

**Task Force Community Forum
April 10, 2013
Nampa High School**

Attendance: Approximately 50

Task Force members present: Richard Westerberg, Tom Luna, Roger Brown, Mike Lanza, Phyllis Nichols, Reed DeMordaunt, Roger Quarles, Bob Lokken, Janie Ward-Engelking, Mary Huff. Recognized Rep. Steve Harris.

Task Force Chair Richard Westerberg provided an introduction and brief history of the Governor's Task Force and the make-up of its members. Mr. Westerberg gave an overview of the evening's agenda and flow. The presentation included education achievement data, degree attainment data (including national) and explanation of the Board's 60% postsecondary attainment goal. Also included were Department of Labor information, job market data, and other information regarding the need for improvement in our education system. Mr. Westerberg reviewed focus areas identified by Task Force as well as the groups' initial strategies and recommendations. He also provided a list of questions the Task Force would like the public to consider and provide feedback on.

Public Comment:

Structure Individualized Instruction	L. Kiester: Has 7 years of business experience and 15 years of teaching experience and understands need for structure of collaborative partnership between business, schools, parents, community. The community is the nucleus of the school, but there is a lack of consistency, community, and trust in the current education system. These partners are silo'd with little collaboration among levels of education. Perpetuating this model wastes money. The state needs to focus on the individual. There should be collaboration from pre-k thru college. We need individualized learning. Individualized learning plans reduce behavior distractions. Curriculum and teachers play significant role. Better use of community resources. Need more funding and energy at lower levels not at the high school level. The model she has developed proposes change in math and science and increased rigor at middle school. Suggests a new model. Works with TVEP, etc.
Special needs students	N. Elliott: School counselor who has an autistic son. Stated the system is failing special needs student. The system puts them in padded rooms because they don't know how to handle them. In the US, 1 in 52 children has autism. It costs \$9700/year to educate an autistic student in Utah. Idaho should be able to better meet these students' needs. The education system doesn't account for the individual needs. Will it take parents ending up in federal court? There are 400 members of a group of mothers of autistic children who meet and advocate for their children. The most common complaint is that children aren't getting the education they deserve.
Funding	J. Hoelsing: Teacher asked how much is Idaho spending vs. other countries. Stated it is hard to have additional growth if our system is underfunded.
Standardized Tests	M. Steiner: A retired English teacher with 44 years in the classroom spoke about what we measure. Not a single secondary skill more important than clear written communication. Integral to what we measure, is how we measure it. Bubble sheet

	tests purport to measure writing, but it can only ask questions about writing. It's not writing. Should assess writing statewide. The direct writing assessment in the past was labor-intensive process. Having testing company with bubble sheets would have been cheaper, but it worked. Students could write better. Assessment was a clear driver of success. 2010 DWA got discontinued in favor of the ISAT for less money. It's not the real thing. It doesn't really assess writing. Most standardized tests are one size fits all which means they don't fit anyone very well. Assessments should assess what they purport to assess.
Common Core	W. Grover, Meridian: Degree in secondary education. Need to improve education, which he saw as an instructor at Carrington College. He is concerned about common core and hopes the Task Force will look at this. Would like to see it go before the state legislature and have more public input. Give opponents of common core an opportunity to be heard.
Standardized Tests / Funding	S. Lee: Experience with Caldwell School District most recently with small children and reading. We need to pay attention to what is important not just what is quantifiable. Go for the good of the whole. Too much emphasis on quantifiable. Students need more than to be just good test takers. They need lots of face-to-face time. It takes funding. Have to ramp up teachers and teachers' aides who can make a huge difference in the classroom. A person who cares is what makes a difference, not technology. There is a need to instill values like good citizenship, humane treatment of others, reasoning skills, community involvement, and interest in the broader world. Lots of kids don't get that at home or other places. They get it at school. This can't be measured numerically, but could be wide input with specific things that could be expanded. Doesn't need to be religious or science based. Much of it is common sense. Can build it in, but it takes funding. Values need to be part of what we are doing in schools.
Public Input	V. Young: A citizen of Caldwell, she stated that the public is not fairly represented on the Task Force. Citizens are treated like bumps in the road. She urged the Task Force to tear down barriers to public participation. The Task Force ideas are more what to do than how to get things done (that's what should be emphasized). If she was a teacher and the Gov. a student, she would tell him to do his homework in education and use what you know. Utah did an excellent job of mapping out what needs to be done. Idaho isn't following the strong foundation of philosophy set down in law. Need to offer vigilance of district patrons. Patrons should not be excluded from Stat of Schools report Parent education Community engagement and meaningful exchange of ideas. Quality of thought and ability to answer questions. If you aren't challenging the system that produced a generation of citizens less educated. We already have an abundance of answers. Need to use what we know. Problems are national but solutions are local. Citizens must be given back the right to participate in the process.
Common Core	T. Manning: Thanks to the Task Force and legislators. Common core requires a stunning change in education. Idaho needs to maximize outreach. Need to reach out to parents so they understand how much more rigorous it will be. Offer community education to help them understand the common core. Professional Development is important for teachers but also parents. If parents aren't

	<p>confident, they can't help their students. Parents need to commit to a higher level of engagement even if they need to go back to school. Early childhood education is critical. Idaho is behind in this. Peer reviewed research is solid. Kids who engage academically early on are more successful (better jobs, fewer incarcerated, etc.) Kindergarten should be mandatory and should be offered full day. There should be a tax credit for people who send their children to preschool. Idaho parents need to do a better job in reading to their kids.</p>
Public Input	<p>R. Linsemann: She asked how and where was the forum publicized and stated it was not adequate. She learned of the forum just that day from the newspaper.</p>
Standardized tests	<p>J. Vero: Caldwell. Retired teacher. Look at 3 things that work in education. 1) Motivating students. 2) Providing time on task. 3) Providing teachers who know techniques to meet kids' needs.</p> <p>Varying student interests make it difficult to motivate students. Rewards like points and grades and money work temporarily but lessen motivation. Some students have hungry brains that need feeding. They do well in long run and are not part of the problem. Most are motivated by knowing that the public and people they are in contact with and families want to see investment in time and effort. They need to hear "I think you are worth this." Attacks on teachers are damaging to children for whom teachers are their main contact. The important thing is to motivate students. Kids see parents work hard and they are making progress, but some kids see parents work hard and they aren't making progress. Kids need mentoring. Haven't seen that in the recommendations. Time on task – the time kids are on task and allowing furlough days is a sin on current students. Not the way to handle anything. Methods that work for some kids one year may not work the next. Teachers need to be able to switch techniques quickly. Students need a variety of activities. We should allow individuals and groups to select their own projects. Need to give every student a chance to participate. Need to be less concerned with detecting and measuring and more concerned with making sure teachers have and know methods that work. Standardized testing does not work. Must convince students their future is worth time and effort. Ensure that teachers have understanding and tools necessary to deal with individuals.</p>
Professional Development	
Individualized Instruction	
Class Size	<p>L. Thomas: Caldwell teacher, parent and grandparent. Taught at the elementary level. Need to start early and look at class sizes and mandatory class sizes. Has 31 students, some are special needs. Doesn't have the ability to help the individuals. Usually focuses on lower skilled students, because she knows she can make progress. Can't get to know all her students. If the teacher knows them individually, students are motivated to learn.</p>
Common Core	<p>K. Hahn: Kudos to mom of autistic son. Request is to look more into common core curriculum. Research its history. It is a federalization and nationalization of our education system. Trace it back to Unesco and find that they have an education plan, called the education initiative. Need to look at curriculum and material and what the students will be reading. The curriculum is on the state board's website. It includes environmentalism, gender equality, social justice, suffering of minorities at the hands of Americans. Could be used to direct child's career path. Data gathering will determine career path of kids. Encourages people to research it. It's deeper than you think.</p>
Professional	<p>K. Brocke – Teacher in Middleton who has taught for 21 years. Teachers need</p>

Development	<p>professional development and time to analyze data and motivate kids. They need materials and manipulatives to teach. Teachers are caring people whose heartstrings are attached to kids. But they also have families to take care of. Idaho has not funded education properly. Teachers deserve a great salary for their hard work. Kids don't deserve good education. They deserve a great education. Idaho needs the best teachers. Teachers are professional. They will find the best methods and ways to teach.</p>
<p>Accountability Measures</p> <p>Alternative High Schools</p>	<p>C. Crawford: HS English teacher. Would like the Task Force when considering school evaluation, to consider alternative high schools and they get left behind. Formula puts them in the same category as other high schools. They get knocked down on 5-star rating. Measuring on growth doesn't recognize their students. Consider a different formula for alternative high schools. They are trying to meet needs, but evaluation shouldn't hold to the same standard as regular high schools. They work differently but make a huge difference.</p>
<p>Common Core</p> <p>Funding</p>	<p>J. Easily: Parent from Middleton. Mother of 4 has been volunteering for 11 years. She became a substitute and works part time in the district. She is excited about the core curriculum and likes what she sees. She likes new math methods, which are in line with Portland schools, They are better and have an emphasis on essay questions. The problem is that at the same time we are increasing the standards, we are decreasing teacher pay. Classrooms are getting bigger. Planning and training days are vanishing. Funding for technology gets cut and training is inadequate. The question is where we can shift dollars while doing the least harm. Teacher pay, sports, district consolidation. The real question is how we can increase revenue to provide an adequate, better yet excellent education. How can we increase demand and decrease funding? There are more than 30 students in most classrooms and that's too many. There have been furlough days. Loss of 2 weeks means losing 1 full year by the time 3rd graders are in high school. How can they meet challenges of core curriculum when they aren't in school? In education there has been a starve the beast mentality. But when you raise standards so high while cutting funding that causes the system to fail. This opens the door to charters, privatization, etc. When everyone is telling you there is not enough funding, when the demands go up and the beast starves, will it be the schools that fail or will it be the dept. of education and the legislature? Idaho needs to give students and teachers the tools to be successful. Fear is that we won't provide adequate planning and training time and we won't be successful.</p>
<p>Funding</p> <p>Best Practices</p> <p>Common Core</p>	<p>R. Kerby: Supt. of New Plymouth district. Thanked each member of the Task Force for listening. The Task Force should set goals on where the state's education system should go. We don't know if we are making progress if we don't set goals. Goals should be those that parents, teachers, legislators, public can get behind. Funding is a huge issue. It hasn't worked to keep saying we are lagging. Need a strategy that everyone will buy into. Look at data that we agree on. First goals would be the percentage of students going on to college. 51% go on and we are 47th in nation. Idaho is last in nation for those who go on to 2nd year of college. We lead nation in the number of students who don't make it from year 1 to 2. We need to work on that. We need to make sure our kids can make a living wage. Business tells us we need more people in STEM areas. If we had a better educated workforce, we would have more good jobs. Idaho needs to set some goals. The college retention rate should be 80-85%. You can look at data of the college going and retention rate of every school in Idaho. We have plenty of</p>

	<p>schools and people who know how to improve the numbers and schools getting it done, but consistency is not there. We need to scale up best practices. It's not fair for the kids who live in a low-performing district while another similar district has far better success. The Task Force needs to set some goals. Where do we want to be? If the public knew there was a collaborative effort, they would be more behind us. We have to change strategies and set goals that people can get behind. And we know how to do it. Common Core is very good. Our kids will be better at problem solving. Concepts are still there. They didn't take out anything. The tests now include performance tasks. This will help get more kids to college and more who can go into math and engineering.</p>
Common Core	<p>Not Identified: A great grandmother with children in Idaho's education system. When she graduated, we had Rhodes scholars from Idaho. She doesn't know what has happened. She has a great grandchild who doesn't know how to read her writing because they don't know cursive. She is concerned about common core and has read a lot about it. It's not right to put it in place without the public knowing about it and having a chance to see it. By 2015, Idaho will have a big bill to pay because others are putting it onto us so they can make money. She voted in favor of the 3 propositions, but she's not voting for common core. The state has not looked at it deeply enough and it hasn't been tried. Top professor says kids can't do math in college because they don't know the basics. We need more time to look into it. We don't want something new and expensive put on us when we don't have enough funding to pay teachers.</p>
Special Needs Students	<p>A. Oklie: Caldwell. Has two autistic children. Son is bullied each day by his teacher. Our schools need proper teaching skills and resources including paraprofessionals and aides. She came from Minnesota where they had better resources. Here, they put children with behavioral problems in a padded cell. That needs to stop. Her school denied a 3 year old who is autistic because he is high functioning. The child tried to turn in homework and the teacher's response was, it's an inappropriate time to turn in homework. Need proper training for staff and teachers in what autism is. Bright high-functioning children who need proper education.</p>
Common Core	<p>J. Reese. Has been researching common core and was horrified to learn about common core. She has looked at the original sources and documents from the stimulus package and encourages people to look at those. There was involvement from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. She shared her personal experience with a nephew who has an engineering mind but is not doing well in math because he's unable to explain how he did his math problems in essay form. The method is very convoluted. She is very concerned with high school math. She's concerned about data mining. Has heard about MRI's in the classroom, student GPS, sensor monitors, etc. She has questions about the student data system – what is it and what will be implemented. Also wants to know what is technology or instruction; what is holding districts accountable; why aren't local districts accountable; what is the statewide salary and benefits scale; why does it need to be statewide It's not too late to stop common core.</p>
Individualized Instruction	<p>M. Simpson, She is a teacher in Nampa. It would be easy if teachers were given a block of wood and specifications, but kids are all different. She hopes the Task Force takes that into account. You can't shove kids into a cookie cutter output. We have amazing children in this state, but trying to stick to a timeline and have</p>

	<p>everyone perform to the same level, isn't realistic. It doesn't matter what the measure is, it doesn't work. It's similar to construction where timelines sometimes can't be met. Buildings get put on hold because a subcontractor doesn't show up. You can't build walls without a foundation being poured. It's important as a state that we stop worrying about whether each kid should be at the same level as all others. The foundation is important. It's a process and takes time. Each kid is different and individual. We need to take the time needed to build a strong foundation.</p>
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