

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION WORK GROUP September 3, 2014 MEETING NOTES

Present: Don Soltman; Dr. Cori Mantle Bromley, Chair; Senator Roy Lacey
Bill Brulotte, and Katie Graupman (via teleconference)

Others present: Marilyn Whitney, State Board of Education

Don Soltman and Marilyn Whitney reported to the committee on the outcome of the meeting hosted by Roger Quarles at the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation (Albertson) on September 3, 2014, which focused on the report by the Institute for Evidence-Based Change, entitled “Review of Idaho’s Educational Technology and Data Systems; Moving Idaho Forward” (Albertson Report). The committee focused on the 4-page executive summary of the 82-page report.

Mr. Soltman reported that Andy Mehl and Chris Mathias from the State Board of Education were in attendance, as were Rob Winslow, Executive Director of the Idaho Association of School Administrators; Alex Macdonald, Director, Instructional Technology, State Department of Education; as well as other interested parties and stakeholders.

The report was presented, and then attendees broke into three groups to explore a question. The group discussions were recorded and will be provided as a written report.

The Executive Summary emphasized the need for “[a] statewide plan [which] will move Idaho forward and ensure that we remain at the forefront of national efforts to enlist technology and data in the service of student success. This step should be taken before further investments in the systems are made.” Mr. Soltman asked who would be responsible for the statewide plan. Roger Quarles suggested that the group present might reconvene to determine the keeper of the plan, although Mr. Quarles did not believe the State needed a statewide plan, but rather felt that districts should receive block grants to fund a plan based on their own needs. Mr. Soltman and Ms. Whitney agreed that the recommendations from the Innovation and Collaboration group could be considered the plan once their recommendations have gone to the Governor.

Bill Brulotte expressed concern about funding – that it needed to be statewide. Ms. Whitney added that many districts have been nervous about line item funding from the state in building sustainability; they are concerned that funding will not be ongoing. Funding needs to be built into operational funding, not capital needs.

The committee discussed their recommendation #10.2 in relation to technology funding.

Dr. Mantle-Bromley noted that the West Ada County School District (Meridian) is not advocating one-on-one devices, especially in elementary schools. Individual devices are much like individual textbooks; whereas shared devices encourage collaboration which a goal in today's education. Students can rotate devices between iPads, Chromebooks, and others. Principal Becky Meyer said that her elementary teachers agree.

The committee supported its recommendation that the technology pilots be discontinued and that the state provide equitable funding for all districts. Senator Lacey said that a good strategy to the legislature would be to ask for "x" dollars per student in the districts' operational budget. Each district could decide for itself how to use those dollars.

Mr. Soltman suggested that a gap analysis be undertaken to identify districts which have good technology plans in place and then determine what would be needed to bring all districts to that level. While it may take a year to gather the information, part of Idaho's problem lies in not knowing what districts have in place. Some have sets of classroom Chromebooks; some have 10 year old computer stations.

The committee explored the fiscal impact of \$100 and \$200 per student over five years x 285,000 students, which could be used for devices, support, maintenance and software. They agreed the funding needs to be ongoing so that districts can plan.

The committee next reviewed the Executive Summary's 9 "themes" in relation to its own report:

Theme 1: "The State lacks understanding of the technology and data needs of all school districts in the state."

Dr. Mantle-Bromley agreed that this statement was true. The State has a fairly good idea in some areas, but not in others. She did not believe that a needs assessment would result in more understanding. Wide disparity exists, as does the need for accurate and timely data. Ms. Whitney noted that the committee's recommendations discuss what a 21st century learning environment should do, and does provide some general guidance; however, given the direction toward district autonomy, she did not believe that the State should dictate to the districts.

The committee agreed to preface their recommendations by acknowledging disparate technology, lack of timely data, and uncertainty over technology funding. Senator Lacey said that in order to operationalize technology funding, monies could be taken from one area and put into another fairly easily. A per student figure needs a rationale behind it. Ms. Whitney agreed to look into research studies for a cost analysis. The Fiscal Impact statement of \$15 million per year plus \$21 per student for IEN falls in line with Superintendent Luna's 2015-16 technology budget recommendation of \$19.4 million.

Theme 2: "Idaho is struggling with the cost of and accessibility to technology in school districts, in the classroom and outside the classroom."

The Executive summary recommended that a 3-5 year statewide strategic technology and data use plan be developed. Ms. Whitney advised that the Accountability and Autonomy group is recommending that the new legislation for annual planning be re-written to focus on continuous improvement process rather than strategic planning. She did feel, however that districts should have a technology integration plan.

Themes 3 and 4: *“Educators lack coordinated and effective professional development in data and technology use.” “A considerable gap exists between the technical assistance needed in districts, schools, classrooms and the technology support available.”*

The committee felt that it had discussed the need for support and coaching in depth. The Idaho Educational Technology Association may be able to play a roll. Students can help on a classroom level, but not on a school or district level. The committee felt that their discussions and Recommendation #10.3 covered these themes.

Theme 5: “Rapid changes in technology and the evolving needs of students and teachers leave districts struggling to keep up.”

The committee felt that the Doceo Center for Innovation + Learning¹ could be useful in listing computer applications. Vetting those applications would be more problematic. A list server for technology coaches might also be useful. The committee felt Theme 5 had been addressed adequately in their report.

Theme 6: “Districts are ahead of the state when it comes to creating policies about technology.”

Don Soltman said that the Albertson Report survey stated that the State did not provide any guidance for technology policy. The committee agreed that this issue lay outside the purview of its work, but did agree to add language encouraging the Idaho School Boards Association to collect current technology policies and share best practices with its members.

Theme 7: “Idaho’s weak definition of college and career readiness makes it difficult to assess and set goals for students, schools or districts.”

The committee agreed that this theme was not within their scope. Ms. Whitney advised that the Accountability and Autonomy group has addressed it in their recommendations.

Theme 8: “Administrators, teachers and other educational stakeholders are not skilled at using data.”

¹ <http://www.doceocenter.org/>

The committee agreed to add language to their second “deliverable” to include professional development in the use of data for decision-making.

Theme 9: “The state lacks effective collaboration, coordination and communications surrounding data and technology.”

The committee agreed with this statement, adding that their work was driven by recognizing the need for Innovation, Collaboration and Technology Systems. Ms. Whitney added that the Accountability and Autonomy group is making strong recommendations for more and better data to be used for decision making. The committee agreed that it needed to wait for the Office of Performance Evaluation to complete its inquiry before making further recommendations.

The committee continued reviewing their recommendations. They discussed the IEN claim that none of the districts had reached capacity in their broadband usage, and that broadband was therefore adequate. Becky Meyer said that in Sandpoint, they had capped out, and then increased capacity, so they do not show as having exceeded usage. In order for elementary or high schools to piggyback onto the high school broadband network, they would need direct line of sight for wireless or fiber optics; however most rural districts have neither.

The committee noted that Superintendent Luna had recommended that the school year be increased by two days for professional development. The committee agreed to keep its recommendation at three days.

In Recommendation #3, the committee added language to ensure that districts would not be penalized who already provided professional development for collaborations skills, data use and management training.

With minor additions, the committee approved its final report.

Ms. Whitney advised that the committee had completed its work with the exception of reconvening after the receiving the Office of Performance Evaluation Report. She advised that a Special Board Meeting has been called for October 3, 2014 for the board to review and act on all of the recommendations before they are sent to the Governor. She also advised that members will be effective advocates during the legislative session to inform the legislators’ decisions.

Committee members expressed their appreciation for each other and the work they had accomplished. With that, the meeting was adjourned.