

Chairman Mortimer, Committee members, for the record my name is Wendy Johnson, Superintendent of the Kuna School District. I am also here today as the President of Region III Superintendents.

My message today is to urge you to hold this bill in committee.

The reason is simple -- this formula needs more work.

You should have grave concerns about whether we truly know the impact this formula will have on school districts and charter schools.

It has been a challenge to analyze these changes because the spreadsheets have changed at least six times --- and the last one "Model to Match Senate Bill 1196" is just a few days old.

As we have all become more familiar with the spreadsheets, how they work, and the data sets supporting them --- we have significant concerns.

First, we continue to see spreadsheets that compare 2017-18 data to 2018-19 funding as well as 2017-18 data with future funding scenarios for 2019-20. These inaccurate comparisons are like a high school wrestler wrestling at his 7th grade weight class and being proud for beating everyone.

To really understand what the formula does, it is important to compare the same data set from the same year. For example, when superintendents in our region compared 2017-18 data to 2017-18 funding, 84 districts were "losers" even though the published funding formula that compared 2017-18 data to 2018-19 funding reported only a handful of "losers."

I've also had numerous school districts report to me that the data sets within the formula are also incorrect. For example, superintendents have reported to me that they don't have any ELL students but 54 students were listed in their school district data sets.

Again, I encourage you to hold this bill in committee and continue to work with stakeholders on this legislation.

Idaho is fortunate that we have time to do this right. We aren't working under a court-imposed deadline or threatened court action. We have proactively identified a need to update our formula, and we have the time to do it right.

The bill before you isn't "right" ... it isn't ready ... and a bill with known mistakes and errors shouldn't become law.