

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 22, 2017

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

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Winder, Nonini, Den Hartog, Guthrie, Crabtree, and Buckner-Webb

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Ward-Engelking

**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 Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.

**PRESENTATION:** **Idaho Office of School Safety and Security (IOSSS), Division of Building Safety. Brian Armes**, Manager said this is a new office established by statute and opened on July 5, 2016. He gave the Committee the written report (see Attachment 1) regarding the work of the office. He said the goals for IOSSS is to provide safety and security assessments to schools as well as train and support school administrators as to how best secure their buildings.

**Mr. Armes** detailed the goals of IOSSS: 1.) develop and employ a comprehensive process and instrument for triennial school assessments; 2.) compile accurate information on all LEAs, school location and school configuration; 3.) identify and implement multiple modes of support for the improvement of safety and security within schools; and 4.) identify and establish connection with the agencies, institutions and organizations that serve schools, school personnel, or provide some type of service useful for promoting safety and security within the school environment. **Mr. Armes** said the goal was to get their office locations across the State fully functional before school started by September. And the goal is to be in all schools within the next three years. He reported to the Committee the data completed which detailed the trends in the assessments.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked if Mr. Armes would describe the instrument used for assessments. **Mr. Armes** replied the model comes from a tool used in Texas which is been modified for Idaho schools. He explained this is a visual assessment and how the assessors implement its use.

**Senator Nonini** asked if the State Board of Education (SBE) has a role in the assessments of schools. **Mr. Armes** replied the SBE does a role, the executive director does sit the IOSSS board and that is the direct pipeline to IOSSS.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked how many schools the IOSSS has assessed. **Mr. Armes** replied about 120 schools. There are 660 schools that will need to be assessed in the next three years.

**Senator Winder** asked if teachers have been trained as how to react in case of a security situation. **Mr. Armes** replied they are working to train teachers to assess their environment for a proper response to a security situation. He said each school is unique and has specific strategies for their environment. He explained the "See Tell Now" campaign which trains teachers and administrators how to recognize a security situation.

**Senator Winder** asked if once the assessments are completed will each school have its own recommendation. **Mr. Armes** replied in the affirmative. After each assessment there is an executive summary that is given to the school's administrator.

**Senator Buckner-Webb** said she appreciates the level of rigor IOSSS has in implementation of this program. She asked if temporary classrooms are a concern. **Mr. Armes** replied they are especially vulnerable. He stated these are some of the challenges schools encounter. Those issues and others require better security policies and procedures. He explained some of the steps that are being taken to secure the temporary classrooms.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked how they assess the culture and climate of the school. **Mr. Armes** replied it is subjective and difficult to measure. He explained it is important to include climate and culture in the assessment. Most offenses occur due to some type of bullying or harassment at the student level. He said as a point of interest, all schools have acknowledged there is some type of student bullying on their campus.

**PRESENTATION: Early Childhood Learning. Beth Oppenheimer** Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children introduced today's topic and asked Representative Christy Perry, District 11 to begin the presentation.

**Representative Perry** stated the most pressing issue today is kindergarten school readiness and indicated early childhood education is a means to address the issue.. She spoke about working in collaboration to develop new ways to educate Idaho's children. She said policymakers have the ability to break down barriers and develop new systems for educational opportunities. She said the upcoming presenters will give us ideas to help develop new educational strategies. She said today's presentation is from a variety of speakers regarding the benefits of early childhood education (see Attachment 2).

The following people spoke in favor of early childhood education:

**Beth Oppenheimer**, Executive Director, Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC);

**Dr. Dean Cloward**, Faculty, Department of Education, Brigham Young University-Idaho;

**Dr. David Allen**, Professor of Education-Early Childhood Education Program, Brigham Young University-Idaho;.

**Alyssa Townsend**, Kindergarten Teacher Reed Elementary, Kuna School District;

**Farhana Hibbert**, Parent, Pocatello, Idaho;

**John McFarlane**, Superintendent, Basin School District, Idaho City Idaho;

**Dr. Shalene French**, Superintendent, Caldwell School District, Caldwell, Idaho;

**Park Price**, Chairman of the Board, Bank of Idaho, Eastern Regional Chair, Idaho Business for Education;

**Judge Gregory Cutlet**, Retired Third District Judge;

**Admiral Archie Clemens (Ret)**, Admiral U.S. Navy (Ret), Member, Idaho Business for Education, Boise Idaho; and

**Lieutenant Governor Brad Little**, State of Idaho.

They reported information on the following topics: school readiness; betterment of reading and college exam scores; reduction in crime; the preschool learning gap; parents as teachers; statewide economic development; and the positive return on the State's investment.

**Vice Chairman Thayne** asked what is family involvement in early childhood education programs. **Dr. Allen** replied a good quality early childhood program includes a family support component: one that helps teach parents better parenting skills. **Vice Chairman Thayne** asked if the reduction of young men going on to college is due to incorrect experiences in early childhood education. **Dr. Allen** replied studies indicate that if children have an opportunity to be in a program which prepares them for school and gives them a rich experience, they have a better chance of going on for post secondary education.

**Vice Chairman Thayne** asked if pre-kindergarten should offer a variety of programs. **Ms. Oppenheimer** replied families need choices and opportunities that fit that families needs.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked if children are physically and psychologically ready to learn all that is expected of them. **Ms. Oppenheimer** replied in the negative. Based on the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) reading scores, which identifies the basic needs to enter kindergarten, 50 percent of Idaho students are not able to identify 11 letters in the alphabet. She explained the achievement gap starts in kindergarten due to the lack of educational experiences between the age of birth to five years of age. She stated they simply aren't ready to start kindergarten.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked if they know what has happened to have created this gap. **Ms. Townsend** replied technology has played a huge role in early childhood development. Children are tapping on screens and not holding pencils or crayons: it is keeping them away from learning those early skills. There are fewer stay-at-home parents, which equates to less support and less opportunities to learn those skills.

**Senator Nonini** said many of the presenters mentioned parents as teachers. He asked if the Parents as Teachers program is still available. **Ms. Oppenheimer** replied it does exist but it is not funded. It is now funded through other nonprofits and other partnerships. It is no longer readily available.

**Senator Nonini** asked if Dr. French was familiar with the pay for success legislation. He explained the program and said it works with the private sector to help with early childhood reading. **Dr. French** replied she was not familiar with the program. She said the Caldwell School District has reached out to Head Start and P16 because they are a funding source. She explained how these programs work with families and students to build community relations and develop learning skills.

**Rod Gramer**, President, IBE, said they are familiar with Pay for Success law. IBE believes it can play a critical role in pre-K and early education as well is parents as teachers.

**Chairman Mortimer** thanked all presenters. He stated this discussion could be more in depth at a later date.

**PRESENTATION: Education Assessment Update. Sherri Ybarra**, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Department of Education said today's presentation is regarding information on Idaho's statewide assessments. She stated that this relates to the SDE's educational goal number 1: all students persevere in life and are ready for college and career. She explained in order to be ready for college and career students must have available to them supportive assessments or testing systems. She said the data received helps local districts support students' achievement. **Superintendent Ybarra** said this presentation is a snapshot on mathematics and English language arts results in a detailed report of what data is available to the local leaders, teachers, and parents.

**Karlynn Laraway**, Director of Assessment, SDE, reviewed the Idaho Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) results from the spring 2016 administration, the testing times, and an overview of the reports that are available to support educators, parents, and students. She said the focus today is specifically on the English language arts and mathematic assessments but she will answer questions on any other assessments.

**Ms. Laraway** reviewed for the Committee the test results and highlighted the positive changes in specific grade levels, comparing the 2015 and the 2016 assessments. She specified that every grade showed improvements (see Attachment 3). She reported the testing times for students in most of the grade levels resulted in a decrease of time and in two grade levels no change in testing time.

**Ms. Laraway** said Idaho is a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and that provides educators with information and tools to improve their teaching and student learning. She said the assessment reports are available 10 days after the test is submitted to districts, administrators, and teachers. She explained the steps necessary to access the data; currently approximately 40 percent of the teachers statewide have access to that information. **Ms. Laraway** reported the results are reported in two different ways: proficiency and performance. She gave examples of each of the reports showing the breakdown, a summary of each score, how they can be filtered, and how the assessment can aligned to the standards. She explained how the tests and assessments are used by teachers to aid student learning and formulate differentiated instruction. **Ms. Laraway** said school administrators are able to examine student performance to gauge their schools achievement. She detailed for the Committee how parents also have access to the reports.

**Ms. Laraway** said this comprehensive assessment system provides districts access to interim assessments. These allow frequent measures of students' progress. She explained the type of assessments available. She said American Institutes for Research (AIRWays) is an online tool that provides item level analysis for each student. This shows teachers how students perform on specific test questions.

**Senator Den Hartog** asked when the testing results are available. **Ms. Laraway** replied they are available 10 days after the test is concluded. She explained all the detailed reports for 2016 were available by June 3rd. **Senator Den Hartog** asked if the data is of any use to the current teacher or is it to help the teacher for the next year. **Ms. Laraway** replied this is for both. Teachers can review the gains made over the course of the year. It is also for teachers to review their classroom practice and determine if improvements need to be made for the next year. She said for the new teacher in August, this information gives them an idea of students' achievement.

**Vice Chairman Thayn** asked what does the report "performance relative to the test" mean. **Ms. Laraway** replied it is an indication of a student's achievement based on a specific target. She gave examples to illustrate the report.

**Senator Buckner-Webb** said that these reports are interesting. They look as though they been written by people in the discipline and that parents may not understand the information. She asked if they have considered simplifying this for parents. **Ms. Laraway** replied the report should be meaningful for parents and students.

**Superintendent Ybarra** said today's presentation is to show you the depth of the testing system. The SDE has developed a parent committee to work on making these reports friendlier to parents. Rest assured they are working on means to simplify this information.

**Senator Nonini** asked if Superintendent Ybarra heard from teachers and administrators regarding these tests. **Superintendent Ybarra** replied this is a summit assessment – end of year. She said teachers do want the data to form instruction but what they don't want is to be criticized if it student results are not at the expected level. This information is used to better instruction.

**Senator Buckner-Webb** said in an effort to have collaboration between families, educators, and administrators these reports need to be easier to decipher. **Superintendent Ybarra** agreed.

**Ms. Laraway** said their department understands the need to simplify what parents receive. She said an interpretive guide was developed to explain to parents the reports. She explained the SDE works with teachers across the State to understand the purpose of assessments and in assessment literacy; how to read and interpret the reports so teachers can adjust instruction.

**Chairman Mortimer** asked how many SDE personnel are going out into the schools across the State to explain the assessments. **Ms. Laraway** replied it is combination of departments: the assessment team, capacity builders, and content specialists. She said the SDE is utilizing all of the resources to help promote and spread the use of the assessment results in a way that will positively affect teaching and learning in the classroom.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no more business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:57 p.m.

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Senator Dean M. Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn Mohr  
Secretary