

MINUTES
Approved by the Committee
Funding Construction of Public Schools
Thursday, November 10, 2022
2:30 P.M.
Room WW55
Boise, Idaho

Members in attendance: Cochairs Senator Dave Lent and Representative Jason Monks; Senators Lori Den Hartog, Kevin Cook, Jeff Agenbroad, and Janie Ward-Engelking; Representatives Julie Yamamoto, Matthew Bundy, and Sally Toone. Absent/excused: Representative Paul Amador. Legislative Services Office (LSO) staff in attendance: Trevor Ahrens, Jared Tatro, and Grace King.

Note: Presentations and handouts provided by the presenters/speakers are posted to the Idaho Legislature's website <https://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2022/interim> and copies of those items are on file at the Legislative Services Office in the State Capitol. Recordings of the meeting may be available under the committee's listing on the website.

Cochair Lent called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.; a silent roll call was taken.

Opening Remarks

Cochair Lent requested a motion for the minutes. **Representative Bundy moved to approve the October 25, 2022, minutes. Senator Ward-Engelking seconded and the minutes were approved by voice vote.**

State Funding of Public Schools

Cochair Lent invited Fred Birnbaum, Director of Legislative Affairs at the Idaho Freedom Foundation, to give a presentation regarding state funding of public schools. Mr. Birnbaum provided a chart regarding per-student funding between 2004 and 2022 from sources such as general funds, dedicated funds, federal funds, and local taxes and levies.

- Senator Ward-Engelking wondered if Esser funds were included in the federal funds category. Mr. Birnbaum confirmed that it was. He added that the chart showed what was spent, not what was appropriated, so it may have been possible that some of the appropriated Esser funds were not spent.
- Cochair Monks asked why there was a difference between the amount appropriated versus expenditures. Mr. Birnbaum explained that analyzing the amount spent may include supplemental appropriations that were not included in the original budget.
- Senator Agenbroad inquired about the amount from Esser funds that may be available to use toward school facilities. Mr. Birnbaum stated that he was unsure and suggested that the topic should be examined before receiving the Esser funds. Senator Agenbroad asked Mr. Birnbaum to research the topic for the committee.

Bluum Report on Projected New School Facilities

Cochair Lent invited Blake Youde, Lobbyist for Youde & Associates and representing the Idaho Charter School Network, to give a presentation regarding the Bluum report on projected new school facilities. His presentation included information on the number of schools needed in the future, where schools would need to be built, and a comparison of construction costs between public and charter schools.

Policy Possibilities and Policy Objectives Matrix

Cochair Lent provided the committee a handout that listed suggested policies as brought forward by committee members in previous meetings. He asked committee members to rank the policies in order of preference and to include any other policies they would be interested in discussing.

- Senator Den Hartog commented that the list seemed to be extensive and that she had nothing to add to the list.
- Senator Agenbroad urged the committee to consider the equity of the Bond Levy Equalization program between urban and rural school districts.
- Representative Bundy asked to include grant matches and the prioritization of schools based on age.
- Senator Ward-Engelking expressed appreciation for a report by the Office of Performance Evaluations but asked if it could be expanded to include information for all of Idaho's school districts.

Open Discussion

Cochair Lent invited the committee to discuss policy suggestions.

- Senator Agenbroad proposed that the Endowment Fund be used to create a grant program or to distribute a certain amount to each school district every year.
- Cochair Lent commented that the funds from the 2022 extraordinary session could be utilized to fund construction costs.
- Representative Toone expressed concern about funding formulas because they may not be equitable toward smaller districts. She suggested looking into caveats for the different types of schools, such as elementary schools, high schools, and career technical schools.
- Cochair Monks suggested that smaller school districts consolidate their funds for new construction costs because not all school districts would need those funds at the same time.
- Senator Cook proposed that the state fund new facilities based on standard building plans and that if communities wanted facilities for extracurriculars such as football fields or amphitheaters, the community would have to raise funds for those.
- Representative Yamamoto commented that charter schools do not receive Endowment funds and added that charter schools should be included in the revolving loan fund suggestion.
- Senator Ward-Engelking stated that public school students and charter school students should receive the same amount of money from the state if charter schools are to receive Endowments funds.
- Representative Bundy explained that charter schools can use public school facilities for extracurriculars.

After closing comments, the meeting was adjourned at 3:41 p.m.