

April 28, 2006

BOARD ANNOUNCES WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE DEAF/BLIND EDUCATION

State Board of Education President Laird Stone announced a broad group of Idahoans who will evaluate more in-depth the issues associated with improving education for blind or deaf students in Idaho.

The group will be chaired by Karen McGee, state board member and speech pathologist from Pocatello. Other members include:

- Laird Stone, President of the State Board of Education
- Donna Pence, Representative, District 25
- Randy Tilley, Senior Financial Management Analyst, Division of Financial Management
- Russ Hammond, Special Education Coordinator, State Department of Education
- Dr. David Mercaldo, Professor, Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders, and Education of the Deaf, Idaho State University
- Jim Cobble, Superintendent, Jerome School District
- Duke Morten, Gooding City Councilman
- Christine Ivie, Elementary and Secondary Officer, State Board of Education
- Cathy Thornton, Director of Special Programs, Meridian School District

Other members may be added as necessary and additional stakeholders will be asked to meet with the group as topics arise.

This group has expertise in a variety of areas including research in educational programs for students with all types of disabilities; research in deaf/hearing impaired education; program design, curriculum and professional development for special education programs; special education law and compliance with federal regulations; state funding; state policy development; Gooding employment and finance issues; school district funding; school district administration; administration of special programs for public school students; state teacher certification; federal requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers and paraprofessionals.

In July 2005, the Board organized a committee to examine educational programs in Idaho for the deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired students in Idaho. The committee created nine recommendations to address deaf and blind education in Idaho and called for a committee to give further study.