

MINUTES
Approved by the Committee
Idaho Content Standards Committee
Monday, June 22, 2020
9:00 A.M.
Room EW42
Boise, Idaho

Cochair Thayn called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.; a silent roll call was taken. Members in attendance: Cochair Senator Steven Thayn and Senators Lori Den Hartog and Dave Lent; Cochair Representative Gary Marshall and Representatives Dorothy Moon, Ryan Kerby, John McCrostie and Paul Amador (via phone); LSO staff Elizabeth Bowen and Jennifer Kish. Unable to attend/excused: Senators Jim Woodward and Janie Ward-Engleking. Attendance of audience members was not recorded.

NOTE: presentations and materials distributed to members are posted to the Idaho Legislature website: <https://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2020/interim>; and copies of those items are on file with the Legislative Services Office located in the State Capitol.

Cochair Thayn made his opening remarks, noting that this meeting preceded the Department of Education's rewrite committees "kickoff" meetings, which would be held the last week of June. He asked audience members to introduce themselves. Cochair Marshall added his opening remarks emphasizing the need for cooperation and for goals to be clear and achievable.

At 9:15 a.m., Cochair Thayn initiated a review of the [letter](#) issued in March from both the House and Senate Education Committees to the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) regarding Idaho content standards. The letter is comprised of recommendations to SDE per content standards on math, English language arts, science, and ESSA assessment, as well as speaking to recommendations on the rewrite process and other curriculum related issues. Cochair Marshall reviewed the [Content Standards Revision Process](#) handout, emphasizing the necessity of understanding the what (knowledge and performance that students need to know - standards) and the how (process of teaching the standards - curriculum) of the rewrite process.

- Rep. Kerby expressed a need for less complex verbiage in detailing the standards. Cochair Marshall pleaded for the omission of political influence on the content standards. Rep. Moon and Rep. Kerby echoed that opinion especially for science content standards. Cochair Marshall requested that more emphasis be placed on grammar and writing skills at the high school level. Sen. Lent theorized that the standards should be the blocks/foundation upon which an education is built - narrow and deep rather than wide and shallow; a student may rely on one solid method rather than necessarily needing to know multiple methods.
- Cochair Thayn cautioned that modifications to the content standards should not stray from the common core standards' topics, and likewise, the relationship of standards to assessment methods needed to be considered as well. Rep. Moon advised that methods of assessment from other states should be considered when reviewing other states content standards and indicated a desire to replace the SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) method that Idaho currently employs. Rep. Kerby requested that the SDE provide a presentation on what other states are doing and what other states are using for assessment.

At 11:00 a.m., the committee recessed for a 15 minute break. Upon returning, Cochair Thayn asked committee members to express their thoughts on how to accomplish the objectives discussed in the letter.

- Sen. Lent expressed the need to create standards that were relevant for the present but also 10+ years into the future. He reminded the committee that e-learning will be much more prevalent due to normal technological advances and distance learning capabilities. Rep. Kerby emphasized

the need for the roles of educators, parents, and administrators to be clear. Sen. Den Hartog agreed and cited the clarity of the Massachusetts' Department of Elementary and Secondary Education standards (www.doe.mass.edu/highstandards). Rep. McCrostie opined the necessity of testing knowledge and performance in parity; one was not more important than the other.

- Rep. Kerby requested that information provided at the study committee's meetings, and minutes thereof, be provided to the standing House and Senate Education committee members - and other interested stakeholders - in order to keep them apprised of the committee's work. Cochair Thayn instructed the committee secretary to provide such information to those members.

Cochair Thayn provided a brief list of goals for the study committee:

1. To provide adequate monitoring of the rewrite committees to ensure that concerns of the Legislature were addressed.
2. To provide clear standards, as well as quality standards.
3. To provide standards that can be applied in a variety of ways as education needs evolve.
4. That study committee members - and legislative members - be able to support the standards that are put forward.
5. That the standards are parent friendly - are clear and concise.
6. That there is cohesion among the involved parties as the process proceeds.
7. That there is good communication of the rewritten standards to all parties involved.

With that, the committee recessed at 12:00 p.m. for lunch.

At 1:15 p.m., Cochair Thayn called upon Marilyn Whitney, Deputy Superintendent of Communications and Policy for the Idaho Department of Education, for her presentation "[Idaho Content Standards.](#)" Ms. Whitney was joined by SDE staff Karlynn Laraway, Communications Director & Press Secretary, and Todd Driver, Director of Content and Curriculum. Ms. Whitney reported that the three [content standards committees](#) (math, science, and ELA/Lit) were scheduled to have organizational meetings on either June 29th or 30th. She explained that the committees were comprised of individuals with a variety of backgrounds and positions from the community (citizens, teachers, educational administrators, legislators, etc.) Ms. Whitney noted that once the work of the committees was completed, then work would need to be done on providing professional development to educators on the new standards, as well as ensuring that assessments were aligned with the new standards.

- Rep. Moon asked whether the department had been working steadfastly on the project since receiving the March letter. Ms. Whitney reported that it had but that it was a "heavy-lift" organizing the three subject areas at the same time and that the timeline for submitting administrative rules also needed to be taken into consideration. Rep. Moon asked whether the department had adequate staff to support the committees. Ms. Whitney responded that staff had been prepping information for the committees but reminded the committee that the department was not leading the committees but rather guiding them. She added that the content committees would be held in virtual settings due to COVID protocols and doing so would take time due to logistics and the learning curve of members not familiar with the technology.
- Rep. Moon asked about the cost of the SBAC assessment per student. Ms. Whitney did not have that information. Rep. Moon reported that she understood the cost of SBAC to be quite expensive and hoped that with changes to the standards that the department would look to another assessment tool.
- Cochair Marshall asked how many members would be on each committee. Ms. Laraway reported that the math committee had 26 members, science had 40 members, and ELA/Lit had 26 members. Cochair Marshall asked whether those would then be split into smaller groups based on grade levels. Ms. Laraway agreed; each smaller committee would be approximately six members. She also noted that the smaller committees would work in parallel with the age

above and below to ensure continuity. Rep. Kerby requested that Rep. Wisniewski be added to the science committee. Rep. McCrostie noted that there were no Democratic Party legislative members on any of the provided lists. Ms. Whitney responded that all members were welcome, she just needed a name. Rep. McCrostie responded that he would provide some names.

- Rep. Kerby asked for more detail about the drafting process. Ms. Whitney responded that the "homework" within the timelines was when the drafting would occur. Such items would be shared among the smaller groups before meetings occurred.
- Sen. Lent asked about the intricacies of making changes to the standards that would affect the SBAC assessment's effectiveness. Ms. Whitney explained that it was difficult to determine; however, the department did have the ability to write its own items and remove items from the assessment. Ms. Laraway added that rewriting or reducing items may allow the current assessment to be used. She noted that an assessment was planned about five years out before being adopted. Cochair Thayn requested a presentation in a future meeting on what other states were doing and to have national industry experts comment on what was/was not working.

Cochair Thayn thanked Ms. Whitney for her presentation and moved on to discussion about future meetings and what topics needed to be presented/discussed. One topic that presented itself was how changing the standards impacted assessment tools. Rep. Moon suggested speaking with Missouri and Florida who had recently made changes and would have relevant information. Rep. Kerby suggested having guests by virtual means to provide information; possibly, to provide questions in advance to such individuals. Cochair Thayn requested that the committee members provide their questions to LSO staff. Sen. Den Hartog reminded the committee that there were professional groups and organizations within the state that could provide individuals or reports on topics.

Next, the study committee discussed how often it would like to meet and expected to receive reports from the content committees. Cochair Thayn suggested that the study committee meet sometime in August after the content committees have been able to organize and had their scheduled virtual meetings on August 3rd. Cochair Thayn requested that LSO staff poll the committee members for availability to meet the first week of August.

With business concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.