

**Task Force for Improving Education
Structural Change and Technology Subcommittee
June 21, 2013**

Present (in person or via conference call): Representative Reed DeMordaunt, Cindy Wilson, Superintendent Tom Luna, Alan Millar, Bob Lokken, Roger Brown, Anne Ritter, Mike Lanza, Ken Edmunds, Mike Caldwell (substitute for Cheryl Charlton)

Rep. DeMordaunt began the meeting by explaining that the agenda for the day was to make preliminary recommendations around Strategy 1: High Expectations. He reminded the group that they needed to use Edmodo to share information about possible tactics around each of the strategies. Preliminary recommendations will be posted on Edmodo for further discussion.

Rep. DeMordaunt shared with the group that he sees high expectations in two areas: high expectations for the collective and high expectations for individual students. The group began by discussing high expectations for the collective.

Bob Lokken posted two articles on Edmodo prior to the meeting that address high expectations. The first was research that shows that when statewide systems adopt high standards, like the Common Core, all students rise to the expectation, including students who struggled under the previously lower standards. Lokken suggested one of the preliminary recommendations be strong support for the implementation of the Idaho Core Standards.

The second article Lokken shared with the group was about 3rd grade literacy. The research shows we unknowingly do damage when we allow social promotion out of 3rd grade for students that aren't proficient in reading. After 3rd grade students are no longer learning to read, but reading to learn. A possible tactic would be to not allow social promotion for students who aren't proficient in reading by the end of 3rd grade. Colorado and Florida have already done this. Parents would be allowed to override and promote their student; however, they would have to sign a contract acknowledging that they're putting a student at risk by promoting them when they're not proficient.

Anne Ritter commented that she'd prefer a SWAT team approach prior to 3rd grade to remediate and differentiate based on Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) results. Lokken responded that implementation of the tactic should be left up to the State Department of Education and State Board of Education, but there should be a standard that would then trigger the state putting programs into place to meet the standard. Ritter agreed and restated that the state's job is to ensure the resources are put in place for a child to be reading by 3rd grade, and if not there are consequences.

Superintendent Luna gave an overview of the IRI, which has been in Idaho for 10 years. It's an indicator for how students are progressing on their reading skills through 3rd grade. A score of 3 is proficient or at or above grade level. K-3 students are given the assessment every fall and spring. Approximately \$3 million in funding is distributed to districts whose students score 1 or 2 to help implement strategies to remediate students who aren't at grade level. Local school districts then determine how to use that funding, whether it's to hire more teachers, extend learning time, etc. Currently, 75% of Idaho's 3rd grades are scoring a 3 on the IRI.

Superintendent Luna reminded the group that social promotion is only an issue if a district or school continues to advance students based on age and seat time. If a system moves towards mastery, there's

no longer social promotion, because age isn't the focus— mastery is. Social promotion is how we deal with a system focused on seat time, not mastery.

Cindy Wilson agreed with the idea of a 3rd grade literacy mastery tactic. If the resources are currently available, but there are still students who aren't reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade, then what we need is a higher expectation.

Rep. DeMordaunt asked what the standard would be for this tactic. Would it be IRI or NAEP? He wanted to ensure we're setting the bar in the right place, so we didn't have the same problems as with No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Alan Millar countered that the larger question is whether we are ready to recommend a mastery model that begins as early as 3rd grade. Ken Edmunds suggested that the question wasn't so much what the measurement would be. He wanted to leave it up to local districts to make the mastery happen. Rep. DeMordaunt agreed, but said he still struggled with what mastery looks like. Millar suggest that rather than define mastery, the group should recommend a mastery based model and funding for incentives towards larger groups of students mastering content. Superintendent Luna suggested the tactic be that students master literacy before moving on to content learning. Mastery can be defined through the rulemaking process, which goes to the State Board of Education and then the Legislature.

Millar suggested the subcommittee possibly make recommendations for mastery in set areas throughout a student's education. Those set areas are where a student isn't promoted or is advanced more quickly. The points would be to move from seat time to mastery.

Ritter asked whether mastery or social promotion is best for kids. Millar commented that data reflects that social promotion has a better effect on older students than students who are held back. Superintendent Luna qualified that there's research that shows holding a student back for a whole grade, especially male students, can be seriously detrimental. However, advancing a student without mastery is also seriously detrimental.

Lokken said that we should be putting the urgency and sense of necessity in the system so that there's no forward progress until the standard is achieved. This doesn't suggest holding a student back for an entire year is best, but there has to be some delineation.

Mike Caldwell commented that it's not good to have a "gate" at the end of an education, but not "gates" all along throughout an education. He offered to post "It's Not a Matter of Time: Highlights from the 2011 Competency-Based Learning Summit" on Edmodo.

Rep. DeMordaunt suggested we need mastery of skills to be competitive in a global environment, and that Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) or Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) results should be part of the tactic. Superintendent Luna pointed out that the PISA and TIMMS are valuable, but the challenge is that they're not given every year and are only given to a sampling of students. Our own state assessment is currently measuring against a high standard and expectation.

Mike Lanza said he agreed with the mastery model, but wondered what happens if students still aren't achieving proficiency. Millar said you recommend a system that incentives local systems that are successful that would then drive those strategies upward through the system. Lokken agreed with the

question and said it would be something that would have to be addressed as part of later strategies.

Rep. DeMordaunt asked the group what feedback loop exists from the workforce to make sure the knowledge, skills, and expectations of the education system are what business and industry needs. Millar responded that he's involved with P-TECH schools in Idaho, and he's learned there's a set of soft skills that are as important to industry as any hard skills. He offered to post them on Edmodo.

Rep. DeMordaunt told the group that under tactics for high expectations for the collective they'd brainstormed Common Core, reading mastery, and mastery in general. He'd like to add to look at global measures—PISA and TIMMS. A high expectation is a composite of lots of different data points. It's dynamic, moving, and changing over time. It's relevant. NCLB was an arbitrary point that was set and wasn't dynamic.

Ritter asked if he thought we would raise the bar from the Common Core. Rep. DeMordaunt responded that it's possible over time, since we have to make sure our standards are always high enough; otherwise, we end a few years later racing towards a goal that's no longer a relevant goal. Wilson commented she believed the Common Core Standards are dynamic, because they provide higher order thinking skills.

Rep. DeMordaunt then transitioned the group to discussing high expectations on an individual level.

He suggested value-added analysis may be a tactic for high expectations for the individual. We need to maximize the learning for each individual student, and technology allows us to focus in on an individual and make sure they're achieving their own high expectations. Ritter asked how you measure value-added in some subjects that aren't continuous from year to year.

Millar asked what an Idaho classroom will look like in five years. We know there will be more technology, probably no textbooks, and the role of the teacher will be significantly different because they won't be giving direct instruction to students about what they need all time. If that's what the classroom of the future looks like, it lends itself to a mastery model.

The question was then raised how you implement a mastery model without micromanaging the classroom. Superintendent Luna remarked that he believes it requires a structural change of the funding formula. We currently have a funding formula that focuses on seat time and doesn't incentivize mastery models. He also cautioned the group against asking for innovation while also asking where the research is. We can't ask people to be innovative only if there's years worth of research.

Rep. DeMordaunt began to draw the meeting to a close. He said he didn't sense consensus around a tactic for high expectations at the individual level.

Millar suggested a tactic may be incentivizing teachers who are successful in achieving high individual growth with a large group of students. Lanza agreed with previous arguments that the funding model will have to change.

Lokken reminded the group that they need to focus on setting high expectations, making them a necessity, and then letting teachers and administrators decide how to get there.

Wilson told the group that teachers are frustrated they're not allowed to hold students accountable, and a system of mastery would help relieve some of that frustration.

Rep. DeMordaunt then closed the meeting by reminding the group to use Edmodo and that the next meeting will be on July 3rd on autonomy.