

Intro...

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee.

My name is Greg Wilson, and I'm Governor Little's Senior Policy Advisor for Education.

I look forward to working with you all and I plan on meeting with each of you one-on-one, if I haven't already.

In the State of the State, Governor Little said education was his number one priority.

It's at the foundation of our shared vision of having the best possible opportunities for us, our children, and grandchildren to remain in Idaho— to thrive and enjoy Idaho's unparalleled quality of life.

I would like to share Governor Little's education priorities— **which move this vision forward**— in addition to offering a few other thoughts on Idaho's education system. I'll end by taking your questions.

OK, IF, Children's Cabinet...

First of all, to advise the Governor throughout his term on ongoing education issues and ensure the voices of those on the front lines of education are heard at the Capitol, Governor Little will create a Children's Cabinet.

This Children's Cabinet will consist of parents, traditional education stakeholders, and groups across our state dedicated to advocating for children.

This group's outlook will be broad, providing perspective on issues that impact education in Idaho— including poverty, ESL, and at-risk students, in addition to other issues.

This will be a long-term advisory group to the Governor on a multitude of education matters.

These past four years, with the help of many legislators in this room and stakeholders, Idaho has a successful record of responsible investment and reform in education.

As the Governor expressed in his State of the State, successful education policy requires long-term planning and buy-in from stakeholders.

The Governor has talked with fellow governors and education policymakers in other states—and Idaho's model of our 2013 K-13 Task Force is highly regarded.

Moving forward, building on this successful approach, the Governor will create *Our Kids, Idaho's Future*. The charge of this broad-based task force will be to look at our education system holistically, providing Idaho's next five-year blueprint for education investment and reform.

It will touch on many issues— putting forward recommendations on the career ladder for the next five years, plans for improving our go-on rate and moving closer to the 60 percent goal, discussing the metrics of how we assess our education system, and looking at student achievement... among many additional issues.

Much like the past task force, *Our Kids, Idaho's Future's* work will be fast.

To be clear: these are two different groups, with two different missions.

Implementing the Fifth Year....

In addition to these two groups, one permanent, and one working through 2019 to provide the plan and stakeholder support for the next five years of education investment and reform, **the Governor's budget recommendation implements the fifth year of the K-12 task force's recommendations.**

This implementation of the fifth year:

- Funds the **next phase** of increased teacher salaries, under the career ladder.
- Funds **Master Educator Premiums**, an important promise to our most experienced educators.

Additionally, the Governor's budget recommendation increases the investment in the popular Advanced Opportunity program, which saves Idaho families in tuition costs and aligns with our efforts to get more kids to go-on.

There are specific priorities that cannot wait, however.

Literacy...

Reading is foundational to our students' success. It's at the foundation of every Idahoan's success in life.

By the third grade, our students must have already learned to read so that now they can read to learn.

The Governor's budget recommendation proposes doubling literacy program funding.

As they have had these past two years, school districts should continue to have the flexibility to decide the best ways to use the funds to raise reading scores among their students.

This approach, allowing for the use of a variety of research-based methods, recognizes that no two kids are the same... and that no two communities are the same. We want flexibility for teachers and school districts to determine what is the best approach for their students.

Experts have made clear that is the best approach.

Governor Little also expects us to see measurable progress in reading scores in the next two to four years. **While the Governor believes expanding this program is the right thing to do, we must have accountability for this program and we must see clear success.**

\$40,000 Teacher Pay

Our state still has many challenges when it comes to recruiting teachers. According to a State Board Teacher Pipeline Report from 2017:

- About 15 percent of Idaho's teachers leave the workforce after just one year on the job.
- After their fourth year, 30 percent of teachers have left the profession.
- Over 30% of teachers who become certified in Idaho do not teach in an Idaho school.
- And there continues to be teacher shortages in communities across Idaho

We must attract, recruit, and retain our young educators, particularly in rural, underserved, and border communities.

In order to achieve this goal, the Governor proposes raising starting teacher pay to \$40,000 a year.

His proposal will also look across the entire residency section of the career ladder, in order to prevent compression in those first three years of teacher pay.

The Governor made clear, however, that he expects school districts to continue working with us on reporting measurements that Idahoans need to validate increased education investments to you and to taxpayers.

Raising starting teacher pay aligns with his view of ensuring our best graduates and educators can remain in Idaho to live and raise their families.

Higher education....

Let me shift to the other side of our education system— Our community colleges, universities, and CTE programs.

The Governor is committed to increasing Idaho's go-on rate and making greater strides toward our 60-percent goal.

He will continue to look at higher education funding models, including Outcomes Based Funding, and looks forward to working with the Legislature and the State Board on potential options.

He wants this new higher education funding model to align with accomplishing our goal of having 60-percent of our 25- to 34-year olds with a completed degree or a professional certificate.

In lieu of OBF, this year, his budget recommendation increases funding for Opportunity Scholarship applicants, providing a market-based approach to higher education funding, with money following the students, and allowing them to choose the institution and degree that best fits their needs.

Last year, 1,780 applicants were eligible for the scholarship but did not receive an award because of a lack of funding. This popular program seems to have a direct effect on our go-on rate and 60-percent goal.

Overall, the Governor has been impressed with the increase in dual credit opportunities and college preparedness... and seeks to continue to build on this progress.

The Governor wants to have a continued discussion about how we measure those foundational goals for Idaho's education system— particularly, how we calculate our go-on rate and our 60-percent goal.

This would naturally be a good subject for Our Kids, Idaho's Future.

If young Idahoans have skills that allow them to have a career where they can comfortably raise their families and plan for retirement, why shouldn't they count as part of the 60-percent goal?

The Governor also wants to increase the voice of parents and educators in the Capitol, which will be done with the Children's Cabinet.

Conclusion:

Bottom line: The Governor believes a strong education system helps ensure we keep our best and brightest here in Idaho.

Working on economic development across Idaho, he also knows that education is what attracts investors and entrepreneurs to Idaho.

I will be sending around my contact information to all the committee members. Please contact me **any time** with your questions.

With that, I'd be glad to answer any questions.

Thank you.