VIRTUALLY AND PROVIDED FREE TO THE DISTRICT. ALL 10 TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED HAVE RETURNED TO TEACH IDAHO STUDENTS THIS YEAR AND FEEL BETTER PREPARED BECAUSE OF THE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT RECEIVED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. THIS IS A PROGRAM WITH GREAT GROWTH POTENTIAL.

THE SECOND FOCUSES ON SCHOOL BEHAVIOR. BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND ON ELECTRONIC PLATFORMS IS AN ONGOING PROBLEM, BUT ONE THAT WE HAVE THE CAPABILITIES TO HELP ADDRESS. THIS IS AN AREA WHERE EDUCATION AND INTERVENTION CAN HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT ON STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT. WE KNOW THAT SUPPORTING THOSE WHO FEEL BULLIED OR THREATENED, ALONG WITH PROVIDING TRAINING FOR THE STUDENT POPULATION CAN DECREASE THE AMOUNT AND SEVERITY OF BULLYING IN OUR CLASSROOMS. THE IEA HAS TRAININGS AND RESOURCES

RELATED TO THIS TOPIC, BUT A COMPREHENSIVE, COLLABORATIVE, MULTI-PLATFORM APPROACH AT THE STATE LEVEL COULD MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.

ALL OUR RESEARCH AND ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE TELLS US THAT SUPPORTING OUR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS, ESPECIALLY THOSE JUST STARTING OUT, CAN PLAY A HUGE ROLE IN HELPING US RETAIN TEACHERS. WE HAVE HEARD IT SAID TIME AND TIME AGAIN, THAT “THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IS HAVING A WELL-TRAINED, HIGHLY-QUALIFIED TEACHER”. WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT THE WORK WE ARE DOING TO SUPPORT OUR TEACHERS, HELP IDAHO RECRUIT AND RETAIN TEACHERS, AND ENSURE THAT EVERY CHILD IN OUR STATE HAS ACCESS TO A GREAT PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THIS COMMITTEE, THE LEGSILATURE AT LARGE, AND THE EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURING EVERY STUDENT LEAVES IDAHO PUBLIC SCHOOLS PREPARED FOR COLLEGE OR CAREER NEXT STEPS.

THANK YOU, AND I WILL STAND FOR QUESTIONS.