

**TASK FORCE FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION  
MEETING NOTES  
January 11, 2013  
Yanke Family Research Park  
Boise, ID**

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**Attendees:** Doug Baker, Laurie Boeckel, Roger Brown, Cheryl Charlton, Linda Clark, Penni Cyr, Reed DeMordaunt, Karen Echeverria, Ken Edmunds, Wayne Freedman, John Goedde, Mary Huff, Teresa Jackman, Alex LaBeau, Mike Lanza, Rod Lewis, Bob Lokken, Tom Luna, Don Kellar (sitting in for Alan Millar), Phyllis Nichols, Katie Pemberton, Roger Quarles, Mary Ann Ranells, Anne Ritter, Brian Smith, Geoffrey Thomas, Janie Ward-Engelking, Richard Westerberg, Rob Winslow, Cindy Wilson.  
Facilitator: Mike Rush

**9:00 am Meeting Called to Order; Welcome and introductions – Richard Westerberg, State Board of Education**

Richard Westerberg from the State Board of Education and Chair of the Task Force for Improving Education welcomed the members to the meeting. He identified some general meeting and discussion guidelines for Task Force members and introduced Roger Brown from the Governor's Office who offered additional opening comments on behalf of the Governor.

Mr. Westerberg asked attendees to introduce themselves and provide a brief explanation of their background and why they accepted the invitation to serve on this Task Force. After introductions, Mr. Westerberg reiterated the purpose of this Task Force is entirely for improving education. He described the State Board's role in the discussion as a leadership role and pointed out what would be excluded from discussion are the items of labor relations issues (i.e., contract negotiations and tenure). He added that the discussion will not spend a lot of time on 2013 budget issues as the Legislature is already aware of them.

Mr. Westerberg pointed out the agenda for the meeting and the timeline for the next two scheduled meetings. He went on to the presentation portion of the meeting and introduced Rod Lewis from the State Board of Education for a presentation of the overview and progress of education initiatives in Idaho and the need for continued improvement efforts.

**9:15 am Overview and Progress of Education Initiatives in Idaho and the Need for Continued Improvement Efforts – Rod Lewis, State Board of Education**

Mr. Lewis commented his goal today is to set the framework for the Task Force. He indicated the main points of his discussion will include previous and current educational improvement efforts, the fact there is still room for improvement, the fact that effective

teachers and effective schools make a difference in student achievement, and to remind us of the State's goal to increase post-secondary degree attainment.

In discussing educational improvements, Mr. Lewis pointed out several past and current initiatives in the education arena. He emphasized the need to propel education forward on a collaborative basis. Mr. Lewis shared some charts showing math and science proficiency, indicating levels in the U.S. are considerably low. He pointed out that Idaho's average is higher than the U.S. average, but is still low. In reading proficiency, the US is falling behind many other countries and again, Idaho is above the U.S. average, but still considerably low. To summarize, Mr. Lewis reported that overall, improvement in education is barely keeping pace with the moving target with Idaho's rate of improvement being in the middle of the pack. He added that ACT and SAT scores have been flat over the last five years and only 1 in 4 students met the 2012 college readiness benchmarks set by the College Board.

Mr. Lewis moved on to speak about effective teachers having a positive impact on student achievement. Using the example of math, there was a direct correlation between math scores and teacher effectiveness. Mr. Lewis reiterated the Board's 60% goal which is to achieve a postsecondary degree/credential attainment among Idaho's citizens by 2020. Adding that increasing our go-on rate and our postsecondary success is strongly correlated to educational improvement in K-12.

Mr. Lewis additionally pointed out that unemployment rates decline with more education and that while postsecondary education has become increasingly more important, the U.S. has begun to trail others internationally in degree attainment. He also provided a comparison chart of WICHE states showing that Idaho is considerably lower than its neighboring states. He commented on the percent of Idaho high school students in need of remediation and that Idaho is facing a real problem with students in need of remediation overall.

Mr. Lewis concluded his presentation with a message of hope. He pointed out the importance of noting that Idaho has made considerable improvement in increasing the number of dual credit courses and AP courses taken by students. He encouraged the Task Force members to embrace the challenge to improve Idaho's education system, reminding them that while Idaho is improving, other states and countries are moving forward at an even faster pace.

**9:45 am Fiscal Impact of Repeal of Students Come First Laws – Paul Headlee, Principal Budget Analyst for Public Schools & Higher Education, Legislative Services Office**

Mr. Headlee provided an overview of the fiscal impact of the repeal of the Students Come First laws – Propositions 1, 2 and 3. Mr. Headlee shared that his presentation would include information on the laws affected by Propositions 1, 2, and 3, the fiscal impact on the FY 2013 Public Schools Appropriation, and options for unallocated funds in the FY 2013 Public Schools Appropriation. Mr. Headlee identified that the Propositions affected labor laws, pay for performance bonuses, technology and mobile

computing devices. He pointed out that the FY 2013 Public Schools Appropriation Bill (S1410) was not directly impacted by the Propositions, but that there are significant indirect impacts. This bill is where the funds are contained that would have made the Students Come First laws actually work. He indicated that the S1410 current year appropriation is \$1,566 billion which is a 4.6% increase in the General Fund from the previous year, and comprises 47.4% of the FY 2013 statewide General Fund appropriations.

Mr. Headlee discussed the programs and provisions that were repealed, showing what was saved and what was expended. He also pointed out what programs and provisions were reinstated. Mr. Headlee indicated that when you net the savings versus the costs, there is roughly \$30.6 million in the appropriation that is unallocated presently (i.e., without spending authority). The question is what happens to the money. Mr. Headlee indicated there are several different options for this money. Option one would be to take no additional Legislative action which means that \$30+ million remains in the appropriation until the end-of-year reconciliation. If those funds remain after the end-of-year reconciliation, then they are transferred into the Public Education Stabilization Fund (PESF). This would result in a \$49 million dollar balance in PESF. Summarily, if there is a positive variance, those funds are deposited into PESF; if the variance is negative, they are withdrawn from PESF.

Pointing out that Propositions 1, 2, and 3 repealed \$37+ million of funding disbursements to school districts in the 2012-2013 school year, Mr. Headlee highlighted some challenges the school districts are facing. The largest challenge will be with the staffing flexibility commonly referred to as the "Use it/Lose it" provision. Other challenges are with the dual credit for early completers, funding for additional math and science teachers, re-freezing of education credits on the salary table, and with the second distribution of classroom technology.

Mr. Headlee indicated option two would be to distribute the money to the school districts. This option would require Legislative action to reinstate the aforementioned programs and distribute the \$30+ million to school districts in FY 2013. This equates to 2.4% of the district's General Fund appropriation. Mr. Headlee indicated this would result in a \$6,855 million withdrawal from PESF.

Mr. Headlee indicated that the third option would be for the Legislature to redirect funds for purposes other than public schools which would require a 2/3 vote from the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC). At the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Headlee also provided a handout showing the Governor's recommendation for FY 2014 Public School Support.

Mr. Westerberg thanked Mr. Headlee for his presentation. At this time, the meeting recessed for a ten minute break.

After the break, Mr. Westerberg commented that this Task Force was authorized by an Executive Order from the Governor. He invited the Legislative representatives on this Task Force to offer comments going forward. Senator Goedde indicated that they will

be reporting to the Governor on the results and findings from this Task Force. Representative DeMordaunt echoed the comments of Senator Goedde adding that they are looking forward to the input from Committee members.

### **10:15 am Framing the Issues – Ken Edmunds, State Board of Education**

Mr. Edmunds spoke to the attendees about the budget recommendations and provided motivational comments and overarching questions for the Task Force on what lies ahead in the way of education and how to improve it. He indicated that Dr. Mike Rush from the Board office would act as a facilitator to this meeting.

### **10:30 am Identification and Prioritization of Issues – Facilitated by Mike Rush, State Board of Education**

Dr. Rush thanked Boise State for its involvement in video streaming and technical assistance for today's meeting, along with all their additional services. He asked stakeholders to identify what the key issues are they would like to address with this Task Force. He pointed out that the group would be identifying short and long term items. Short term items would be any Legislative recommendation or item that needs to be addressed by mid February (or within the next 30 days). Any item that does not need to be addressed within this Legislative session would be considered as a long term item. Dr. Rush pointed out items in each category will be prioritized separately and that there may be some overlap in each category as well. Dr. Rush enlisted the assistance of Ms. Kathy Hagler for the identification and categorization of the main issues identified by the Task Force. For ease of visibility to the Task Force members, Ms. Hagler captured the issues on large sheets of paper placed at the front of the room.

After collective discussion by the stakeholders, Task Force focus areas included:

#### **1. Professional Development**

- Tie to teacher effectiveness
- Create grant programs for districts
- Professional Development
  - Collaborate
    - Between teachers and schools
    - Consistent and regular collaboration efforts
  - Time for research and collaboration
  - On-going development
  - Funding for development
  - Professional development in technology for teachers & administrators
- Improvement of educational leadership in our schools
- Train leaders at all levels, starting with Boards & Administrators
  - Pre-service and In-service for elected officials at the district level

#### **2. Teacher Effectiveness**

- Time is necessary for improvement
- Collaboration for university level preparation

- Mentoring and sharing/collaboration with other teachers
- National Board Certification
- Goals for teachers
- Get feedback from teachers
  - What would incentivize them?
  - Get meaningful input
  - What are problems
- Best practices
  - How to replicate best practices in Idaho
- Recruitment and retention
- What makes a good teacher v. a bad teacher
- Test improvement, not just benchmarks
- Consolidate resources and personnel in rural areas – do more with less

### 3. Fiscal Stability

- Districts are not stable if funding is not stable
- Operational costs must be funded adequately
- Funding must be predictable
- Control should be at local board level – have a say in how to best use money
- Set money aside in grant program for local districts
- Teacher pay
- Spending flexibility
- Accountability measures for trust and confidence in education system
- Incentivize districts by tying funds to successful five-year plans
- Increase per-pupil funding
- Funding for school safety
- Consistent resources
- Economic problems of small districts

### 4. Technology

- Use Idaho teachers to write and teach on-line classes
- Use IEN
- Focus on technology to make improvements in education
- Maintain technology funding
- Professional development in technology
- Establish metrics and accountability measures for technology in districts
- Technology infrastructure must be in place
- Identify technology issues

### 5. Recruitment and Retention

- Fiscal realities in hiring high quality teachers (master teachers)
- Importance of educational leadership (Superintendents)
- How to attract the best and brightest

### 6. Local Control

- Training for school boards
- Accountability standards at local level
  - What happens if they don't meet accountability standards?
  - How to address school districts that are not functioning?
- Give more latitude to boards and districts in reform efforts.
- Implementation of common core

## 7. Structural Changes

- Need to change our "model" of education
- BYU Idaho – local example of change that is working
- Look at charter schools
- Districts must be driven by student outcomes
- Districts have had to reduce class time because of reduction in budgets
- How do we "innovate"
- Structure: Good leadership comes from the top down
- Recognize importance of classified staff (compensation also)
- Consider importance of Pre-K and Kindergarten
- What can we do that is not always linked to "we need more money"
- State and Federal requirements are aligned
- Structure issues
  - Year round schooling
  - Teacher collaboration time
  - Revised day schedule – longer; different hours, or other
  - More focused time

## 8. Leadership

- Are administrators trained to use the state-wide evaluation model?
- Every level of education needs better leaders
- Good leadership comes from the top down – every level of education needs better leaders
- Accountability system that ties to leadership is a key to our work
- Should elected officials be required to understand our schools?
- Look at the current qualify of our applicants
- Consider the leadership role of counselors in "Go-On"
- Test improvement, not just benchmarks

## 9. Differences in Districts

- Not all our districts have effective leaders
- Should we consider consolidation (using the IEN)?
- We must enable structural reform
- Retention and recruitment is difficult in most districts
- How can we get parents more involved?
- How can we create equity between schools?

## 10. Best Practices

- Utah is going to a three-semester school
- Best practices
  - How to replicate best practices in Idaho
- Consider the impact of school choice
- We have created “mastery” that could replace seat time and few use it
- What are the southern states doing that their “Go-On” rates are so much better than ours?

#### 11. Student Voice

- Do our local enrollment kids succeed?
- Let past students tell us what they needed as they went through HS and college. What worked or what didn't.
  - Where can we improve for students?
  - Why are grads not pursuing higher education?
  - What are educators missing?
  - What skills are students missing?
  - Why don't students feel prepared for college after high school?

After the Task Force identified the focus areas and discussed items for each category, Mr. Westerberg excused the group for a lunch break.

#### **2:45 am Identification of Next Steps & Action Items—Facilitated by Mike Rush, State Board of Education**

Dr. Rush urged the Task Force to identify those items that must be addressed in the next 30 days. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that the 2013 Public Schools Appropriation budget issues were being addressed by the Legislature and the Task Force should focus on long-term issues. Mr. Lewis suggested a progress report for the Legislature consisting of where we are headed and what we plan to accomplish in the 2014 Legislative session. There was discussion around developing a framework for where Idaho's education is headed and consensus that the Task Force needs to present a clear and collective picture of where it believes funds would best be spent.

There was considerable discussion on the budget and that the focus should be on the deliverable with the deliverable being the Board's 60% goal. There was continued discussion on the Board's 60% goal and agreement that the members of the Task Force in its entirety believe in building a system that propels Idaho to accomplish the Board's 60% goal.

The Task Force went on to discuss whether it should make a recommendation to the Legislature. The Legislative representatives responded that the longer term mission is much broader, but that a recommendation for clarity's sake might be appreciated. Mr. Westerberg, as Chair of the Committee, encouraged sending a letter to the Legislature that the Task Force is in agreement and recommends the 2013 budget items being funded. Mr. Edmunds suggested a recommendation to the Legislature that the 2014 items should be specific for the items that need continuation and that the Task Force

provide a conceptual framework going forward for the Legislature to understand the full picture.

Dr. Rush reaffirmed that the overarching main goal the Task Force agreed on is, “to build a system that allows us to accomplish a 60% goal that Idaho’s citizens age 24-35 will have at least one year of postsecondary credential by 2020.” He clarified that there are certainly a lot of components within the goal that will require itemization and recommended the Task Force identify those sub categories at a future meeting.

With the help of Ms. Kathy Hagler, Dr. Rush indicated that there were eleven main categories identified by earlier discussion (originally thirteen, but two were grouped with other categories). The Task Force then grouped the items by a show of hands voting process. The outcome of the voting is as follows:

1. Structural change – 11 votes
2. Technology – 14 votes
3. Leadership – 9 votes
4. Professional development (includes common core) – 19 votes
5. Recruitment & retention (includes compensation) – 12 votes
6. Teacher effectiveness – 16 votes
7. Student Voice – 1 vote
8. Local control – 11 votes
9. Fiscal stability – 16 votes
10. Best practices – 1 vote
11. Differences in districts – 2 votes

By a show of hands, the top four items identified by the Task Force are:

1. Professional development (includes common core) – 19 votes
2. Teacher effectiveness – 16 votes
3. Fiscal stability – 16 votes
4. Technology – 14 votes

It is important to point out that these items were listed by the number of votes only and that their prioritization has yet to be determined.

Dr. Rush’s concluding comments indicated that staff will reconcile this information and return to the next meeting with results and recommendations for the Task Force.

**3:00 pm Next Meetings**  
**Adjourn – Richard Westerberg, State Board of Education**

Next meetings for the Task Force will be held:

- January 25, 2013 at 10:00 am MST. Meeting location TBD.
- February 8, 2013 at 9:00 am MST. Meeting location TBD.