

MINUTES
JOINT FINANCE-APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 07, 2024
TIME: 8:00 A.M.
PLACE: Room C310
MEMBERS PRESENT: Senators Co-Chairman Grow, Bjerke, Burtenshaw, Lent, Cook, VanOrden, Herndon, Ward-Engelking, Just
Representatives Co-Chair Horman, Miller, Bundy, Raybould, Furniss, Handy, Lambert, Petzke, Tanner, Green
ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Adams

Co-Chair Horman called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Keith Bybee, Division Manager, LSO Budget & Policy Analysis, gave an overview of the Agricultural Research & Extension (ARES). Appropriated funding provides base support for ARES and leverage for additional grants and contract funding for ongoing program needs.

Mr. Bybee reviewed the FY 2023 budget enhancements related to the Idaho Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment (CAFE). He also described the FY 2024 enhancements for faculty positions at the CAFE research dairy.

Mr. Bybee explained the FY 2025 budget requests for the Idaho Center for Plant & Soil Health in Parma, soil health funding, irrigation and forestry faculty positions, and adult computer literacy.

In response to committee questions, **Mr. Michael Parrella**, Dean of the College of Agricultural & Life Sciences, provided context for the irrigation and forestry faculty positions. The new facility has already been key in recruiting early career research professionals. He confirmed the new building does not replace the entire complex.

In response to a committee question about the irrigation specialist position, **Dean Parrella** explained this specialist will have responsibilities for applied research, working with growers on irrigation matters, training graduate students, and perhaps serving as guest lecturers for undergraduate students.

Dean Parrella made closing remarks. He expressed appreciation for the Change in Employee Compensation (CEC), which he believes helped reduce the personnel turnover rate from 19% to 14%. He stated the work of ARES and the state's land grant institutions contribute to sustainable food production and the state's agricultural economy.

Mr. Bybee gave an overview of the Office of the State Board of Education (OSBE). OSBE is comprised of three distinctly budgeted programs: OSBE Administration, IT and Data Management, and School Safety and Security.

Mr. Bybee reviewed the organizational structure of the agency and explained the historical growth of the agency. The IT and Data Management program was transferred to OSBE in FY 2021 and the School Safety and Security Program was transferred in FY 2022. He pointed out even though the FTP cap expanded as the two programs were added to OSBE, the annual FTP average is decreasing.

Mr. Bybee briefly reviewed the dedicated funds associated with OSBE and reminded the committee the smaller funds support specific programs. He explained the difference between estimated and actual expenditures for OSBE for FY 2020-FY 2024. The differences are due largely to the influx and expending of pandemic relief funding.

Mr. Bybee explained FY 2023 enhancements related to Arts in Rural Public Schools grants, Empowering Parents grants, and School Safety and Security grants. Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds were appropriated to create the Idaho System for Education Excellence (ISEE) longitudinal data system, create a dyslexia handbook, and administer summer learning programs.

Mr. Bybee reviewed the FY 2024 budget enhancements, including ongoing funding for operational costs and Empowering Parents grants. He also pointed out the reappropriation funding for the ISEE build; as this program is still in the planning stages, OSBE will be requesting reappropriation authority in FY 2025.

Mr. Bybee introduced OSBE's FY 2024 supplemental and FY 2025 line item budget requests. He highlighted several with extra explanations. He stated two additional reappropriation requests will be discussed at budget setting for OSBE.

Mr. Matt Freeman, Executive Director of OSBE, answered committee questions. He explained OSBE began the Direct Admissions Program in 2014. OSBE used a student's GPA and SAT/ACT scores as a cutscore to determine global admission to six of the state's higher-education institutions. Currently only GPA is used as a cutscore. OSBE will now incorporate the 11th grade ISAT score into the admittance determination.

In response to a committee question, **Dir. Freeman** explained the budget request for an EBT Program Business Analyst. He pointed out this budget request is not recommended by the Governor.

In response to committee questions, **Dir. Freeman** gave further details about the college and career training coordinators, who will provide training to high school college/career counselors and students about available resources. Currently this work is being done by the small OSBE administrative staff.

In response to committee questions about the Arts in Rural Public Schools grants, **Dir. Freeman** explained OSBE has distributed all the grant money appropriated in FY 2021 and FY 2022. The FY 2025 ongoing requests would be delivered as onetime grants to rural schools and charter schools. He explained the Commission on the Arts is the grant manager; OSBE serves as a pass-through for the funds.

In response to a committee question, **Dir. Freeman** gave an update on the ISEE K-12 longitudinal data system. OSBE is currently in the intent-to-negotiate process with the Division of Purchasing. No material amount of funding has been expended on the system.

In response to committee questions about the budget request for the broadband program transfer, **Dir. Freeman** agreed it may require a policy change in statute. This would be a net-zero transfer in the base budget. The Broadband Infrastructure Fund is a dedicated fund established in Idaho Code; it has a \$1.9M ongoing appropriation.

In response to a further committee question, **Mr. Bybee** explained the original source of the Broadband Infrastructure Fund was a onetime transfer from the General Fund several years ago.

Dir. Freeman gave concluding remarks about the projects and programs of OSBE.

Mr. Jared Tatro, Deputy Division Manager, LSO Budget & Policy Analysis, gave an overview of Idaho Public Television (IPTV). IPTV has two functional areas: a statewide delivery system, which relates to public safety, and content creation and acquisition. The General Fund supports the maintenance and administration of the statewide delivery system; private source donations fund local content creation and program acquisition.

Mr. Tatro reviewed the five-year appropriations and expenditures for IPTV. He pointed out most of the growth in public television has been for onetime purchase of equipment related to public safety. He explained the increase in FY 2023 expenditures was due to the recognition IPTV was receiving extra donations; the agency requested additional appropriation to create additional content.

Mr. Tatro explained the FY 2025 budget request to replace obsolete equipment. The upgraded equipment will improve emergency alert messaging, warning capabilities, and extend the coverage area of the integrated public alert and warning system to reach more households. IPTV is waiting for final approval of the federal grant.

In response to a committee question, **Mr. Jeff Tucker**, General Manager of IPTV, gave further explanation about the request for funds to replace the warning system equipment. IPTV has not been told when the federal grant will be awarded; it is expected by the end of March 2024.

Co-Chair Horman expressed appreciation to IPTV for the transparent nature of its budget request. One way or another, IPTV will only spend the \$700K when it needs the funds.

Mr. Tucker gave concluding remarks. The continuous appropriation gives IPTV the flexibility to do what is necessary for viewers, and the General Fund allows for the basic maintenance and operation of the broadcast distribution system.

Mr. Tatro gave an overview of the State Independent Living Council (SILC). SILC promotes independent living to maximize the independence and productivity of individuals with disabilities and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into mainstream society.

Mr. Tatro reviewed the SILC Dedicated Fund. The revenue, expenditure, and cash balance has been fairly constant for the last five years. He explained in FY 2022 the Legislature reduced the Council's federal appropriation by 50%. SILC requests any remaining federal funds in the appropriation be reduced from the base budget; if SILC receives a federal grant, it will return to JFAC to request appropriation authority.

Mr. Tatro stated SILC had no FY 2023 enhancements; the FY 2024 enhancement was related to the DHR consolidation. He explained the FY 2025 budget request for external audit support. The external audit is statutorily required.

Ms. Mel Leviton, Executive Director of SILC, thanked the committee for their support and pointed out SILC is nationally recognized for its projects and partners.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

Representative Horman
Chair

Alyson Jackson
Secretary