

MINUTES  
JOINT MEETING  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 07, 2019

**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Lincoln Auditorium

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Den Hartog, Crabtree, Woodward, Lent, Buckner-Webb, and Ward-Engelking  
Chairman Clow, Vice Chairman Kerby, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Mendive, DeMordaunt, Moon, Ehardt, Goesling, Marshall, Raymond, Wisniewski, McCrostie, Abernathy, and Berch

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** None

**NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

**CONVENED:** **Chairman Mortimer** called the Joint Senate and House Education Committees (Committees) to order at 3:02 p.m.

**PASSED THE GAVEL:** Chairman Mortimer passed the gavel to Chairman Clow.

**TESTIMONY:** **Chairman Clow** welcomed the audience and stated that today's joint meeting is a listening session for the draft legislation of the Public Schools Funding Formula (PSFF). He reminded the audience the draft legislation that has been made available is not the final version for the PSFF. He set out the guidelines for the Committees and audience participants. **Chairman Clow** said developing a final draft will take time and patience and today, those who will be writing the final version are listening to all the concerns.

**Chairman Clow** welcomed Sherri Ybarra, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Department of Education (SDE), to the podium.

**Superintendent Ybarra** said she served on the interim legislative committee and is in support of the recommendations to move to a student-centered funding formula based on enrollment rather than the current formula. She stated her comments are not in support of or against the draft, rather her comments reflect how the SDE is studying the recommendations for implementation of the new formula.

**Superintendent Ybarra** provided the following concerns: 1.) Payment schedule, which creates cash flow issues for school districts; 2.) The lack of a payment base, leading to fiscal instability for districts; 3.) Incomplete enrollment data; 4.) What happens to district funding after the third year; 5.) Problematic wealth adjustments; 6.) Value index calculation; 7.) Residency and professional rungs on the Career Ladder; 8.) Lack of appropriations for additional professional education attainment; 9.) Student category definitions not aligning to administrative rule and Federal program, Every Student Succeeds Act; and 10.) An undefined school year (Attachment 1).

**TESTIMONY:**

**Rob Winslow**, Executive Director, Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA), said he is speaking on behalf of the IASA and Harold Ott, Idaho Rural Schools Administrators (IRSA). He said their associations have been following the draft closely and shared the points of concern, which are as follows: 1.) Data being used is inconsistent; 2.) Requiring the Career Ladder to be implanted as local salary schedules; 3.) The desire to see the model forecasted for three to five years; 4.) Lack of provisions for funding alternative schools; 5.) Distribution of weighted foundation moneys to the school district rather than school; 6.) Current payment schedule causing cash flow problems in every charter and school district; 7.) Idaho Digital Learning Academy needs to be included in the legislation; 8.) Will teacher evaluations still be needed; 9.) Enrollment needs to be defined; and 10.) The school district market weight value explanation is confusing (Attachment 2).

**Kari Overall**, President, Idaho Education Association (IEA), said they are appreciative of the opportunity to express their concerns regarding the drafted legislation. She said the proposed legislation does not meet the goal of being student-centered, transparent, flexible accountable, and equitable. She urged the Committee to address the shift from average daily attendance to enrollment funding and asked that they work diligently with the Governor's Task Force over the summer to write a well-thought-out formula.

**Karen Echeveria**, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), said she was here to testify on behalf of the 900 school board members the ISBA represents. She expressed her concern that during the subcommittee's work on the draft, ISBA was not included in the discussions. She said there are many technical issues with the draft legislation. **Ms. Echeveria** said there is a lack of consistent terminology and uniform definitions. She said there is a lack of funding for the required Career Ladder. She raised concerns regarding the payment schedule to districts and the requirement of additional data reporting. **Ms. Echeveria** said the wealth adjustment is not accomplishing its intent and recommended that it be amended or removed. She said the legislation as written will make it impossible for the budget writers to set the budget. She reminded the Committees of the collaborative work from the Governor's Task Force and suggested that as this legislation is being redrafted, that model should be utilized.

**Blake Youde**, Idaho Charter School Network, thanked the various committees for their work to bring this legislation forward. He said they support the formula for both its philosophical and functional reasons. He said charter schools have pressed for funding based on student needs and local control, which leads charters to meet the performance certificate goals. He stated the areas of the draft they like are enrollment base weight student funding, the simplicity of the formula, and the ability to improve the data. He stated the areas of concern are the special education weight, linking outcomes to the data, and programing the model out for three to five years for funding.

**Tom LeClaire**, President, Coalition of Charter School Families, stated they are a coalition who supports the expansion of school choice in Idaho. He stated the new formula is more student-centered and less program-centered. He suggested there will be more local control and flexibility. He stated this formula supports school choice (Attachment 4).

**Rod Gramer**, President and CEO, Idaho Business for Education (IBE), said his group has not taken a position on the proposed legislation. He noted the biggest concern from IBE is that the key education stakeholders do not support the legislation as it is currently written; it is important that everyone finds common ground. He urged all the stakeholders to collaborate and come to a consensus (Attachment 5).

**TESTIMONY:**

**Fred Birnbaum**, Vice President, Freedom Foundation, stated there are some technical issues to address before the draft is introduced. He liked that the formula was using enrollment data for funding. He stated the new formula had too many weights and was not consistent. He said the wealth adjustment is a difficult equation. He suggested the model be projected out further than three years (Attachment 6).

Superintendents **James Gilbert**, Mountain Home; **Michael Garrett**, Orofino; **Kevin Lancaster**, Bliss (Attachment 7); **Andy Grover**, Melba (Attachment 8); **GwenCarol Holmes** (Attachment 9), Blaine County; **Paula Kellerer** (Attachment 10), Nampa; **Wayne Rush**, Emmett; and CFO, West Ada School District **Jonathan Gillen**, testified against the wealth adjustment. They stated it is not an accurate indication of the wealth of the students and that school leadership cannot control the property market growth of their community. It was suggested that more school superintendents should have been included in the drafting of the legislation.

**Brandon Durst**, Parent, Boise, stated it is important to change the funding formula, but the proposed legislation needs work. He stated his opposition to the wealth adjustment and stated Idaho Digital Learning Academy needs to be funded.

**Nick Smith**, Human Resource Director, Boise School District, said the wealth adjustment in the formula is a disadvantage to rural schools. He detailed how it can harm schools. He encouraged the Committees to explore restoring the maintenance and operations levy, to address salary-based apportionment and the Career Ladder funding. He said the formula creates year-to-year volatility in funding for school districts (Attachment 11).

**Steve Smylie**, former Representative, Educator, Boise testified against the formula. He outlined the disparity the formula causes. He said the new formula won't benefit the small traditional schools and charter schools. He said where he thinks the new formula will help schools is in recruiting highly qualified teachers, offering better teacher pay, increase community involvement, and build a solid curriculum (Attachment 12).

**Allison Westfall**, Trustee, Nampa School District, said their district is in favor of school choice and school of choice tend to be small schools. The funding formula, as written, penalizes small schools. She stated her concerns about property taxes and supplemental levies.

**Chairman Clow** thanked those in attendance for sharing their concerns.

**PASS THE  
GAVEL:**

Chairman Clow passed the gavel to Chairman Mortimer.

**Chairman Mortimer** reminded the audience that what they have is a draft of the PSFF legislation. He said their input is appreciated and there is still a great deal of work to be carried out before the final draft is ready for the public.

**RECORDING  
LINK:**

To hear the complete PSFF listening session, go to:  
<https://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2019/standingcommittees/SEDU/>.

**ADJOURNED:**

There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:41 p.m.

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Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn Mohr  
Secretary