

HB 566

Charter School Administrative Certificates

3/13/18

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Paul Stark and I am the General Counsel for the Idaho Education Association and I stand to testify against HB 566.

1. House bill 566 allows for under-qualified individuals to obtain a certificate by merely having a 4-year degree and taking one class on teacher evaluations.
2. Further, the only basis for not issuing this certificate is when there are reasons that would constitute grounds for revocation. And even that is couched in the discretionary term “may.”
3. At its core, we have a massive watering down of the qualifications that have historically made Idaho administrators magnificent, to where anyone with a bachelor’s degree, a 3-credits class and a pulse can be an administrator.
4. Doing this will assuredly harm the educational system that legislators and stakeholders alike have worked so very hard to improve, but most importantly, it will harm the students.
5. First, lowering the bar like this will undermine all the efforts of the last several years to improve education in Idaho.
  - a. In short, teachers, need a prepared leader in the building. So do students and parents.
  - b. Teachers look to their administrators for leadership in many areas: mentoring, classroom management, student behavior, interaction with parents, and instructional practice. Our students and their families expect that the administrators setting the tone and guiding the school are trained and qualified to deliver the appropriate guidance.

- c. Administrators are expected to be the instructional leaders in their schools. The culture, climate, and focus of the school are all dictated by the administrator. Teachers are more likely to innovate and challenge themselves when they are being encouraged to and coached by a skilled instructional lead administrator.
6. Second, lowering the bar will be detrimental to the students of Idaho.
- a. Certification in this instance, as it is with teachers, actually means something.
  - b. Under this bill a BA and 1 class qualifies you to get a certificate.
  - c. But this is simply too little. We can do better. We are doing better.
  - d. An Idaho principal currently must have
    - i. A Master's Degree
    - ii. Complete at least 30 semester credits of graduate studies in school administration.
    - iii. An internship or one-year experience
  - e. An Idaho Superintendent currently must have also:
    - i. An education specialist, or doctorate degree, or completion of a post-master's 6<sup>th</sup> year program.
    - ii. Specialized leadership and organizational education for superintendents.
    - iii. An internship or one-year experience
  - f. Our administrators are also expected to understand special education law, budgets, student discipline, teacher discipline, ethics, family and community relations, instructional leadership, and pedagogy. The list goes on and on.
  - g. Once again, teachers, as well as parents and school district leaders, rely on administrators to provide this knowledge and guidance. A 4-year degree in French does not an administrator make. (There is actually a Bachelor's degree from USC in "Disruption.")
3. Bottom line: There are fundamental, foundational benefits to students and teachers by having a well prepared and educated administrator in the building.
4. We urge you to vote no on House Bill 566.