

A PUBLICATION OF THE IDAHO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

spring
2021

SLATE

magazine

**How We
Changed
the Way We
Advocate**

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IHSAA

IDAHO HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

Supporting Education Through Activities

**NOW MORE THAN EVER BEFORE
IT'S MORE THAN A GAME**

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

CORONAVIRUS UPDATES



Students Now Citizens Forever

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MISSION:

Provide leadership and services to local school boards for the benefit of students and for the advocacy of public education.

VISION:

School Board leadership for excellence in Idaho public education

STANDARDS:

1. Vision and Mission
2. Continuous Improvement
3. Advocacy
4. Accountability
5. Community Engagement
6. Board Operations and Professional Development

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SLATE

magazine

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2021 ISBA CALENDAR

Jan - March	Legislative Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Idaho State Capitol - Boise, ID
April 8-10	NSBA Annual Conference <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virtual
April 16-17	Executive Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Via Zoom
April 27	Spring Leadership Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Twin Falls
April 28	Spring Leadership Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rigby
May 6	Spring Leadership Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none">• West Ada
May 12	Spring Leadership Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lewiston
May 13	Spring Leadership Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coeur d'Alene
May 31	Memorial Day <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ISBA Office Closed
July 5	Independence Day Recognized <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ISBA Office Closed
September 10-11	Executive Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boise, ID
September	September Leadership Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dates & Times TBD
November 17-19	ISBA Annual Convention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boise Centre - Boise, ID

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2020-2021 ISBA Executive Board:

OFFICERS:

The Idaho School Boards Association is governed by a 22-member Executive Board which includes four officers and two representatives from each of the nine regions of ISBA.



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St. Maries SD #041



President-Elect
Jason Knopp
Melba SD #136



Vice President
Nancy Gregory
Boise SD #001



Imm. Past President
Wally Hedrick
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- REGION 2
- REGION 3
- REGION 4
- REGION 5
- REGION 6
- REGION 7
- REGION 8

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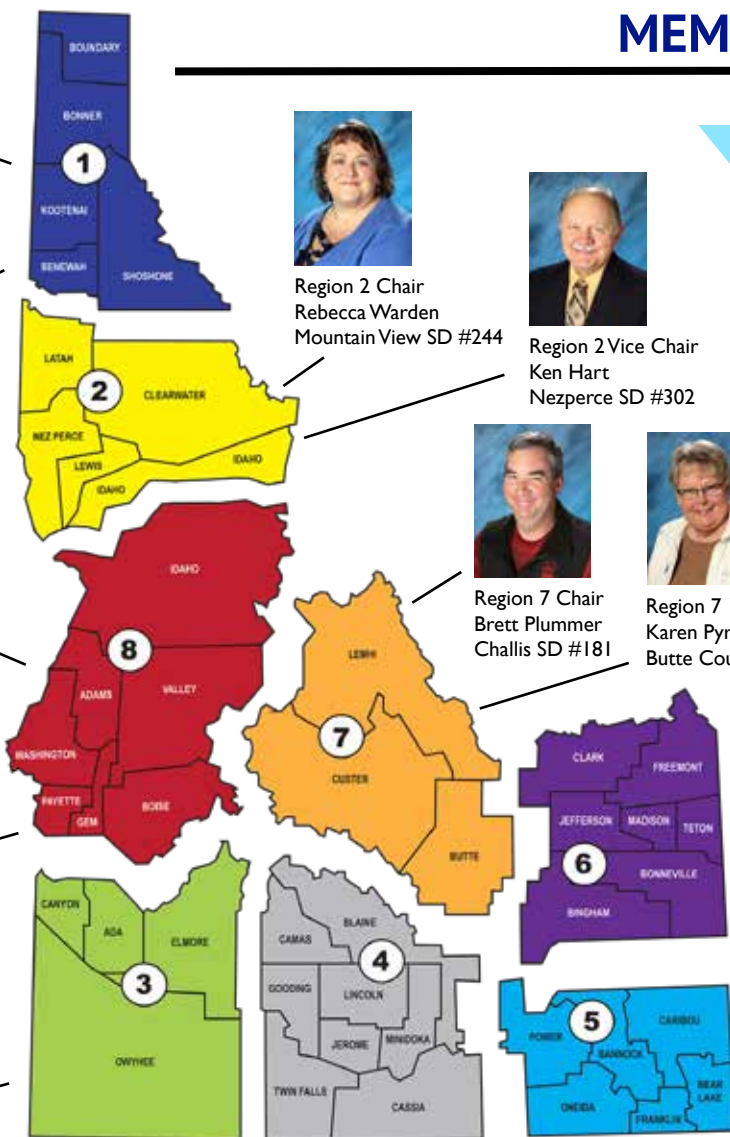
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Region 6 Vice Chair
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Region 5 Chair
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By Jody Hendrickx
ISBA President

ISBA Provides Critical Support to Board Members in the Process of Building Educational Systems

Horace Mann, the father of American Education, once said, "Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is a great equalizer of the conditions of mankind." In our lifetimes, this statement has never been more evident. The schools of Mann's time were much different than the schools of today, yet this statement is truer today than ever before. Today's schools have been tasked with far more than teaching students to read and write. To create and run schools that meet the new demands, critical decisions lie upon the shoulders of the board members of each district/charter. I believe that the weight of those decisions would be too much without the support of organizations such as the Idaho School Board Association.

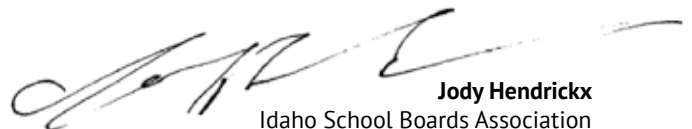
I would like to consider the accomplishments of the Idaho School Board Association's staff and thank them for all that they have done and continue to do. The ISBA staff has continued to provide board professional development, model policy, labor relations, publications, partnerships and affiliations, superintendent searches, scholarships, and a myriad of other services throughout the pandemic. However, they now provide those services with the twist of virtual meetings, social distancing, and other accommodations.

The task of creating the first-ever virtual Idaho School Board Association Conference was herculean. The fact that the conference was engaging and informative on a virtual platform was amazing. Most people would have no idea about the time and talent that went into putting the conference together, yet it was seamless due to the hard work of ISBA staff. Entire companies are needed for recruiting presenters, setting up sound and video options, software management, uploads, and

security for virtual conferences, yet the ISBA staff was successful. And all of this on top of all of their regular duties.

As the legislative season begins, the ISBA staff is now breaking new ground as they advocate for schools at the Capitol. Following Open Meeting Law and transparency measures while protecting themselves and the legislators from catching or transmitting COVID does not have a road map. The ISBA staff has made every effort to make connections with the legislators and keep the board members informed. The best lobbyists get the job done by building professional relationships with key players. Building professional relationships has a new meaning when most of it must be done in a virtual manner. Clear and consistent communication in this new format will also be a challenge. Yet, I have every confidence that the ISBA team will find success.

Karen Echeverria, Misty Swanson, Quinn Perry, April Hoy, Krissy LaMont, David Brinkman, Lance Corpus, Mika Milette, Morgan Garcia, and Payton Grover provide Board members across Idaho with outstanding service. Most importantly, they are making a difference in the lives of students. The ISBA staff is critical in supporting board members in the process of building educational systems that help every child from every walk of life have the opportunity to succeed. In a time when board members across the state are grappling with decisions about schools, ISBA is rising to the challenge. The students of Idaho are lucky that school districts/charters, the device that is the equalizer of their conditions, have the support of an outstanding Idaho School Boards Association staff.



Jody Hendrickx
Idaho School Boards Association



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By Sherri Ybarra
Idaho Superintendent of
Public Instruction

Addressing Learning Loss Will be Key as We Ready for a Post-Pandemic Future

It's been a year since COVID-19 hit, plunging us into the most challenging time ever faced by Idaho's school educators and staff, students, and families.

As I told the appropriations committee in January, the reality is, we do not know yet how long the pandemic will last or what the long-term impacts will be. What we do know is that we must act now to ensure our students are in the classroom, back to a routine, back to their teachers and peers, and back on track.

We need to work together to minimize learning loss, sustain vital services, continue to improve access to technology and restore in-person learning for our students.

Recent research emphasizes in order to address learning loss we need a long-term plan and continued investments in critical areas. A national study, "The Cost of COVID," estimates that the pandemic will increase operating costs to districts and charter schools by up to seven percent for a targeted plan of recovery that should include extended learning time, tutoring, and increased investments in social-emotional supports.

Now more than ever, we must understand the needs of every student and make the necessary investments to address those needs.



continued on next page...

One-time federal funds are available to address pandemic-related needs through Fiscal Year 2022, and I will work hard to make sure that funding doesn't lapse when the relief cycle ends. Each of these items are critical to districts/charters and must be sustained.

My department is already managing the distribution of about \$196 million in federal relief funds to our schools this fiscal year to address pandemic-related needs including devices, connectivity, learning management systems, and professional development.

I join the governor's call for a \$20 million summer reading program to help address disruptions in learning. Districts/charters will need flexibility to spend these funds so they can tailor programs to fit local needs and schedules. Programs could run in June as part of an extended school year, or in July and August to jump-start the next school year.

Extending the time frame for learning is an important part of reaching a crucial goal we all share - making sure all Idaho children can read at grade level by third grade. State Department of Education efforts toward that goal include a shift of English language arts and literacy coaches in the Idaho Coaching Network to focus on K-3, and implementation of the updated Comprehensive Literacy Plan to provide a critical roadmap for Idaho teachers. My content and curriculum staff are developing plans for implementation, starting with training all K-3 teachers in the science of reading.

An essential part of our early literacy efforts is the twice-yearly Idaho Reading Indicator. After the pandemic prevented statewide administration of the IRI last spring, it was encouraging that nearly 90 percent of Idaho's K-3 students took the fall test in person, at school. Unsurprising was news that the percentage of students performing at grade level in first through third grades was lower than for their counterparts the previous year.

Those results, broken down by specific skills such as spelling, comprehension, and vocabulary, will help us analyze the learning loss during the pandemic. Many districts/charters are assessing students monthly, and monitoring their progress throughout the school year. My department continues to support teachers in using that monthly data to tailor their instruction to students' individual needs, and we look forward to seeing the results when these students take the IRI again this spring.

Just as important will be assessing and addressing learning loss and gaps for students in grades 4-12. Educators and support staff are using a variety of tools and measures to monitor the progress of these students and provide the

necessary supports. This spring's Idaho Standards Achievement tests (ISAT) in English Language Arts and math will provide a statewide picture for students in grades 3-8 and high school, allowing us to prioritize resources.

It was encouraging to see that last spring's disruptions did not derail seniors from completing high school, as we saw the four-year graduation rate increase to 82.1 percent, the biggest year to year increase since we started tracking the adjusted cohort rate in 2014.

Our commitment to continued academic progress is equaled by a determination to support the mental and emotional health of students, as well as staff, amid the added stress of this pandemic.

Continuing our statewide efforts on suicide awareness and prevention, the State Department of Education offers free online Gatekeeper training that has already helped more than 1,500 members of Idaho's school communities learn to identify early signs of suicidal ideation, how to intervene and where to find resources. Our new Behavioral Health Services Evaluation for K-12 schools statewide provides clear insight into gaps that exist among schools and districts, especially rural vs. non-rural and charter vs. non-charter.

We are collaborating to define a vision statement for serving the whole child in Idaho. This work would include consensus-based definitions of behavioral health and wellness, student wellness, civic education, whole child education, social emotional learning, trauma informed practices, and more. The shared vision and definitions will help support alignment between statewide leadership and local efforts, strategies, and initiatives.

Through all the turmoil, my staff and I – like you – have stayed focused on the task at hand: making sure life and learning go on for Idaho students.

I know that together we can implement long-term strategies to overcome learning loss and ensure students are prepared for success.





By Debbie Critchfield
President, Idaho State
Board of Education

The Push to Bridge Idaho's Digital Divide



The COVID-19 pandemic prompted educators to suddenly face challenges that quite honestly, seemed insurmountable.

"Last spring, we had every student in the state in a virtual environment and it became painfully clear that school districts, charter schools, and the state weren't prepared to deliver education in that environment," Board member Kurt Liebich recently recalled. "We have a little over 300,000 kids attending public schools and an informal survey we sent out to districts and charters last spring suggested we were short about 180,000 devices between students and teachers."

• The Push to Bridge Idaho's Digital Divide •



Liebich took the lead on behalf of the Board, working with Greg Wilson, Governor Brad Little's education policy advisor, to pull together a committee of educators, district technology officers, and private sector partners to develop strategies to close the "digital divide" – between students who have access to devices and internet connectivity, and those who do not.

Tapping \$30 million in federal coronavirus relief funds, the Board established a grant program administered by the State Department of Education to provide money to districts and charters to purchase laptops and tablets. Idaho Business for Education also organized a "Close the Divide" campaign collecting thousands of donated devices across the state and provided them to schools. And Governor Little's Strong Families, Strong Students program is distributing \$50 million in federal

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funds to families throughout Idaho to purchase devices, connectivity, and other services benefitting over 24,500 students.

Liebich estimates the digital divide has narrowed from 180,000 needed devices last spring, to about 30,000 at the start of the new year. Closing the connectivity gap is proving to be more difficult.

"Kids need to have connectivity in order to learn remotely and each situation is unique depending on where you live, how many kids are in the house, and whether their parents are working remotely too," he said. "Early data estimated between 28,000 and 45,000 students didn't have adequate internet connectivity. We don't know how accurate that is, but I believe it's a safe bet to say we still have a lot of work to do – especially in our rural areas."

There is also work to do to better prepare our teachers to conduct online instruction.

"One of the things we learned about remote learning is that maintaining student engagement becomes really difficult and part of that is tied to professional development," Liebich said. "We need to work with our teachers to give them the tools and skills they need to support students in this type of instructional delivery."

Thanks to the efforts of the Governor's Office, Board member Liebich and the digital divide committee, Idaho's public education system is far better positioned coming out of the pandemic from a technology standpoint than we were a year ago.

Liebich says the challenge now is to effectively utilize these new resources in the classroom.

"Now that we have this technology platform, how can we support teachers in leveraging this once we get back to something resembling normal? The pandemic has reminded us that there is no substitute for a caring qualified teacher in the classroom."



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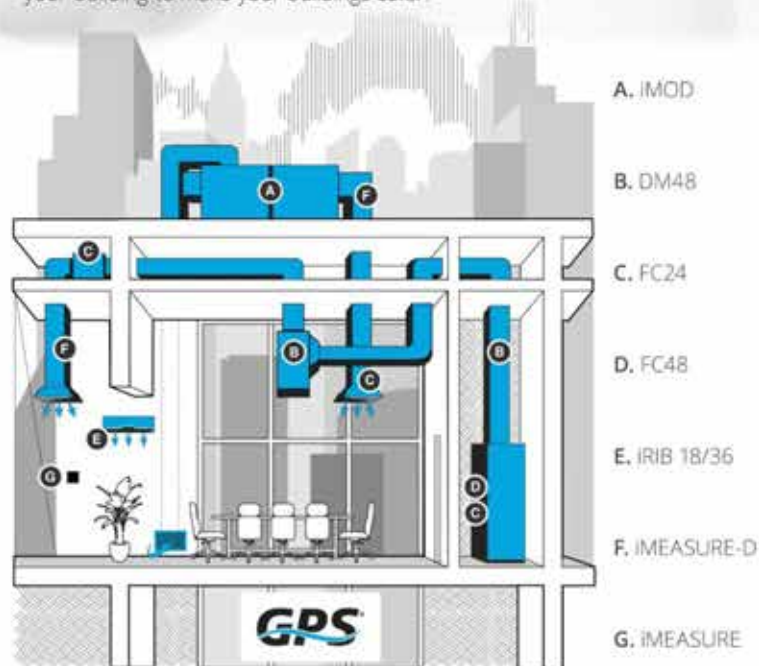
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By Dane Higdem
Moreton & Company



As we come into spring for the 2021 year, it will not be long until our schools' playgrounds will be ringing with the sounds of exuberant and cheerful children playing. It is our job to keep playgrounds safe, allowing students the ability to have a good, safe, and rewarding experience.

When evaluating playgrounds, we recommend that you utilize established credible information and materials to evaluate your facilities. There are many places to find information. However, the following references are what we use when evaluating playgrounds.

The first reference documents we use when evaluating a playground is the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Public Playground Safety Handbook, which can be downloaded from this URL: <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325.pdf>. While this manual was written in 1981, there have been significant updates through 2010, and it remains one of the top references for this subject.

The National Program for Playground Safety website has a listing of the ASTM voluntary technical manufacturing standards for public use playground equipment, surfacing, and fencing. These standards are developed to help manufacturers produce the safest equipment possible. When purchasing playground equipment and surfacing, documentation on safety should be obtained. The list of standards can be found at this URL: <https://playgroundsafety.org/standards/cpsc>.

There is also a course offered by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), The Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) certification program. This comprehensive training

program on playground hazard identification and risk management methods. This program information can be found at this URL: <https://www.nrpa.org/certification/CPSI/become-a-cpsi/>.

Now that you have the resources and information at your fingertips, what are some of the hazards out in the playground to find?

The National Playground Safety Institute has identified the twelve leading causes of injury on playgrounds in a pamphlet entitled "The Daily Dozen Checklist." Found at this URL: <https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/the-daily-dozen-12-point-playground-safety-checklist.pdf>.

The following is a brief explanation of these twelve hazards:

1. **Proper Surfacing:** Does the playground have at least 12 inches (30 cm) of wood fiber, sand, or other safety surfacing in place? The depth of surfacing required depends on the height of the equipment.
2. **Accessibility:** Equipment, protective surfacing compliant with ADA requirements, for example pea-gravel does not meet ADA requirements.
3. **Supervision:** Is the equipment designed so you can "see" through it, or are there too many hiding spots for supervisors to adequately perform their job?

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4. **Age Appropriate Equipment:** Developmental needs vary greatly from ages 2 through 12. Is the equipment challenging and fun, yet still safe for the intended user?
5. **Proper Equipment:** Some playground equipment is not recommended for use on public playgrounds, these include trampolines, swinging gates, heavy metal swings, free swinging ropes, swinging exercise rings and trapeze bars.
6. **Adequate Use Zones:** Use zones are the area around playground equipment onto which a child would fall. A minimum of 72" is required around all playground equipment. Depending on the type of equipment and motion involved, many pieces of equipment require larger use zones. Use zones must have proper surfacing.
7. **Protrusions & Entanglement Hazards:** A protrusion hazard is a component or piece of hardware that is capable of impaling or cutting a child, if a child should fall against the hazard. Some protrusions are also capable of catching strings or clothing. This type of entanglement is especially hazardous because it can result in strangulation.
8. **Head Entrapments:** Most open spaces, between 3 1/2 inches (9 cm) and 9 inches (23 cm) mean trouble, especially at the top of a slide, between platforms, or between decks.
9. **Trip Hazards:** Look for protruding tree roots, exposed concrete, and abrupt changes in surface elevation. Keep the safety surface free of debris and hazards so children can run freely on the playground.
10. **Crush, Shear, and Sharp Edges Hazards:** Components on the playground should be kept free of sharp edges and moving components should be checked for the potential of crush and shear injuries.
11. **Proper Maintenance:** A playground must have a program of systematic, preventative maintenance to remain in a safe condition.
12. **Inspected by a Certified Inspector:** Part of a sound risk management plan should include having your playground inspected routinely by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI). CPSIs are certified as knowledgeable on the most current playground safety standards and guidelines and must maintain their certification every three years.

PLAYGROUND SURFACE MATERIALS

One reoccurring theme in the NRPA's Dirty Dozen is playground surfaces. One of the most cited reports was conducted by the CPSC which looked at playground equipment related injuries treated in US hospital emergency rooms. The study concluded most injuries resulted from falls from equipment. These were primarily falling to the ground surface below the equipment rather than from falls from one part of the equipment to another part. The surface under and around playground equipment can be a major factor in determining the injury potential of a fall. A fall onto a shock absorbing surface is less likely to cause a serious injury than a fall onto a hard surface. Because traumatic head injuries from falls have the potential to be life threatening, the more shock absorbing a surface can be made, the greater the likelihood of a severe injury can be avoided. However, it must be recognized that some injuries will occur on school playgrounds no matter what surface materials are used.

Hard surface materials such as asphalt or concrete are unsuitable for use under or around any playground equipment of any height. Earth surfaces such as soils, and dirt, are not recommended because they also have poor shock absorbing properties.

Grass and turf are not recommended because of wear and environmental conditions can reduce their effectiveness in absorbing shock during a fall.

Acceptable playground surface materials are available in two basic types: unitary or loose fill. Unitary materials are rubber mats, or rubber like materials held in place by a binder. These are typically called "poured in place" rubber products. When considering a unitary playground surface, it is important to select a product that is designed by the manufacturer for the fall height of your playground equipment.

When comparing loose fill materials, sand, pea-gravel and engineered wood fiber, each as their own strengths and weaknesses.

Loose-fill materials have acceptable shock absorbing properties as long as they are installed and maintained at a sufficient depth. To adequately protect for falls from elevations of 8 to 10 feet, approximately 12 inches of these types of loose fill materials are needed.

Sand, although inexpensive, must be continually added to maintain the 12-inch depth needed. It is easily kicked out from under the structure and is difficult to maintain. It also tends to compact and does not drain well leading to freezing solid like concrete during the late fall, winter, and early spring seasons limiting its effectiveness for a large portion of the school year.

Pea-gravel corrects some of the flaws of sand, however it too has its weaknesses. Schools must be careful to select the correct size (1/8-inch minus is preferred). It inevitably spills over its containment, and if installed along concrete or asphalt it tends to turn into marbles possibly creating a serious slip and fall hazard. When installed along grass, it can cause significant damage to the lawn maintenance equipment. Like sand, it will be kicked out from under high use equipment and is difficult to re-spread. There is also another significant issue when considering sand or pea-gravel for your playground surface material. It does not meet Americans with Disability (ADA) standards for wheelchair accessibility.

Engineered wood fiber is wood chips processed so that they are free of bark and chipped to a uniform size. Although more expensive than other loose fill materials, they have many advantages over either sand or pea-gravel. It works well during Idaho's freeze-thaw cycles, and it is easily re-spread to insure a uniform depth. It is more effective as a protective surface material than either sand or pea-gravel, and it does meet ADA standards for wheelchair accessibility.

Regardless of the type of playground equipment installed at your schools, or the protective surface materials used a self-inspection and maintenance program is needed to ensure the safety of your students.

Moreton & Company has checklists for playgrounds, and for both unitary and loose fill materials. Please give us a call or email and we would be happy to provide these materials.

If you should have any questions related to playground safety or protective playground surface materials, please contact Chad Ranstrom, Aimee Assendrup, or Dane Higdem at Moreton & Company. They can be reached at (208) 321-9300.



By Misty Swanson
ISBA Chief Deputy

Who is the ISBA Executive Board



& What Do They Do for You?

Do you know who your ISBA Officers are? What about your ISBA Region Representatives? They are all very important to your role as a board member as well to your school district or charter school as they represent you regionally, statewide, and nationally.

The ISBA Officers and Region Representatives are listed on page 5 of this SLATE magazine. The ISBA Bylaws set forth the nine school board regions that make up the ISBA and outline the process for electing representatives of each respective region. For all regions, there are two representatives per region. Most regions have a large district and small district representative. One of the main functions of the region representatives is to represent the boards in each of their regions.

Like all of you on your local boards, the ISBA Officers and Region Representatives serve on the ISBA Executive Board without pay. They serve the membership of ISBA in a variety of ways including attending ISBA Executive Board meetings.

The Executive Board reviews and agrees to a Code of Ethics. The goal of the Code of Ethics establishes a set of principles and practices of the Idaho School Boards Association Executive Board to act as parameters and provide guidance and direction for board conduct and decision-making. Members

of the Executive Board are committed to observing and promoting the highest standards of ethical conduct in the performance of their responsibilities on the board of the ISBA. Executive Board members pledge to accept this code as a minimum guideline for ethical conduct and agree to several components within it, including accountability, professional excellence, collaboration, and more.

ISBA Executive Board Meetings

The ISBA Executive Board meets three times per year for their regular meetings but also gathers for any special meetings called by the ISBA President. This past year, there were a few special meetings called regarding political positions of the Association, COVID topics, Annual Convention planning, and more.

Here's a look at what the regular meetings normally include and topics the Board discusses and makes decisions about.

continued on next page...

At All Meetings

- **Follows Robert's Rules of Order**
- **Reports:** ISBA Finances/Budget Report, Executive Director's Report, Chief Deputy Report, IHSAA Report, PSC Report, Professional Development Department Report

At Some Meetings

- **Reports:** Government Affairs Committee Report, Professional and Leadership Development Committee Report, Scholarship Committee Report, Pacific Region Report, NSBA Leadership Conference Report
- **Committee Meetings:** Government Affairs Committee, Professional and Leadership Development Committee, Scholarship Committee, Fiscal Advisory Committee
- **Discussion:** Strategic Planning, Years of Service Recognition for Board and Staff

April Meeting:

- **Reports:** Legislative Review & Government Affairs Committee Report, Review of Executive Director, ISBA Budget Presentation, Annual Dues Discussion, Review of Employee Salaries / Positions, Discussion of Executive Director Contract, Finance Committee Recommendations, Annual Investment Report, Region Reports, NSBA Annual Conference and Delegate Assembly Report
- **Committee Meetings:** Audit/Finance Committee Meeting

September Meeting:

- **Committee Meetings:** Audit Committee Meeting, Government Affairs Committee Meeting, Nominating Committee Meeting
- **Discussion:** Government Affairs Committee Bylaw Discussion, Government Affairs Committee Resolution Discussion, Nominating Committee Report, Board Position on Resolutions, NSBA Summer Leadership Development Report, NSBA Executive Director's Retreat Report, Region Meetings, Region Reports

During each Executive Board meeting, the Board carefully reviews topics and often takes action. The 22-member Board doesn't always agree on all topics, but I can assure you there is always thoughtful discussion and engagement as the Board represents each of their regions.

Association Committees

I mentioned several committees above. Many of ISBA's committees are outlined in the ISBA Bylaws, and, there are also some that the ISBA President creates and appoints each year. Here's more about those Committees:

- **Nominating Committee:** This Committee is established in accordance with Article IV of the Association bylaws. It is comprised of the nine regional chairs and meets prior to the annual meeting for the purpose of selecting qualified candidates for the offices of president-elect and vice president.
- **Audit and Finance Committee:** The audit and finance committee is responsible for reviewing the yearly budget as presented by the ISBA staff and presenting it to the full Executive Board for review and approval. This committee also reviews the monthly financial reports, engages an auditor, receives the Audit Report, and presents the Auditor's findings to the Executive Board.
- **Governmental Affairs Committee:** The Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC) has small and large district as well as charter school representation. The GAC is charged with reviewing resolutions, proposing resolutions, making recommendations and changes to proposed resolutions and reporting on the status of adopted resolutions to the Executive Board. The GAC acts as a sounding board for the Association staff and Executive Committee during the legislative session in order to ensure that the intent of resolutions adopted at the ISBA annual convention are carried out as far as possible, and to advise on legislative issues which arise but may not be covered by a resolution.
- **Professional and Leadership Development Committee:** This committee is charged with providing counsel on the delivery and content of board professional development as well as developing leadership among board members within the Association. The membership of the committee is by presidential appointment and typically includes eight Executive Board members.
- **Other Committees:** The Executive Director and President of the Association may form additional committees. Upon committee formation, the purpose, length of duration, scope of work and reporting criteria are established. One examples of an "other" committee is the Fiscal Advisory Committee. Recently, an additional committee was formed, the Executive Director Search Committee, due to upcoming retirement of ISBA's Executive Director, Karen Echeverria.

Serving on the ISBA Executive Board involves many responsibilities but is extremely fulfilling as well. This amazing group of individuals volunteer countless hours in fulfilling their duties on the Executive Board and assigned committees.



By April Hoy
Research & Policy
Specialist

A Week at the Statehouse

As this year's legislative session began, the COVID-19 death toll for Idaho stood at more than 1,500, and around 1,000 Idahoans were being diagnosed with COVID-19 each day. Because State Representative Sue Chew is a member of a group at increased risk of COVID, she enlisted a series of people from her district to act as her substitutes at the Legislature, each for at a week at a time, until a sufficiently safe way could be found and agreed to for her to serve in her own stead. I had the unusual and unexpected honor of being asked to act as one of these substitutes.

It was a fascinating experience that gave me an up-close look at how the Legislature considers the questions before it. I had a textbook understanding of the general process by which bills are introduced in committee, passed by the committee to the floor of the House or Senate (or not), and then considered by that chamber and perhaps sent for a similar tour of the other chamber. However, I didn't have that strong a sense of how the process feels up close.

For one thing, I hadn't realized just how much legislation representatives have to consider. I served as Rep. Chew's substitute during a relatively calm part of the legislative session. Even so, the amount of information to keep up with was a bit daunting. I reviewed each bill and proposed rule change that was going to come before me and tried to find any news stories I could on them for a bit more perspective. Agency representatives presenting proposed rule changes, other legislators offering introduction or debate of a bill, and testimony given by representatives of community groups were helpful, but there often wasn't much other coverage or commentary to find. Technical changes, new procedures for sampling beach water for contaminants, and alignments of statutory language with federal requirements tend not to prompt much media interest.

That brings me to another major difference between this experience and most of my previous experiences at the Statehouse. I'm a bit of a rabble-rouser in my spare time. I have found myself sitting in legislative committee meetings hoping to testify, or at least lend public pressure by my presence,



several times. As you would expect, I attended in an advocacy capacity for fairly hot-button issues, the kind of bills that usually garner a lot of attention and have a clear right and wrong side to most observers (although no general agreement among the observers as to which is which). My day-to-day experience of the legislature involved some contact with heated issues, especially those related to the power-struggles over COVID-19 emergency measures. However, these were unusual peaks of emotion and discussion amid a lot of routine items that passed unanimously or nearly unanimously. That seemed to be the pattern early in the session, anyway.

It was fascinating to discuss these routine and extraordinary agenda items with the elected Legislators, hearing their thoughts on the potential consequences of proposed bills and strategizing around them. The caucus meetings were especially interesting, offering a view into some of the differing shades of opinion among people who seemed to share the same general values. I had a few chances to nervously offer my own perspectives which might not have otherwise been considered.

It was a big honor to have a chance to serve as a substitute legislator. I feel like I learned a lot, even as someone who follows the Legislature fairly closely and had a pretty good understanding of the mechanics of it. It was unnerving to suddenly be in the hot seat—facing the gallery rather than sitting in it, on the Idaho in Session video feed rather than watching it. I was very nervous about many aspects of the process ranging from anxiety about messing up, nervousness about the possibility of finding myself under an unkind spotlight, and fear of contracting COVID-19. In the end, everything went pretty smoothly, though. It was a fascinating experience, and I would recommend anyone who has the opportunity to briefly trade seats with their Legislator take the risk. For me, it was absolutely worth it.

Statistic of the Quarter

As of March 11, 2021, approximately 10% of Idahoans have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. ¹

While the World Health Organization states that experts don't yet know what percentage of the population will need to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to achieve immunity, it seems like we must still have a long way to go. ²

¹ <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>; <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=idaho>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>



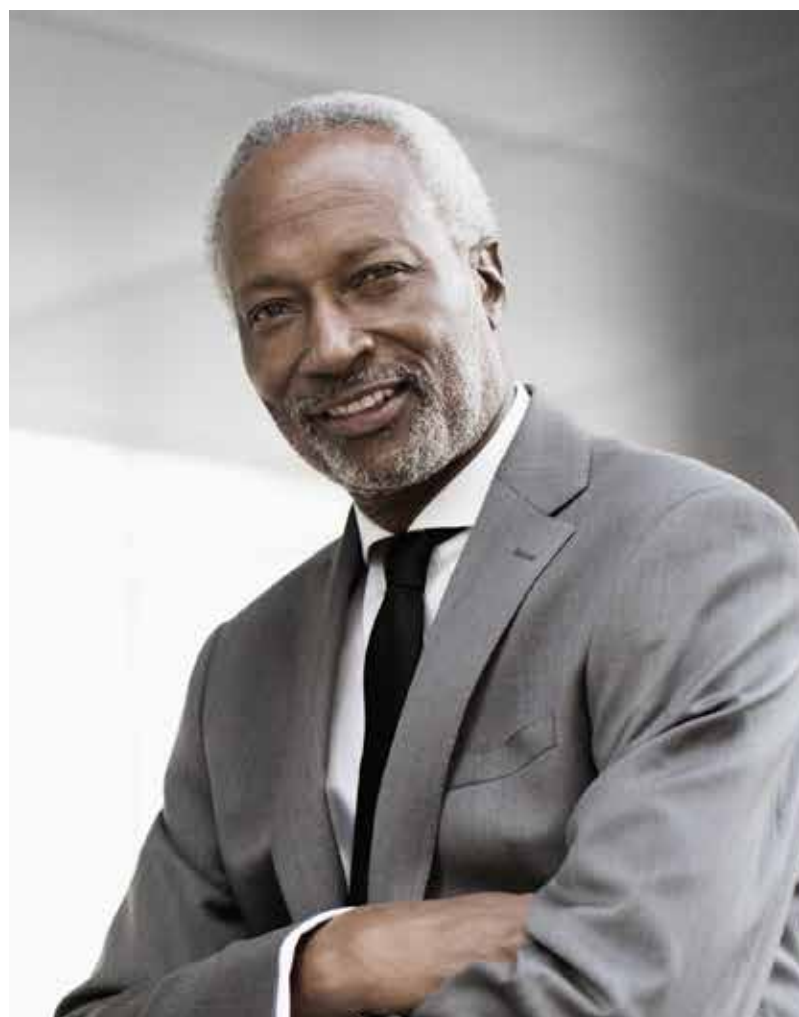
By April Hoy
Research & Policy
Specialist



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**Sharon Mast, Clerk of the Board
Boise School District, ID**



BOARD MEMBER profile

CHRISTY CROCCO

Cambridge Joint School District



Christy Crocco
Cambridge Joint SD #423

ISBA Executive Board
Region 8 Vice Chair

How long have you been a board member?

I was elected to serve on the ISBA Executive Board in November 2020, so I am brand new, but excited to serve. I have been on Cambridge School District's school board for six years. When my son started school I knew I wanted to be involved in the district as much as possible. When the Board position opened up in my district, I knew that being on the board I would definitely be involved and hopefully make positive contributions to our school.

What is a success story from your district you would like to share?

I am very proud of the way our teachers, staff, parents, and community members have pulled together during this pandemic. We all worked hard and had numerous meetings to plan for our school to open and remain open as much as possible. One issue we faced was lack of substitutes. Our parents and community stepped up and signed up to be on our substitute list. We have been able to stay open for the majority of this school year.



Who was your favorite teacher?

My favorite teacher was Mrs. DeLeon, my 6th grade teacher. Not only did I love to say her name, but she was the kindest, most caring person. She had a way of making every one of us in her classroom feel like we were important and our ideas and opinions really mattered.

Any advice to pass along to future Board members?

My advice to future board members is not to be afraid of asking lots of questions. When I first joined the Board there were lots of terms used that I had no idea what they meant. I was and am constantly asking questions!



By Quinn Perry
Policy &
Government Affairs
Director



School Leaders Can Be the **BEST ADVOCATE** for their Schools & Students

If you attended our Day on the Hill event, then you heard my case for the five ways that school leaders can advocate for their school districts and charter schools. While this pandemic has created hurdles for advocacy, it has never been more important to establish and nurture your relationship with policymakers.

Below are the five ways for school leaders to be the best possible advocates they can be:

1

Stay informed. Read your local news and specific State House reporters, subscribe to your lawmakers' newsletters, and (most importantly) – read **Capitol Notes**. We are deliberate about what we include in our weekly editions of Capitol Notes, and we encourage you to read it every week from top to bottom. We try to give you a high-level overview of the hot topics of the session, even if they are not necessarily education related. We do this because politics are really all a part of a thousand-piece puzzle coming together. We also highlight the top issues that have an impact on our public schools and create a tracking sheet for you at the bottom. For state house reporters, I recommend the veteran Capitol reporter Betsy Russel's blog "Eye on Boise," which is published on the Idaho Press website. Additionally, Idaho Education News follows education legislation closely and reports on it often. For our folks who have it, Twitter is an excellent way to follow the quick activity at the state house, following the hashtag #idleg.

continued on next page...

2

Connect. Before, after, and during the legislative session, it is critical that you connect and make meaningful relationships with lawmakers in your area. Offer yourselves as a resource when they want help making an informed decision about legislation – and, most importantly – do not only reach out when you need something from them! In addition, make connections with other school board members and school leaders in your region when advocating to lawmakers. Our school leaders are the closest on the ground to our public schools, so the information you provide to lawmakers can go a long way in helping them understand and make sound decisions on issues affecting public schools.

3

Act. When ISBA, or other education groups, put out a call to action, it is so critical that you follow through. Unlike other organizations that advocate, we rarely send out “form emails” for you to contact your lawmaker, but we are ALWAYS available to help you formulate your talking points. A phone call or a request for a meeting with lawmakers can go a very long way. Most lawmakers are willing to take virtual meetings – which are not only convenient during a pandemic, but can be helpful when you want to meet and discuss a particular issue. Again, I have to reiterate, it is so important that you do not only reach out and act when it’s something you want to ask them to oppose. Contact them on a regular basis, and let them know about positive legislation moving through, or just to remind them that you are available as a resource to them.

4

Attend. When your lawmakers go home to their communities, they often hold town halls or meet-ups, and we encourage you to attend. It is a good way to get insight on the issues that are important to them, and it once again offers a chance up for you to make a meaningful relationship with them. While I know a virtual Day on the Hill is not ideal, it is so important to attend our advocacy day, especially when it is in-person. We always receive a large turnout for lawmakers attending our luncheon. Lastly, whenever possible, attend or watch committee hearings. Education committees meet nearly every single day, and it is important to hear the conversations that the committees are having amongst themselves.

5

Shadow. Before, during, and after the legislative session, invite lawmakers into your board meetings, school buildings, and programs so that they have that direct connection to the public schools in their communities. Once again, be readily available to provide them information that is useful to them when they head to Boise to make laws and policy.

Lastly – don’t be afraid to ask your association questions! As your advocate down at the Statehouse, I am always available to help guide discussions, provide talking points, or make introductions to lawmakers.

ask

ISBA

Question:

Can a school district issue contracts whenever it wishes in early spring or are there statutory parameters that have to be followed?

Answer:

Most schools recognize that the school must address contract status for existing employees by no later than July 1st:

- Idaho Code 33-514(2)(b) for Category II contract employees
- Idaho Code 33-514(2)(c) for Category III contract employees
- Idaho Code 33-515(3)(a) for Renewable contract employees

However, a number of years back the Idaho Legislature made a modification to 33-513, Idaho Code which now states:

No contract shall be issued for the next ensuing year until such time as the employee’s formal written performance evaluation has been completed.

This is found in the third (unnumbered) paragraph of section 33-513(1) Idaho Code, a general section addressing professional personnel and the power’s and duties of the Board relating to professional personnel.

As addressed in sections 33-514(4) and 33-515(2), Idaho Code, all components of the annual evaluation for a school teacher must be completed no later than June 1st. As addressed in section 33-514(2) and (3), Idaho Code, the evaluation of Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents and Principals must likewise be completed no later than June 1st.

While there may be isolated circumstance (i.e. a leave of absence) that have to be addressed individually, outside of this requirement, the general rule that must be followed is that a board cannot issue a new contract to any teacher or administrative employee until such time as the individual employee’s annual written performance evaluation has been completed.

As a member of the Board, if the Superintendent or Charter Administrator brings a recommendation to approve contracts for next school year, an appropriate question to ask, prior to the Board taking action, is whether the required annual written performance evaluation for each of the recommended personnel has yet been completed. If the answer is no, absent an individual situation such as a leave of absence, referenced above, contract approval must be delayed and completed prior to the July 1st statutory deadline.

ISBA STUDENT Poetry CONTEST

Thank you to all those who participated in the 2021 ISBA Student Poetry Contest. We received poems from 6th through 12th grade students around Idaho. Judging was conducted by the ISBA staff and Executive Board members. Poems were scored based on a rubric system that graded on over-all message, form, technique, punctuation, and originality. We received many outstanding poems. The following poems are our top choices for each grade.

12th Grade Winner - "Watchful Eyes"

By Karissa Newell, Renaissance High School, West Ada School District

At first it was seen as curiosity,
The chance that man could shut down the world.
All eyes watched him from day one.
All eyes feared him from day two.
All eyes hide from him from day three.
Then it was seen as growth.
The chance to learn something new while hiding isolated.
The chance to renew your soul and heart while watching from a distance.
Then it was seen as a test of discipline,
teaching yourself advanced mathematics, and how to properly write a poem.
It was said to be fun.
To have all the time in the world but no outlet.
But all things have their limits.
Then it was seen as a hardship.
Seeking for a way to connect.
Finding holes in life that were not there before.
Working from a mundane, deathly quite blank wall.
With nothing but routine keeping you feeling alive.

All eyes watched him from day one.
All eyes feared him from day two.
All eyes hide from him from day three.
Monotonous life had caught our heels and dragged us down to him.
His laugh mocked us with distressed calls from family.
As he came ever so closer to our good home,
he shattered the frame of our reality.
Missed opportunities flooded our new existence.
Bitter tongues pierced our neighbors heart.
Hurting souls wept.
Stolen Livelihood.
Deselected life followed his path in shame.
Distance between conjoined spirits powerlessly split.
Feeble knees failed to continue the shackled journey.
He swept the depths of our life with a darkness unconceivable.
Swollen, beaten, battered, bruised we marched on with his ideal version
of life.
As he marched our streets our curiosity soon became fear.
All eyes watched him from day one.
All eyes feared him from day two.
All eyes hide from him from day three.

* 11th Grade Winner - "A Victim's Confession"

By Isabella Z. Defoort, Kootenai School District #274

There's something I need to say
It happened months ago yet it feels just like yesterday
Do you remember that night?
The night I tried to fight
The night you stripped my soul of all its sanity
Stripped it to the point I couldn't look into the mirror sitting atop my vanity
You'd say my body was a temple but that night you broke every brick that
made up my so called palace
And as I lay there, my one desire was to rip out your cold heart of malice

You made me feel as if my body was not my own
Only yours, never to be shown
I would squirm and I would twist
But no matter how hard I tried I couldn't get your
filthy hands to release each wrist
I want you to feel how broken and used I felt
The way I've felt every day since the moment you undid your belt
In your book, "no" means "yes"
"get off me" means "undress"
So when you sit there and brag to each friend
I want you to know you're the reason someone wants their life to end

10th Grade Winner "Memories of the Coast: A Sonnet"

By Kelsey Inskeep, Blackfoot School District

Walking barefoot in the sand,
The waves crashing into my toes,

Seabirds making sounds like a band,
The fishy smell displeases my nose,
Kites in the air as cheerful children play,
As it starts to rain I pull up my hood,
Sandcastles being washed away,
The shore washes up wood,

I spot seashells decorating the shore,
The salty breeze is blowing,
The loud sea lions roar,
I pick up my things and start going,
As I leave I complain,
For I wish to remain.

9th Grade Winner

“The Past Away Will Never See”

By Giana C. Pugh,
Taylor's Crossing Public Charter

Bomb by bomb, battle by battle,
each day the ground begins to rattle.
Planes high above in the sky,
while boats and ships fly by.

Day by day, month by year,
heartache and sadness, they begin to shed a tear.
Bodies, trenches, and bullets all around,
explosions and bombs are the only sound.

Survivors will never live the same,
just because the enemies came.
The troops keep marching and moving on,
the horrible visions that they have drawn.

Dozens to thousands lose their lives,
when they didn't even get to say bye to their wives.
Days and nights filled with depression and tears,
and the enemy isn't even the greatest of fears.

Faces scream from behind the barbed fence,
and things keep getting more intense.
Millions lose their breath in their lungs,
While men and women lose their loved ones.

Prisoners no longer have a voice,
when they never even made this choice.
The ones who got away are free,
but the passed away will never see.

* ISBA understands that one of these poems may be difficult to read. We reached out to the student and the district before publishing. With her permission, her superintendent stated the following: “The incident she writes about is not recent and has been reported and she is getting help. Her writing about the incident is therapeutic. I hope her poem is accepted and judged on its merits. She did not write it for “shock value” and she is a worthy kid.”



8th Grade Winner

“My Human”

By Ashlee Christensen,
Raft River Junior High, Cassia County SD

Soft feather like hands
Stroke my back
I saw her first by the trash cans
I didn't want her to touch me
But I guess it was meant to be
I am a cat she is a girl
And I love her
At first I didn't

But now I do
I'm stuck to her like paper to glue
She picks me up
I start to purr
No owner is ever better than her
She is the best
She feeds me
And I eat
Having her is such a treat
It's time for bed and I snuggle up close
I will always love her the most
Of all the humans in this house
She is the best without a doubt

7th Grade Winner

“Riding the Nightbus”

By Samara Steele, Victory Charter School

The window chills my cheek
Where it rests on the glass
That fogs up when I breath
As if the world needs proof
That, yes, time is still moving.
I'm tired.

The engine coughs but rolls the wheels
Wheezing like an old mule
as turns the mill,
Sure, Steady,
Weary,
And I'd bet the sun
It's tired.

The driver sits in the captain's seat
Wheezing along with her lumbering steed.
She's blinded by the dark
But must struggle for the light
That her eyes plead for
But she's still tired.

And high above her, in the sky,
Held up and held apart from us
By the everything that binds us,
Is the moon,
Stealing what precious light she can
From a better thing,
But it's not enough.
She's tired.

And above her still,
Other moons, other stars,
Wink at me,
hoping if they're lucky
I'll glance their way,
And then they can escape
Into the oblivion from where they came
Meaning something.
They're tired.

And beyond that,
God only knows,
But whatever it is
Whatever it's doing,
Longing for, stealing from,
I'd bet my being, my everything
It's tired.

6th Grade Winner - “Dear Ocean”

By Madelyn Willcox, American Heritage Charter

Waves that flow back and forth,
Breezes blowing to the north.
Water that froths and foam,
Oh how your waves like to roam.
Mysterious creatures down in your depths,
Oh how dangerous for someone who steps.

How graceful you are, my dear,
You are the color of a tear.
I love how you shimmer and shine,
You are very, very fine.
Oh Ocean, you will be my friend,
All up to the very end.



By Glenn Cook
Contributing Editor,
American School
Board Journal

Aggressive Common Sense

NSPRA's retiring chief talks school communicators' evolving roles



Soon after starting my school communications career, colleagues said I should join the state chapter to learn more about the profession and how districts dealt with daily challenges. At my first state meeting, my new colleagues were quick to suggest I should join the National School Public Relations Association as well.

NSPRA, as it is known, had emerged from severe financial problems in the early 1990s and had become the go-to organization for school public relations professionals. A big reason for that was Richard Bagin, who had returned to the organization in 1992 as its executive director after an eight-year stint in corporate public relations.

Twenty-eight years after taking the job, and more than two decades after we met at my first NSPRA conference, Bagin is retiring from school public relations in February 2021. Starting in mid-November, he will spend a couple of months transitioning with his successor, Barbara Hunter, NSBA's former communications director. He'll then work for two months as "executive director emeritus."

In early October, the same week Hunter was named to succeed him, Bagin and I talked about a variety of topics during a wide-ranging conversation. As always, he was candid in his assessments about the ever-evolving role of the school communicator.

NO SPIN ZONE

Citing John Ralston Saul's book, *The Doubter's Companion*, Bagin refers to public relations as "aggressive common sense." Districts that withhold or try to spin information, rather than being straightforward, risk damaging the public's ever-fragile sense of trust.

"You need to plan and look at the audiences you are trying to serve, do your research, and know the things that they want and need to know," he says. "Because of technology, there's much more personalization. You can zero in on issues, targets, and the people who help your school district move forward."

The rise of technology, combined with the decline of traditional media, presents both challenges and opportunities for district communications staff. While the basics of good public relations have not changed—"It's all about relationships," Bagin says—the methods of delivery are different.

"You had more control of your message back then than you do now," Bagin says, reflecting on when he first took the NSPRA job. "Now anyone within the community can form a coalition or group of like-minded people and put out what they want to

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An often overlooked or neglected piece of the communicator's role is internal communication.

put out. They build their own websites and social media groups to present their take on information. Technology has made that in a way more of a negative than a positive."

The key, Bagin says, is to remember "an invitation to everyone is an invitation to no one," and that personalization is critical today. "A very strong part of what we preach these days is transparency," he says. "Silence creates a vacuum, and your critics and other people are sure to fill it. In today's world, you'll get killed if you're not out there. Building trust through transparency is more important now than ever. You've got to be out there. It's just that important."

Bagin says school communicators should use and leverage technology to be more effective in their work. But it's not just about feeding the endless information beast.

"The tools really help in getting the feedback you need for solid, two way communication," he says. "It's not just about putting out something on Facebook or Twitter, or electronically surveying your audiences. You have to be engaged in thought exchange, where you see the issues, see what others are saying about them, and then narrow down what you have to the issues that the district or school system should be attacking."

This type of planning may seem impossible when you're extinguishing the almost-daily fires that school communicators face. Still, Bagin says moving from tactical to strategic thinking will help your district move forward.

"Everyone wants more, more, more, but if you start knocking out the strategic communication function or paring down what you do so that you're just known as the 'good news information office,' it's going to lead to chaos," he says. "You have to show

people you are providing some balance in the information you are putting out there, and that you are open to listening to your audiences."

Covid-19 and PR

Fortunately, Bagin says, superintendents increasingly see communications as a management function in the school district. Almost 90 percent of school communicators now report directly to the district's chief executive, according to NSPRA research.

"We like to say a good school leader has one foot in the schools and one foot in the community, and they have the stretch marks to prove it," Bagin says. "But if you're truly interested in listening and getting the pulse of the community, you should also be able to look to the communications person to see how it will play out in the community. The superintendents who get that understand the ramifications for their districts."

And with the levels of communication required in the wake of COVID-19, school public relations officers have proven their value more than ever over the past year.

"There's a stronger identification that communication is more important than what they thought it used to be," Bagin says. "COVID especially has helped people understand that your communications people are the ones who get the information out there, and they can do it quickly. Having that expertise and ability on your staff is critical."

An often overlooked or neglected piece of the communicator's role is internal communication. Buddy Price, a longtime school communications director in South

Carolina and NSPRA leader, once said an organization that is "built on a foundation without internal communication is a foundation built on quicksand."

"That's never been truer than it is now," Bagin says. "You have to build a climate in which you clearly communicate and say what's right and what needs improvement. When your staff starts saying negative things about your school district, it's more believable than anything you read on Twitter because of the face-to-face approach."

Seeing people in person is one thing Bagin has missed in his final year as NSPRA's executive director. This year's summer seminar was held virtually because of the pandemic. Like everything else in this uncertain world, 2021 is planned but still up in the air.

"NSPRA was my first love, frankly, professionally speaking," he says. "And it's because the essence of the organization is members helping members. We are very fortunate to have a core of people who love to step up and help. They love the organization, and they love what they do. And they enjoy helping others get better at it too."

Glenn Cook (glenncook117@gmail.com), a contributing editor to American School Board Journal, is a freelance writer and photographer in Northern Virginia. He also spent five years as a communications director for a North Carolina school district.

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By Lea Duffin
Technical Loss
Control Consultant,
Idaho State
Insurance Fund

Claims Management Strategies



Claims management is one of the most effective measures a school district can implement to save money on workers' compensation premiums. Indemnity claims (such as time loss or an impairment) go into the experience modification premium at the full value (or 100%). Medical-only claims are reduced by 70% in the experience modification calculation. Implementing claims management techniques as described in this article can help manage claims and save money!

Several of these techniques include:

1. Identify a Claims Manager
2. Timely Accident Reporting
3. Return to Work/Light Duty
4. Designated Medical Provider
5. Communication with SIF
6. Communication with the injured worker

Identify Claims Manager

Identify a claims manager in your district/charter. This employee should have the ability to work closely with the injured workers, SIF, and the designated medical provider. A claims manager can help reduce overall costs for the districts/charters by keeping claims medical-only and reducing confusion and burden on the injured worker. SIF can facilitate training and guide the claims manager once they are selected. Responsibility would include:

- Coordinating all phases of the claims management program
- Consulting the department heads on the administration of the claims management program
- Evaluating the program annually and recommending changes in the program and goals

Timely Accident Reporting

An employee injury that results in medical bills or time off work due to the workplace injury or which the employee otherwise wishes to report should be reported within ten days from the date of occurrence. The timeliness of reporting can have a significant impact on claims management. The quicker a claim is submitted to SIF, the more time SIF has to make a determination. Your accident investigation report can be of great help to SIF, especially if there are concerns. It additionally provides enough time to conduct interviews and take additional steps if necessary. Timely accident reporting can also aid in return to work as described in the next section.

Return to Work/Light Duty

As mentioned earlier, medical-only claims are reduced by 70% in the experience modification calculation. To keep a claim medical-only, offering light duty or modified duty allows the employee to return to work within the physician's restrictions. Within the physician's restrictions, light duty may include putting the employee back to work in their original job with limitations on a few job tasks or moving the employee to a new job entirely.

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An important aspect of returning to work is paying the employee the correct Average Weekly Wage (AWW). This wage is what the employee needs to be offered while they have restrictions from the physician so the claim can remain medical-only. Additionally, to keep the claim medical-only, the injured worker must return within five calendar days (including weekends and holidays). If the district brings the injured worker back by day five, but not at the full average weekly wage, SIF can provide guidance and can help issue a wage adjustment if necessary. The examiner on the claim can determine the AWW; feel free to contact them for assistance and guidance.

We highly recommend a written work offer (often referred to as a Return to Work Letter). This letter helps reduce confusion for the injured worker and provides written confirmation that the light duty was accepted, and the injured worker has agreed to come back to work. These letters are available on SIF's website.

Besides saving experience modification costs, return to work has other benefits as well. Return to work sends a message that the employee is valuable all the time, not just when they can work at full capacity. Additionally, studies have shown that the injured worker is more likely to make a full recovery quicker when they return to light or modified duties. Lastly, a return to work program creates teamwork and loyalty.

Designated Medical Provider

Establishing a working relationship between the medical provider and your organization can provide many benefits for the district/charter. In recent years, more occupational health clinics have opened across Idaho. Occupational health programs offer a way to better manage on-the-job injuries by providing enhanced communication between the employer, medical provider, SIF, and the employee. The designated medical provider program should apply to all employees. Once you have selected a medical provider, provide communication and training to all employees at the charter. If you do not have a designated medical provider, reach out to us and we can help you set one up.

A designated medical provider is more than just a partnership between the employer and physician. Benefits include making medical care more immediately available when an employee is injured and improving communication between all parties. We have found that when a district/charter has a designated medical provider, return to work notes (or status reports) are received promptly, and the district/charter can provide the return to work offer before day five. Suppose this does not occur and the return to work note from the physician is delayed. In that case, the claim can quickly escalate, and the district/charter misses being able to offer by day five, ultimately resulting in a potential time loss claim.

Communicating with SIF

Exchanging necessary information aids in the prompt and proper adjustment of claims and returning the employee to work as soon as possible. Create a plan that includes reporting injuries and illness to SIF as quickly as possible and establishing a working relationship with your claims examiners with SIF.

Communication with the Injured Worker

Having a workplace injury can be confusing and frightening to injured workers. Communicating with an injured worker can help alleviate this confusion and make the injury and process less frightening. Create a plan to keep up the injured worker's morale and explain the benefits to the injured worker and their family. Additionally, keep contact with the injured worker on progress and changes to the claim.

You can contact your local loss control consultant or Lea Duffin, the Technical Loss Control Consultant, at 208-332-2234 or Lea.Duffin@IdahoSIF.org.

- See our ad on back cover -





By Jeff Tucker
Idaho Public Television
Director of Content

‘Resilient Idaho’ Documentary Shows People Finding Hope After Trauma

Child abuse, neglect, and growing up in a seriously dysfunctional household are all Adverse Childhood Experiences — or ACEs for short. Left unresolved or untreated, these experiences can create childhood trauma and toxic stress that can last a lifetime.

Research shows that at least five of the ten leading causes of death, such as heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure, can be rooted in ACEs. They can even shorten a person’s lifespan by up to 20 years. The new documentary “Resilient Idaho: Hope Lives Here” looks into the ACEs research and how ACEs affect people here in Idaho. Most importantly, the film explores resilience, which could be considered an antidote to ACEs. Community health experts will uncover what makes people resilient and share powerful stories of how people have overcome tragedies.

The documentary will air Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 8 p.m. and Monday, Feb. 22, at 9 p.m. on Idaho Public Television. It will also be available for free streaming through the PBS Video app or online at video.idahoptv.org.

In October 2019, in conjunction with a statewide group interested in addressing this issue, IdahoPTV produced an on-air Q & A discussion on ACEs called “Resilient Idaho: Hope After Trauma.” It was during that time that a few brilliant and focused people came into our sphere. Jean Mutchie with St. Luke’s Community Health Services said to me, “You’re going to make a documentary on this subject and I’m going to help you.” I could tell it was less of a suggestion and more of a kind directive.

Jean is part of a Culture of Health Leaders funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The reasons she gave for making a documentary to expand upon the Q & A discussion rang true in my mind. IdahoPTV

content has a huge statewide audience and ACEs are definitely a statewide issue that people should know more about. She and a large group of community health leaders had organized the Idaho Resilience Project, that focuses on helping others build safe, stable and nurturing environments.

Resilience is the positive growth and change that comes through experiencing difficult life events facilitated by supportive relationships and environments. Hope and healing can help conquer adversity. Data clearly show that ACEs don’t have to be predictive of a person’s diminished future, and resilience can help people bounce forward after trauma and tragedy.

A year ago we secured funding for the documentary from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Optum Idaho. It was the start of something big. Then we were locked down by the pandemic. But Jean, our production team, and another of the program’s subject matter experts — Roger Sherman, executive director of the Idaho Children’s Trust Fund — found the resilience to continue building the documentary.

Although this will not be the end of our work in the field of ACEs, the documentary marks a great effort by dozens of participants to show that the people of Idaho are resilient. And it’s all due to someone whom I now can call an amazing community organizer, all around great person, and friend: Jean Mutchie.

I hope you find hope when you watch “Resilient Idaho: Hope Lives Here.” Hope is in all of us. But it’s also important to be that one caring individual for someone, old or young, in your community or family, to offer them the hope they may be struggling to find. You never know how big your wave can be and how far it can travel.

Resilient Idaho: Hope Lives Here

Child abuse, neglect and growing up in a seriously dysfunctional household are all Adverse Childhood Experiences, or **ACEs** for short. Left unresolved or untreated, these experiences can create childhood trauma and toxic stress that can last a lifetime. Research shows that at least five of the ten leading causes of death, such as heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure, can be rooted in

ACEs. They can even shorten a person's lifespan by up to 20 years.

Resilient Idaho: Hope Lives Here looks into the **ACEs** research and how **ACEs** affect

“ If you have six or more **ACEs**, your lifespan is likely to be 20 years shorter.

ROGER SHERMAN
Idaho Children's Trust Fund,
Prevent Child Abuse Idaho

people here in Idaho. Most importantly, the film explores resilience, which could be considered an antidote to **ACEs**. Community health experts uncover what makes people resilient and share powerful stories of how people have overcome trauma and tragedies. Data clearly show that **ACEs** don't have to be predictive, and resilience can help people bounce forward after experiencing trauma.

VIRTUAL EVENT INFORMATION:

Starting in April, IdahoPTV will present virtual events focused on a different resilience topic each month. These virtual events will include viewing clips from **Hope Lives Here** and a panel discussion with Q & A. Go to idahoptv.org/resilientidaho for more information.

- **APRIL:** Child Abuse Prevention
- **MAY:** Mental Health Awareness
- **JUNE:** Education

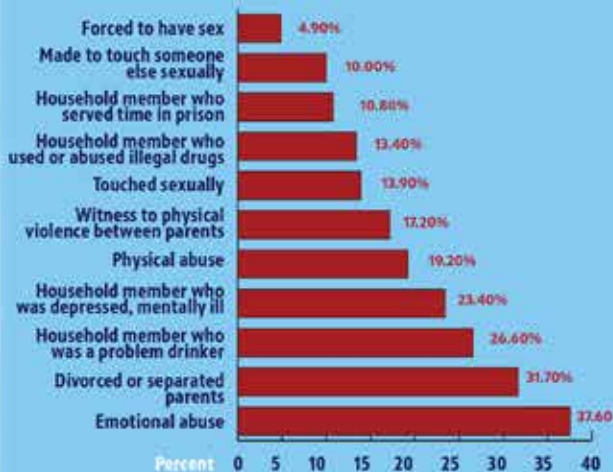
“ **ACEs** can be a significant contributor to why some people suffer from chronic diseases at a higher rate than others.

JEAN MUTCHIE
Community Health Manager
St. Luke's Health System

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- 211 careline
- 911 emergency
- Idaho Resilience Project idahoresilienceproject.org
- Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline - Call or Text (208) 398-4357
- Idaho Children's Trust Fund idahofamilysupport.org
- HelpNow Line (986) 867-1073
- IdahoPTV Resilient Idaho idahoptv.org/resilientidaho
- PBS LearningMedia Collection for Teachers

Most Prevalent ACEs Among Idaho Adults



PRODUCTION FUNDING BY:



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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Endowment

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By Patricia Pyke
CEO,
Girl Scouts of Silver Sage

READY TO LAUNCH



Girl Scouts and Idaho Non-Profits Can Accelerate Recovery of Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning

Instead of extracurricular activities, many students this year have experienced learning disruption, family illness and financial stresses, isolation from friends and mentors, and even lack of access to healthy outdoor adventures. To ensure this generation of children can still reach their fullest potentials, we need a “moonshot” equivalent for education recovery. If Idaho educators, non-profits, policy makers, and businesses come together in an all-out partnership, we can launch an accelerated recovery of the social, emotional, and academic skills and competencies our young people need for their future.

We’re grateful for the heroic efforts by teachers and school districts/charter schools to educate our students and support families under challenging conditions. Even so, as Idaho Governor Brad Little identified in his State of the State speech, some students might still experience more than a year’s worth of learning loss.

For our education moonshot to succeed, every partner must use every tool in our toolbox to build a network of partnerships and resources among formal education and community partners.



Supporting Social, Emotional, and Academic Outcomes

For example, what if there were a co-extracurricular program available right now that had measurable gains in increasing K-12 students' hope for the future? And STEM career interest and digital literacy? And teens said it bolstered their mental well-being during the pandemic?

And what if that program leveled the playing field for girls from underserved backgrounds by providing them mentors who help them pursue personal and academic goals?

Good news. There is such a program. Those real, research-measured ¹ gains were achieved by a non-profit--Girl Scouts. If you're thinking, "wait a minute, aren't Girl Scouts known for outdoor adventures, ceaseless community service, STEM, and that iconic cookie program?"

Yes! It turns out that all that challenge seeking, civic responsibility, and business planning builds the kind of resilient, collaborative, problem-solvers with the tech and people skills to succeed in school, life, and career. Those "soft" skills are also just what employers say they need, hence also building ahead to community economic prosperity.

It's no wonder that more than half of U.S. women business leaders were Girl Scouts, as were most of NASA's women astronauts, and 71% of current U.S. women Senators (both parties).

Girl Scout outcomes are so compelling that some school districts in other parts of the country (Dallas, Texas, for example) have invited Girl Scouts to be part of the school day curriculum. We extend such an invitation to school districts and charter schools in our region too.

Being tech-savvy and nimble, Girl Scouts has, like Idaho's school districts/charter schools, adapted to the hybrid world. How have Girl Scouts have kept up with social, emotional, and academic learning this year? With support from mentors; workshops in space science, engineering, geology, and more; getting outside for photography and snowshoeing; delivering food baskets; making masks; and writing letters to those isolated in care facilities; all while encouraging each other in a supportive sisterhood.

Non-Profits in Idaho's Learning Ecosystem

The Girl Scouts are part of Idaho's strong network of non-profits and agencies ready and able to help with an education moonshot to recover social, emotional, and academic learning losses. Idaho's co-curricular, informal education, and after-school non-profits are eager to complement state learning outcomes with high-quality experiences and lots of fun and caring mentors.

The Idaho Out-of-School Network (ION) cites a growing body of research showing that students regularly participating in quality out-of-school programs improves students' in-school grades, homework completion, test scores, and behaviors that create success. ION recommends that well-designed afterschool and summer opportunities will be crucial to the post-pandemic recovery to make up for learning slides, rebuild connections, support families, and increase access to mentors.

Policy-Makers and Businesses

Policy makers at school board, state and local levels, as well as business leaders, play key roles in recommending moonshot resources and priorities to enable formal education entities and out-of-school programs like Girl Scouts to work together.

continued on next page...



¹ Girl Scout Research Institute, various studies, <https://www.girlscouts.org/research>

Our moonshot also needs access to space and students so we can serve them. Pandemic policies have, in some cases, unintentionally cut off co-curricular partners from serving families and students who might benefit most, by eliminating or restricting physical, and sometimes also virtual, access to some schools. As a safety-first organization with the highest standards, Girl Scouts respect that school administrators have made these choices and we look forward to being invited back in to serve fully soon.

As millions of dollars in federal coronavirus relief have flowed into Idaho, we are grateful to Governor Little and the Idaho Legislature for supporting K-12 schools, higher education, day care centers, and technology for families. Girl Scouts and out-of-school partners stand ready to help with Governor Little's proposed "Building Idaho's Future" plan that includes summer and other programs to combat learning loss.

Summer is Coming

Compounded by pandemic disruption, the typical summer slide may be exacerbated in 2021.

As we tackle learning losses, this spring Girl Scouts will offer Pre-K programming and Kindergarten readiness for schools in our region; we'll form new troops this spring and summer with an emphasis on K-3, the grades for which literacy is most crucial; and, most importantly, we welcome all K-12 girls from all communities and provide scholarships to remove any barrier. We also welcome caring volunteer mentors.

At Girl Scouts we are keenly attuned to the benefits of getting kids outdoors, to connect with nature and socialize with friends, to hunt for bugs and rocks, to run and play and lead. Girl Scouts will offer a plethora of spring and summer day and residential camps and programs to explore science, art, adventure, and nature, while giving parents a respite from this long year.

Moonshot solutions require breakthrough thinking. In this case that breakthrough – intentional collaboration among education partners -- is well within our reach. **So let's launch!**

Girl Scouts of Silver Sage is the premier leadership development program for K-12 girls in southern Idaho, and part of eastern Oregon and northern Nevada. Silver Sage partners with Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, together serving girls throughout Idaho.



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Going the Distance for Idaho Education

Helping Students Stay Connected

Blue Cross of Idaho understands the importance of education, which is why we have worked to support Idaho education as it continues to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. The sudden shifts in where and how students are learning has left many students searching for ways to continue their education through online or hybrid models.

To help, Idaho Business for Education (IBE) created a statewide initiative called the Community Activation Project, which is supported by the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health. Blue Cross of Idaho and the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health have collectively donated \$125,000 to date.

The two goals of the Community Activation Project are:

- Get devices into the hands of thousands of students who do not have them.
- Provide connectivity to those students who cannot access the internet at home, so that all students can have access to online education.

"This project is critical to the thousands of students in our state who cannot learn remotely without computers and other devices or internet connections at their homes," said Rod Gramer, president and CEO of IBE.

Of the total amount donated by Blue Cross of Idaho and the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health, \$100,000 will go to IBE's Close the Divide campaign and \$25,000 will go to the Internet for Students Emergency Fund, both of which were created to support the Community Activation Project's mission to help students get access to technology and internet connectivity.

"Blue Cross of Idaho is pleased to contribute to Idaho Business for Education's Close the Divide campaign and invest in Idaho's children," said Charlene Maher, president and CEO of Blue Cross of Idaho. "The COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges to Idaho's schools, but they adapted to keep teachers and children connected to their classroom. Our support for Idaho Business for Education's Close the Divide Campaign ensures the next generation of Idaho leaders can continue learning from home until the pandemic slows."

Today, approximately 200,000 Idaho students need a computer to close the digital divide, so they can continue learning in any environment. The donations from Blue Cross of Idaho and the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health helps IBE to purchase newer, more consistent brands of computers for Idaho students, as well as help students get internet access.

"We are thrilled that Blue Cross of Idaho, a trustee member of IBE, has made such a large donation to our Close the Divide campaign," said Gramer. "Thanks to Blue Cross, IBE will be able to help many students across the state obtain the computers they need during the upcoming school year to be successful academically."

IBE continues to look for businesses and individuals throughout the state to donate their used laptops. The project is also accepting desktop computers, which need to have all power cords, keyboards and monitor cables included. The computers will then be scrubbed clean of data and sanitized by volunteers.

- See our ad on page 7 -





By Karen Echeverria
ISBA Executive Director

How We Changed the Way We Advocate

As I write my last three SLATE articles, I thought I would take some time to reflect on my career here at the Idaho School Boards Association. We are in the middle of the legislative session – my 30th and last session. We thought a good place to start would be to focus on the changes we have made to the way we approach the resolution process, how we worked to assure that our members were informed and ready to testify, the work we did to gain a seat at the table when it came to education related discussions, and the changes we have made to education laws.

Board Members Speaking to Resolutions

When I attended the 2007 Business Session, I was struck by the fact that not one single Board member got up to debate a resolution. They all deferred their time to their superintendent. While we appreciate the work our superintendents do, they have their own association where they can move issues forward. We are the school BOARDS association. We asked ourselves why no Board members were debating and quickly learned it was because Board members were not adequately informed. They were on the outside looking in. They could not speak to that which the “insiders” didn’t want them to know. We got right to work changing that.

Our goal was to find ways to ensure that Board members were informed about the issues in their district – that was a challenge. We revamped the Regional meetings in the Spring and Fall and spent more time discussing the actual resolutions. We sent articles about how to engage in the process, the role of a Board member as a lobbyist, and we spent a lot of time on the phone with Board Chairs trying to change this dynamic.

Finally, we revamped Capitol Notes. That publication used to discuss, in great detail, one education related issue. The issue may or may not have been relevant to any of ISBA’s resolutions or an issue that was currently being debated in the legislature. By revamping Capitol Notes, it was our intent to let you know about every piece of legislation that could impact public schools in any way. We now take the “legaleze” out of the bills and explain them to you in simple language. We ask for your assistance to pass or kill a bill by contacting your legislators, we keep you informed on the progress of any bills related to our resolutions, and we let you know the position the Governmental Affairs Committee has taken on any piece of legislation. We believe this has provided much needed information to our Board members to help inform them.

By the time we got to the 2008 Business Session, most, but not all, of the speakers on the resolutions were Board Members. We continued to work on that until we got to where we are now. Once we give you information, knowledge, and talking points, we know you are far better informed and can speak to legislative and advocacy issues. We know it is far better for a Board member to talk with their legislator than it is for us at ISBA to do so. They want to hear from all of you. After all, you are elected by the same constituents they are! The best way to do that is to assure that you are informed about the issues.

Goal Accomplished: We have developed school Board members into some of Idaho’s most effective public policy advocates and trusted education authorities in the State.

Revamping the Resolution Process

During our first few years, the resolution process was sporadic at best. Districts would submit resolutions that were specific to one issue that occurred in their district rather than an issue that impacted all districts. We had dozens of resolutions that were submitted and sometimes even more resolutions were submitted from the floor. That made the Business Session long, tedious, and unproductive.

Over the years, we made the following changes to the resolution process:

- Require resolutions to be submitted by July 31. This gives staff time to work with the local district/charter to assure that the resolution is focused on a statewide issue and doesn’t conflict with other resolutions that have been submitted.
- Ask Boards to review resolutions at their October Board meetings so they are prepared for discussion, debate, and vote when they get to the Business Session. This also gives

Board members time to ask questions of ISBA staff or the sponsoring district/charter prior to the Business Session. This causes fewer surprises on the floor of the Business Session.

- Set out specific criteria for resolutions from the floor. This has limited the number of resolutions from the floor. Because Board members are now discussing resolutions at their October meetings, resolutions from the floor are limited to emergency situations only.
- Districts or charters that submit resolutions work to find legislative sponsors for their bills in their local regions. This buy-in from districts/charters has brought us greater success with passage of our resolution into actual laws. Local legislators want to help their local school districts and are more likely to carry a bill when that request comes from the district rather than ISBA.
- The sponsor of the resolution come to testify once the bill has been printed. Once again, the legislature wants to hear the specific reason this bill is being brought forward. While ISBA also testifies, we believe it has more impact when the district/charter is there in person.

Goal accomplished: We now have an effective resolution process that focuses priorities and allows ISBA to accomplish legislative successes.

From Resolutions to Laws

We actually started turning our resolutions into legislation and moving them forward. When we started looking at our processes, we realized that ISBA's resolutions were a sort of statement or platform. The association took no action to pass good legislation or to defeat bad legislation. Once a resolution was passed that was the end of it.

All of these efforts with the resolution process and assuring our members were informed paid off. By the 2009 legislative session, we were a force to be reckoned with and that has not changed to this day. By now, the economy had begun to tank, holdbacks were looming, and funding was not looking great for districts and charters in Idaho. With the economy in bad shape, we saw several pieces of legislation related to trying to keep districts and charters whole. The federal government began pumping education dollars into states in an effort to assist.

We began turning our resolutions into actual legislation and running those bills. We were successful in those first few years in assuring that districts had the tools they needed to get through the looming financial emergency. In future years, we worked to pass numerous pieces of legislation that changed the way you negotiate with your local education agencies. Prior to these changes, districts were not in the driver's seat. Since that time, we have passed numerous pieces of legislation and defeated several more – all based on resolutions and positions that ISBA had taken.

Goal Accomplished: Leading transformational reform of Idaho's educational statutes giving school boards critical control of labor contracts and resulting budgets.

ISBA as the Leading Voice for Public Education

The last step in this process was to assure that ISBA was considered a leading voice for public education. While I had worked with the legislature in various roles for over 15 years, they did not know who the Idaho School Boards Association was. In order for us to have a seat at the table during any big policy discussions, that dynamic needed to change.



We started by taking our officers over to meet with legislative leadership. We hosted them for dinner and lunch. We ramped up our efforts related to our legislative luncheon during Day on the Hill by asking our members to personally invite legislators to lunch. That increased our attendance and allowed for more one-on-one conversations.

We worked to establish strong relationships with members of the State Board of Education and then Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna as well as all of their staff. My previous job had been at the State Board of Education, so these transitions were easier to make. However, we had to remind them often who we were and that our members were elected to govern their districts and charters.

At the same time, while ISBA has always partnered with an outside contract lobbying firm, the Board made a change of course and hired the lobbying firm of Sullivan and Reberger. They went through a rigorous application and interview process with a subcommittee appointed by the Board. They were, and continue to be, one of the premier lobbying firms in Idaho. This has proven to be an incredibly beneficial relationship for ISBA especially when it came to establishing personal relationships with legislators. With their help, we were given appointments with the Speaker, the Pro Tem, and Committee Chairs. We were allowed the opportunity to discuss our agenda and our issues. This transition would have taken years without this relationship.

In addition, the Board adopted a simple philosophy – “from, with, or through”. Legislation would come from us, with us, or through us. That meant hiring the best people to help lead this transformation. In addition to the efforts of our members, Board, and Officers, we already had Misty Swanson on staff, and we then hired Jess Harrison, and later Quinn Perry. This trio of intelligent, energetic, and engaged young women was just what ISBA needed to make the next step. Their personalities made it hard to not include them in any discussion related to education.

Goal Accomplished: We built ISBA into the leading education voice in Idaho. We always have a seat at the table. ISBA is often the first stakeholder contacted by Governors, legislators, and education officials. We are the go-to education leaders in Idaho.

I am really proud of the work we have done in this area. We made some significant changes over the years and we put ISBA in the forefront. It is not always easy being here, but it is the best thing for ISBA and our members.

If you are so inclined, I also wrote a much more extensive outline of what we were able to accomplish each of the last few years. I will warn you that it is lengthy and will take some time to read. If you are a legislative junkie like me, you might find the trip down memory lane enjoyable. If not, you might want to skip it. You can find it on the following pages.



By Karen Echeverria
ISBA Executive Director

A 16 Year Historical Perspective on ISBA's Impact on Legislation

Early Education Issues

While before my time at ISBA, there were several issues that occurred that are important to understand for historical purposes. These issues changed the way we do business today.

2006 Special Legislative Session – Property Tax Relief and Destabilization of K12 Funding

The **Idaho Property Tax Relief Act of 2006** was passed on August 25, 2006. It was proposed by Idaho governor Jim Risch to be addressed in a special session of the Idaho Legislature.

The legislation did the following:

- Reduced property taxes by \$260 million by eliminating the public schools maintenance and operation levy on Idaho real property. About 60% of the tax relief would go to businesses, 40% to residential property owners.
- Raised the Idaho sales tax \$210 million, to 6%.
- Placed \$100 million into the Public Education Stabilization Fund; and
- Placed an advisory question on the November general election ballot asking Idaho voters if they agree with the property tax relief adopted by the legislature in August.

In November 2006, the Act was overwhelming approved by voters with 72% voting in favor.

Governor Risch was only Governor for seven months. The Special Session was the only legislative session that occurred while he was Governor. Even though there was only one issue, the session lasted for more than 15 hours. The Idaho School Boards Association and the Idaho Association of School Administrators were both heavily opposed to the bill.

The tax overhaul forced schools to rely on state sales and income taxes for a larger piece of the state general fund and a bigger piece budget pie. This new law left schools vulnerable and it destabilized the school funding system. History proved us to be correct in our concerns. When the Great Recession hit and state tax

collections dropped, the legislature was forced to cut K12 funding for the first time in state history. And, the only place for us to go was to the local property owner for more levy dollars. Since 2006, supplemental levies are no longer supplemental. They are needed for day-to-day operations.

Facilities Funding Lawsuit: In June 1990, the Idaho Schools for Equal Education Opportunity (ISEEO) filed a facilities lawsuit against the State of Idaho. ISEEO consisted of several school districts and parents and were represented by former Supreme Court Justice Bob Huntley. This case went before the Supreme Court five different times – four of those were procedural, and the last was for a decision.

In 2001, the district court concluded that the system of school funding established by the Legislature was insufficient to meet the constitutional requirement because reliance on loans alone to pay for major repairs or the replacement of unsafe school buildings was inadequate for the poorer school districts. The Court referred it to the legislature to take action.

In 2000 and 2001, the legislature passed legislation giving districts the ability to pass plant facility levies and extended the repayment time frame. They also used the School Safety and Health Revolving Loan and Grant Fund to provide \$10 million to seven school district to assist them in financing facility repair and replacement. In the meantime, the case was appealed to the Supreme Court.

In 2005, the Supreme Court agreed with the district court and ordered the Legislature to devise a constitutional method of funding the construction, repair, and replacement of school facilities to ensure that schools offer a safe environment conducive to learning. At the same time, the Supreme Court was clear that it was not within their purview to tell the legislature how to accomplish that. However, in their ruling, they did offer several suggestions, the first of which was to reduce the super majority. They also suggested funding facilities out the state general fund or allowing citizens the ability to appropriate a certain amount of their taxes to school facilities.

Since the 2005 ruling, ISEEO has been unsuccessful in seeking further remedial – state and federal – court orders to complete the legislative action enforcing a new facilities funding system, and the Idaho Supreme Court has closed the case.

2007 and 2008

My tenure with ISBA began in October of 2007 right before Annual Convention. By late January 2008, I had been hired as the Interim Executive Director and then took over in May. To be honest, this year was spent trying to figure out what I had jumped into. More about that in another article. But, needless to say, we did not run any legislation in 2008.

The Idaho Education Network (IEN): As then Superintendent Luna began working on some of his initiatives, he created the IEN. He was working to ensure that students had equal access to technology and the ability to learn remotely. There were three main goals with the IEN. 1. Improve overall broadband technology in rural and isolated areas; 2. Provide access to fiber optic connectivity; and 3. Increase overall capacity for growth with districts/charters having greater than ten times their current capacity of bandwidth. In order to accomplish these goals, the State of Idaho, through the Department of Administration, sought bids to conduct this work. The issuance of the contract led to a year's long debacle and the eventual closure of the IEN. More on that later.

2009

HB252 Financial Emergencies: This was the year that we negotiated the ability for districts and charters to declare financial emergencies. Without this, the law specifically stated that a district/charter was unable to reduce salaries or benefits for any of their classified staff. Because salaries and benefits make up 80-90% of every school district/charter budget, and with significantly reduced budgets, it was imperative that we find a way to reduce salaries.

The legislature appointed then Representative Rich Wills, a former State Patrol Officer to lead this effort. We met every morning at 6:30 am for eight weeks. Representative Wills would bring doughnuts and coffee every morning. We sat with representatives of the Idaho Education Association (IEA), Idaho Association of School Superintendents (IASA), the State Department of Education (SDE), and the State Board of Education (SBOE) and finally came to an agreement.

While not pleasant, it was a necessity. Those laws remain in place today. Only one declaration can be made each year, so it was imperative that districts were careful to assure they did it correctly the first time. When it became clear that the criteria was going to be met by all districts/charters, the SDE declared a statewide financial emergency. That kept districts/charters from going through all the steps locally. However, they were still required to have a meeting and accept or approve the statewide financial emergency. Almost all districts/charters took advantage of this legislation.

When we testified in front of the committees about the negotiations for this legislation, we stated that it have been difficult to negotiate with a man who used to carry a gun, a nightstick, and a can of mace. In all honesty, he was the perfect man for that job and we are not sure we would have that law now without his strong hand.

“Hamburger Palooza” or HB256aa Transportation Funding: This bill prompted a change to the way we fund transportation and was brought forward by then Senate Education Chair John Goedde. In an effort to get the count up for transportation funding, we had a school district offer coupons for a free hamburger for riding the bus on headcount day. That angered Chair Goedde and he set about amending the law. While pieces of the bill passed, other pieces did not and it took several years for the district to go through a comprehensive audit before we all came to consensus.

HB372a Election Consolidation: Efforts had been underway for several years to consolidate all elections to several dates and to have the County Clerks run the elections. This was the year they were finally successful at getting the law passed. Prior to this law, school districts ran their own elections and they ran them on the days they wanted. Oftentimes, they were run on Open House night or Parent Teacher Conference night in an effort to bring in more positive votes.

We were able to secure two additional dates for school elections. One in March and one in August. Those dates were carefully chosen to allow time to advertise for the next election if a levy or bond had failed. As you all know, to this day, we still have legislation every year attempting to remove one or both of those dates.

In addition, this legislation changed trustee terms from three to four years. There was an extended phase-in period that meant some Board member terms were extended to five years. Once the phase-in period ended, three trustees were set to be elected during one term and two years later, two trustees were set to be elected.

2009 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB262 Freezing the Salary Grid: This was a one time freeze in movement on the state salary grid in response to the downturn in the economy.

HB256A Transportation: This was the new funding formula that moved \$7.5 million to discretionary and reduced the reimbursement.

SB1121aa Notification: Charter Commission must notify the local district when a charter is opening in their area.

HB078 At Large Appointments: Provided the ability to appoint a Board member at-large if no one from the Zone was willing to serve.

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2010

Likely because of the downturn in the economy and the fact that districts and charters were just trying to keep their heads above water, we did not see many significant pieces of legislation this year. We continued our efforts to assure that Board members were informed and that we were consulted when it came to any education policy issues.

Statewide Financial Emergency: As in 2009, the SDE once again issued a Statewide Financial Emergency. A vast majority of school

districts and charters took advantage of that emergency in an effort to hold salaries and benefits with no raises.

Idaho Land Board Lawsuit: Attorney General Wasden filed suit against the Land Board because he did not believe the Land Board was fulfilling its fiduciary duty to the beneficiaries. He went directly to the Supreme Court with his lawsuit. He eventually won that lawsuit and forced the Land Board to divest itself of lease properties and to sell them instead and put those dollars in the State's Investment Fund.

2010 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB493 Mastery Advance Pilot Project: The first phase of allowing students to graduate early by taking college level courses while in high school.

HB676 Student Athlete Concussion and Head Injury: This bill began the work on guidelines and protocol related to this issue.

HB699 Financial Transparency on the Website: While we had this bill defeated, it got caught up in a last minute deal on the last day of the legislative session at 9 pm. In the end, it passed and set out all the criteria you now use when keeping your website updated.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

SB1364 Raising the Cap on Public Charter Schools: Would have raised the cap for underserved student populations.

2011

Unlike 2010, this year was a huge year for Legislation that impacted schools. This was the year that then Superintendent Tom Luna had begun working on several pieces of legislation known as Students Come First. There were three main topics that were addressed in several pieces of legislation.

1. **SB1110 and companion bill HB336 Pay for Performance.** This bill changed the way teachers would be paid. They would be paid based on performance rather than moving across the grid based on years and education.
2. **SB1069, SB1109, SB1113, SB1184, and companion bill HB345 Technology.** All students would have one-to-one computing devices. Boy, wouldn't it have been nice if that had been in place this past year?? Required that some credits be for online courses; increased math and science requirements; and increased the minimum teacher salary to \$30,000

3. **SB1108, SB1068, and companion bill HB335 Negotiations.** This bill made several changes to the way we handle negotiations including all negotiations being open to the public, requiring 50% + 1 proof prior to negotiating, removed the evergreen clause in all master agreements, and allowed for last best offer.

The ISBA Board voted to support one of the major pieces of legislation related to negotiations. It was a controversial decision and not all districts were in agreement with the Board's decision. ISBA staff received many complaints and letters related to the decision and districts were threatening to leave the Association. It was an incredibly difficult year.

After several iterations, all of these bills passed the Legislature, but they would not be in place for long – more about that in 2012 below. However, when they were in place, several provisions took effect that still remain today.

2011 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB78 Mastery Based Education: Removed the pilot and now available to all schools.

HB201 Information About School District Employees: Requires that districts/charters request information about employees from their former employers before they are hired. It also prohibits districts and charters from purging personnel records in an attempt to move an employee out of their district/charter rather than deal with their performance or violation of their code of ethics.

HB308 Bond Elections: Bonds must now contain a statement of the specific purpose.

HB328 Public Records: Set out fees and requirements for processing and providing public records.

SB1026a Unlawful Transfer or Removal of Public Records: As a companion bill HB201, this legislation was passed and provided for civil enforcement and for the Attorney General to seek injunctive relief in order to recover any missing records or records that the custodian removed.

HB315 97% Protection: This is the year we began the phase out of the 97% protection for districts.

SB1105a Student Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying: This bill made it clear that school personnel are expected to intervene and report when they suspect harassment issues.

SB1145 Cottage Site Leases: This legislation codified the Supreme Court findings from the lawsuit that Attorney General Wasden filed and won last year.

SB1149 Public Charter School Closures: Set out the provisions in the event of an unanticipated public charter school closure to assure that any unused State appropriated dollars would come back to the State first.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

HB346 and 353 Lift the Limit on Charter Schools: An attempt to lift the limit of six authorizations a year.

HB352 Charter School Facility Loans: Would have allowed charter schools to purchase a state guarantee on their facilities.

2012

First of Two "Fee" Lawsuits: Former school superintendent Russ Joki, with assistance from former Supreme Court justice, Bob Huntley, filed a lawsuit against the West Ada School District on behalf of his grandchildren. Joki claimed that it was unconstitutional to charge fees for extra-curricular activities such as field trips. More about the decision in 2015.

Propositions on the Ballot: Shortly after Students Come First was passed by the legislature, the IEA began collecting signatures to get propositions on the ballot to overturn the laws. They were successful in securing signatures, and what came to be known as the "props" were on the ballot in November of this year. The IEA was successful in getting all the laws that had been in effect for 18 months overturned.

However, several things had occurred in that 18 month timeframe that could not be undone. Those provisions of Students Come First still remain today. The most noted change was that all master

agreements that were in place when Student's Come First (SCF) was adopted were immediately made null and void. Prior to this, master agreements were known as "evergreen". In other words, once something went into the master agreement, it could NEVER come back out. That put your local education association at a distinct advantage when you came to the table to negotiate because they never had to give anything up. Under SCF the only things that could be negotiated were salary and benefits. So, all master agreements were very limited in 2011 and 2012 when you negotiated your agreements.

Three days after the props passed, a school district in Idaho brought a resolution from the floor at the ISBA Annual Convention Business Session. That resolution essentially sought to reenact all of the aspects of Students Come First related to negotiations. That resolution passed the membership and set the course for some extensive work by ISBA. It would become the major work of the association for the next three years. Through all of that, ISBA was successful in passing all but one piece of legislation from that resolution.

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2012 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB426 8 in 6 Program: Allowing students to move through middle and high school faster.

HB481 Charter School Cap: This was the year that the cap on charter schools was lifted.

HB517 Teachers Taxes and Expenses: This bill allows teachers to deduct up to \$250 for expenses related to their classrooms.

HB534 Teacher Leadership Awards: This is the first year that teacher leadership awards were implemented.

HP579 Rehire the Retired: We were successful in getting legislation passed that allowed us to rehire retired teachers and administrators under certain conditions.

HB694 Liability Insurance for Teacher: In an attempt to reduce the need for teacher's to belong to the IEA, several bills were introduced that allowed teachers to buy liability insurance from other companies rather than through IEA. One bill was finally passed. The Department of Insurance finally put a list of insurers together that teachers could utilize. However, we don't believe that anyone ever took advantage of that and continued to use the school district's liability insurance or insurance they could get as part of their membership through IEA.

SB1244 Parental Input: This bill provided provisions on parental input related to teacher evaluations.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

HB670 Education Scholarships for Private Schools: This was the first year we saw a voucher bill. We have seen at least one bill every year since.

2013

This year brought Jessica Harrison to our lobbying team.

Governor's Task Force: The passage and eventual overturn of Students Come First had taken its toll on the education community. Then Governor Butch Otter formed the K12 Task Force for Improving Education. That committee consisted of a wide array of education stakeholders. Once again, we had a seat at the table with several Board members and me sitting on this committee. We met for two years and eventually adopted 20 recommendations, all of which have been implemented, at least in some part. All of those recommendations were unanimously adopted except for one which had one no vote. That recommendation was related to Idaho adopting "common core standards".

Negotiations Legislation: While the resolution related to negotiations was passed in November 2012, our real work on these issues began in 2013. Below are all the laws that we were able to pass. However, they were all passed with Sunset clauses that would cause them to expire in one year if not extended or removed. We extended those sunsets for two years and made edits to the bills until we were finally able remove the sunset clauses and make them permanent.

HB260 Last Best Offer: This is the one piece of legislation that we were unable to get passed. It would have allowed the Board to move forward with a final Master Agreement even if the Board and local education association could not come to agreement in a reasonable amount of time.

HB261 Reduction in Force and Seniority: This bill set out that when a reduction in force was necessary, that seniority would not be the only determining factor, and that good data would be used as well as some other pre-set criteria instead.

SB1098 Open Negotiations: This legislation provided that all negotiations between the district and the teachers union must be held in open session, posted like all other meetings, and minutes kept from each negotiation session.

SB1047 One Year Master Agreements/No More Evergreen Clauses: This law set out that master agreements are only good for one year in relationship to salaries and benefits and that all other terms of the agreement can be in place for two years.

SB1149 50%+1 and Majority Ratification: This legislation provided that the local teachers union must prove that they represent 50%+1 of the teachers before going into negotiations and set out criteria by which they must prove that a majority had ratified the master agreement terms.

SB1150 De Novo Hearings: This legislation provided that when a teacher or student lawsuit is appealed to the district court, the record from the school district hearing would become part of the record at the district court so that the judge in the case was not hearing a completely new case.

In addition to all the negotiation bills, the economy had started to rebound so we saw the legislature begin to refund some of the programs and line items that had previously been frozen or reduced.

2013 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB275 Use it or Lose It: This was the beginning of the reduction in flexibility in hiring certificated employees.

HB205 Repealing the Freeze on the Grid for Education Credits: The legislation ended the freeze which allowed districts/charters to receive full state funding for any education earned by professional employees.

HB206 Facility Funding for Charter Schools: This legislation provided a state facilities funding stream for charters schools.

HB221 Charter School Oversight: This legislation set out governance and oversight components of the appropriate authorization of charter schools. It was consensus legislation that took all year to negotiate.

HB259 Unpaid Leave: This bill set out the orderly operation of district business when it came to the requirements of voluntary and involuntary leaves of absence.

HB317 Evaluations: This bill set out that all certificated employees would receive at least one written performance evaluation each year.

HCR003 Cursive Handwriting: While not binding, a resolution was passed requesting that the SBOE commence rulemaking that provided that cursive handwriting be taught in schools.

SB1028 Mastery Based Education: This bill removed the pilot and made it available to all districts and charters.

SB1089 Teacher Early Retirement Incentive Program: This bill repealed this section of Idaho Code.

SB1092 Increased Funding for Math and Science Teachers: This bill reinstated the ongoing funding-formula for increased funding for math and science in an attempt to assist students with the increased graduation requirements.

SB1093 Transportation Funding: This bill moved \$7.5 million from transportation to discretionary funding to allow for more flexibility in funding.

SB1097a Educating Out-of-State Students: This bill prevented districts/charters from having to use Idaho taxpayer dollars to educate out-of-state students who are placed in Idaho group homes.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

HB315 Business Personal Property Tax: This was the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry's attempt to remove business personal property from the tax rolls. This would have had a devastating impact on many of our school districts.

2014

Education Stakeholders: This was Jess Harrison's second year with ISBA. She worked very hard to establish strategic relationships with the IEA, IASA, SDE, and SBOE. Because of her efforts, we began having weekly meetings to discuss strategy on how to approach legislation – both those we wanted to pass and those we wanted kill. Those meetings still continue today. We call ourselves the "education stakeholders". There are some in the legislature who now attempt to use that term in a negative way. We continue to meet weekly during the legislative session and we meet once a month during the off season. These relationships have proven to be one of our most effective alliances and have assisted in making the stakeholders more effective in their advocacy efforts.

New Superintendent of Public Instruction: This year also saw a new Superintendent of Public Instruction. After Tom Luna announced he would not run again, Sherri Ybarra won a 4-way Republican primary in May and went on to defeat Jana Jones in the November elections. Jana Jones had previously lost to Tom Luna.

HB521 Strategic Planning and Training: One of the most important pieces of legislation for School Board members this year was the strategic planning and training bill. This was the outcome of one of the recommendations from the Governor's K12 Education Task Force and provided funds for school board members and their superintendent or charter administrator to receive professional development. Those funds started out at \$2000, moved to \$4000, and are now at \$6600. The funds are tied to specific professional development topics and can only be provided by approved trainers. Idaho School Boards Association and our professional development consultants are all approved trainers and do the vast majority of this work in Idaho. In addition, the law has allowed Boards to become effective leaders, educate them on setting their budget, a year round calendar for their agenda, and aligning with student achievement and their continuous improvement plan.

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2014 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB501 Non-Certificated Employee Grievance: This bill clarified the term “unfair treatment” and set out a clearer time line for grievance procedures.

HB504 Leadership Premiums: Allows for additional dollars to be paid to teachers for leadership incentives that are set at the local level. This was a K12 Education Task Force recommendation.

HB557 Use it or Lose It Remove the Sunset: With the sunset removal, it became a permanent law this year.

HB568 Hiring a Spouse: This law sets out criteria under which a district/charter may hire the spouse of trustee.

SB1317 Extend the Sunset Clause on HB261 on Seniority

SB1318 Extend the Sunset Clause on SB1147a on Evergreen Clauses

SB1319 Extend the Sunset Clause on SB1040a on Reducing Salaries

SB1327 Epinephrine Access: Voluntarily asks that districts/charters maintain epi-pens on campus and provided immunity from liability if used.

SB1372a Secure Student Data: Set out criteria to protect student data.

SB1396 Social Engineering Committee: This committee was established, and still exists today, to review the SBAC test questions to assure they are socially appropriate.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

HB499 and 567 Parents Bill of Rights: This bill attempted to emphasize the rights of parents in relationship to their education.

HB507 Vouchers: This round of a voucher bill would have provided a 50% credit on State income taxes to individuals and corporations that made donations to qualified low-income K12 students attending non-public schools.

2015

Fee Lawsuit #1: As noted above, former superintendent, Russ Joki filed a lawsuit against the West Ada School District related to school districts/charters' ability to charge fees. This was the year the Court ruled in Joki's favor. The court discussed what constitutes a free and thorough education. They awarded Joki \$200 for payment of the fees he paid on behalf of his grandchildren. It is important to note that by this time Joki had been elected to the West Ada School Board.

HB296 Career Ladder and HB308 Career Ladder Trailer for Charters:

This year brought us the Career Ladder for teacher's salaries. This was also a recommendation from the Governor's Task Force. It was the first change to how we fund instructional staff in decades. It was a funding model for instructional staff that was variable, based on a residency and professional rung. There are two additional rungs based on education and degrees. It included a five-year implementation plan and would be completed in 2020.

2015 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB90 Transparent and Ethical Government: Moved all the laws related to open meetings and public records into one new chapter of laws where they reside today.

HB110 Mastery Based Education: Based on another recommendation from the Governor's Task Force, this set out some parameters to establish a committee to further study mastery based education.

HB113a Parental Rights: This law states parents have the right to make decisions related to the care, custody, and education of their children.

HB122 Strategic Plans: Law changes strategic plans to continuous improvement plans, increases reimbursable dollars to \$6600 per year.

HB169 Evergreen Clauses: Removal of the final sunset clause making this a permanent law.

HB300 6th Grade Alternative School Funding: Allows for funding for alternative school students in the 6th grade. Many schools have middle schools that include 6th grade.

HB313 School Counselors: Clarified that districts/charters needed counselors that are college and career counselors that would support students in navigating how to move on after high school.

SB1050 Advance Opportunities: This bill combined all sections of code related to the 8 in 6 program and dual credit for early completers program into a single chapter.

SB1071a Civic Test for Graduation: Students must now pass a 100 question civics test as part of their graduations requirements.

SB1072a Sunshine Reports for School Board Members: Candidates filing for a school Board seat are required to complete and file sunshine reports for their campaigns.

SB1088 Reduction in Force and Reducing Teacher's Salaries: Removal of the final sunset clause making this a permanent law.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

HB155aa Open Meeting Law Violations: Would have significantly increased the financial penalty for violating the open meeting law.

2016

Fee Lawsuit #2: While Joki won the West Ada lawsuit he filed in 2012 and completed in 2015, not all school districts/charter schools around the state ceased charging fees. This prompted Huntley, this time with a new client, to file a second fee lawsuit – this one against the Pocatello School District. This lawsuit was a class action lawsuit and included every school district and charter school in the State. Similar to the first lawsuit, it claimed that all fees were unconstitutional and did not provide for “free, thorough, common” schools. At this time, this case is still pending and has not yet come to conclusion.

Don't Fail Idaho: The Albertson's Foundation launched their “Don't Fail Idaho” campaign. The campaign was a series of commercials showing a bus dropping kids off in the middle of the desert and leaving them there on their own. The campaign was offensive to many Idahoans, most especially those in the education community. In answer to the campaign, one of our Regions wrote, *“If the ‘Don't Fail Idaho’ organization continues to drop those students in the desert, rest assured that our districts will pick up those remaining students and place them at the doorstep of their pathway to a successful future.”*

2016 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB451 Literacy Reading Intervention: Emphasized the need for students to be reading at 3rd grade level and requires districts/charters to include parents in the intervention plan.

HB476 Average Class Size: When determining average class size for purposes of 97% protection, this law clarifies that like sized districts will be compared to like sized districts.

HB514 School Safety and Security: Leveraged existing resources through the Division of Building Safety to establish a process and resources to assess for security vulnerabilities.

HB515 Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Timeline: Moved the completion date of evaluation from May 1 to June; requires that a formal, written evaluation be done before a contract can be issued; if ISAT data is not available in a timely manner, other measures may be used for evaluations.

HB537 Extra Day Contracts: Added language to differentiate between a standard teaching contract and extra days that some employees work in addition to the standard contract.

HB560 Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP): Another recommendation from the Governor's K12 Education Task Force to include certain specific data in the CIP Plan.

HB571 Pupil Service Personnel on the Career Ladder: Added Pupil Service Personnel to the Career Ladder.

SB1210 Professional Technical Education to Career Technical Education: This changed the term Professional Technical Education to Career Technical Education.

SB1248 Charter School Teacher Contracts: Provides greater flexibility to charter schools in crafting their teaching contracts.

SB1257a Election Signature Consistency: Write in candidates must receive signatures from qualified electors in their zone and not just in the district.

SB1290 College and Career Advisors: Creates a minimum reporting framework and must be included in the Continuous Improvement Plan.

SB1293a Parental Rights in Education: Outlines how districts/charters will accommodate parental involvement and how they can withdraw a student from a class if they wish.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

SB1273 Trustee Board Vacancies and Recall: This would have prevented a Board member from resigning if the majority of the Board was being recalled. This was an effort to prevent the remaining members from appointing replacements.

SB1307 Trustee Election Dates: Move trustee elections to November of odd years.

SB1308 Trustee Zones: Would have required trustees to live in the zone but be elected district wide.

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2017

Tax Proposals: This was the year for several competing tax proposals. While we always have some proposal related to tax cuts, this time the Senate Floor revolted until they were able to move some of their legislation forward. There were competing bills related to repealing the grocery tax credit (which still has not occurred) and other unemployment and income tax reductions.

Failure of the Idaho Education Network (IEN): As noted above, the IEN was created in 2009. In order to initiate the IEN, the State of Idaho, through the Department of Administration, sought bids to conduct this work. The issuance of the contract led to a year's long debacle and the eventual closure of the IEN. Estimates about the final cost to the State of Idaho are around \$40 million. This was the year the legislature removed oversight of the IEN from the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State took control. Unfortunately, the IEN was closed and no further classes were available through this tool for Idaho's students. The Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA) picked up most of that slack and school districts/charters found other private ways to allow for online learning.

FCC Lawsuit Settlement: As part of the failure of the IEN, the State of Idaho, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), Universal Service Company (USAC) and the Idaho School Boards Association, on behalf of all school districts, settled a federal lawsuit filed by the FCC. Anderson, Julian, & Hull represented ISBA and school districts/charters in the matter. ISBA coordinated with all the impacted districts/charters to obtain signatures and to allow AJH to negotiate on their behalf. It was my first time in a legal negotiation. I can distinctly remember being in the room in the morning of the negotiation session and Speaker Bedke telling the Attorney General who was representing the State of Idaho, and Brian Julian and Chris Hanson from AJH, and myself who were there representing districts and charters "to get this settled and done.....today".

The FCC found that Idaho had violated its own procurement laws and that Idaho's contract for E-Rate services was void. In order to settle the lawsuit, Idaho paid \$3.5 million (part of the \$40 million noted above) to the FCC on behalf of Idaho's school districts and charter schools. In exchange, Idaho withdrew any funding requests for 2009-2014. In addition, districts and charters were required to agree to comply with any E-Rate rules and requirements in the future.

2017 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB113 Rehire the Retired: Reduced the retirement age from 62 to 60.

HB181 Local Government Investment Pool: Allows all taxing districts to participate in the local government investment pool run by the State Treasurer.

HB279 Charter School Petitions: Streamlined the petitioning process for charter schools.

SB1030 Dual Enrollment: Clarified that non-public students can utilize dual enrollment dollars in districts and charters.

SB1094 Teacher Applicants – Criminal History Checks: Allows the SDE to share information with school districts/charters related to criminal history checks.

SB1123 Activities Transportation: Transportation funding for school activities was restored.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

HB196 School Closure on Election Date: This was the first attempt to require schools to close on election day so they can be used for polling places.

HB332 Public Notices: Would have allowed districts and charters to publish on the website and not in the local newspaper.

SB1103 School Elections: Would have moved school elections for school Board members to November of even years; required that trustee zones align with precinct boundaries; would allow districts to vote by zone or district-wide.

SB1050 Immunization Exemptions: This law attempted to allow a parent to simply sign a document saying they did not want their child immunized.

SB1095 School Based Medicaid Reimbursement: This was an attempt to access more Medicaid reimbursement dollars for school districts/charters that provide Medicaid services.

2018

This year brought Quinn Perry to our lobbying team. She was hired in November but this was her first session.

SB1280 Trustee Elections in November: For the first time in the State of Idaho, trustee elections were moved from May to November of odd years. Elections are now held with all other non-partisan elections. After years of trying to defeat the bill that would have moved trustee elections to November of even years, the ISBA membership passed a resolution that moved them to November of odd years. ISBA ran this legislation, and it is now law.

Administrative Rules: All administrative rules are required to be extended each year by the legislature – not just the rules they are reviewing but ALL the rules in the State. After the Senate killed several bills that the House had passed, the House lost their patience. In retaliation, the House refused to extend all of the administrative rules for the year. This caused a logistical nightmare for the Governor. As a reminder, Administrative rules are an executive branch function. The Governor was forced to reissue all administrative rules as temporary rules and they all had to be reviewed the following year.

Defense vs. Offense While we often play defense on some bills, this was the first year that I felt like we spent far more time staving off more bad stuff than we did passing our own legislation or supporting good legislation. That shows in the list of bills below.

2018 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB503 OTs and PTs on the Career Ladder: Allowed placement of OTs and PTs by years of experience.

HB580 Repeal Sunset on Hiring of a Board Spouse: The sunset clause was removed and this is now a permanent law.

HB620 Public Integrity in Elections Act: Sets out the requirements for educating vs. advocating when it comes to bond and levy elections.

HB647 Card Check for Negotiations: Clarified that 50%+1 representation must be proven at least every two years.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

HB412 Common Core Standards: Attempted to repeal the common core standards.

HB420 and HB611 Legal Publications Online and Not in the Newspaper: One more failed attempt to accomplish this issue.

HB423 Firearms on School Campus: Allowing guns on school campuses.

HB487 Bonds and Levies every 12 Months: Would have only allowed districts to run a bond or levy every 12 months.

HB501 Remove IRI as an Assessment Tool: This would have removed the IRI as an assessment tool. While passed by the legislature, it was vetoed by the Governor.

HB566a Charter School Administrators: Would have created a charter school administrator certificate separate from the traditional administrator certificate. This bill passed the legislature but was vetoed by the Governor.

HB414 and 579 Sex Education Standards: First attempt at making sex education an opt-in program rather than an opt-out program.

HB590 Guided Education Management (GEM) Act: Yet another attempt at vouchers. This one would pay for qualified expenses for low income, special education students, students at risk, and active duty military students.

HB630 Rural School Networks: This was a bill from the superintendent of public instruction that attempted to create rural school networks. It was ultimately killed because of the fiscal note.

SB1293 Category 1 Contracts on and Alternate Route: This would have allowed districts/charters to keep employees on Category 1 Contracts until they have completed their Alternate Route process and could receive full certification.

SB1304 Transportation Reimbursement: This was an attempt to get transportation funding and reimbursement back to pre-recession era cuts. This is the only funding cut from the downturn in the economy that has not been restored.

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2019

This was the year that Misty Swanson, ISBA Chief Deputy, started taking a more active role with the legislature and lobbying.

New Governor: This year brought us a new Governor. Governor Little was, and continues to be, a strong proponent of public education. Like his predecessor before him, he brought together his own education task force to look at various aspects of public education. He has always been a strong proponent of early literacy and assuring that all students have access to technology. The recommendations from that Committee are still working their way through the system.

Red Tape Reduction Act: One of the first things the Governor did was issue an Executive Order to reduce the amount of rules that exist in Idaho. That meant that the SBOE issued several new rules that were

reduced or removed. While there were no substantive changes, it was still a huge undertaking.

SB1196 Public school funding formula: Much of this work was done in 2018 but we spent big parts of the session dealing with a new funding formula. We saw dozens of iterations of the bill and reports from national experts that were hired to assist with drafting the new legislation. No matter what iteration was presented to us, there would have been a negative impact to some school districts. As such, we could not support the new formula. After hours of meetings, all education stakeholders testified against the bill in front of the joint education committees. After hearing the testimony, the legislature never actually brought the bill forward for a vote. As such, it died for the year. This has been a sore spot for several legislators who were invested in a new funding formula. They will continue to bring versions of a funding formula bill forward.

2019 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB93aa Non Traditional Educator Preparation Program: Allows districts and charters to enter into agreements with non-traditional educator prep programs in an effort to recruit and retain teachers.

HB103 Levy Election Disclosure: Added language that required the ballot to show the cost per \$100,000 if the levy passes

HB150 Executive Session Simple Majority: Based on an ISBA resolution, Boards can now move into executive session on a simple majority if they have two open seats. However, they can only discuss teacher or student disciplinary actions.

HB177 Hired Retired Law Enforcement to Work to Schools: Allows districts/charters to hire retired law enforcement personnel without that impacting their PERSI benefits.

HB209 Threats on School Grounds: Allowed a peace officer to place a person who willfully threatens violence at schools into custody for observation. Note that the Supreme Court made this legislation null and void with a ruling they made several months later.

HB293 School Funding Definitions: This bill set out the definitions for a student based funding formula. Note the funding formula did not move forward

SB1030 School Boards, Organizational Meeting: This law moved the organizational meeting of the Board from July to January in order to better fit with the new election date in November.

SB1105 Advanced Opportunities for CTE: Allows for Advanced Opportunity funding to be used for CTE Courses.

SB1106A CTE Opportunities for Virtual Charters: Clarifies that CTE opportunities are available to all students irrespective of the type of delivery.

SB1107 Mid-term Support Units: Removes the sunset provision and makes this law permanent.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

HB120 Sex Education: Would have made sex education opt-in and not opt-out and clarified that parents have the right to review all sex education related materials prior to them being taught to their student.

HB133 Immunization Exemptions: This would have required districts and charters to inform parents of the opt-out requirements at the same time they inform them of the obligation to immunize. We believe that already occurs.

HB203 Firearms on School Campus: While better than other guns on campus bills, it still removed the Board's ability to decide if guns should be allowed on school campuses.

HB273 GEM Innovation Act – Vouchers: Round two on this bill. Yet another attempt at vouchers. This one would pay for qualified expenses for low income, special education students, students at risk, and active duty military students.

2020

COVID arrived on the scene in March of this year causing the closure of schools statewide. ISBA issued almost daily emails on how to deal with legal ramifications from COVID – everything from open meeting law requirements for your meetings to employment issues related to leave. We held webinars, issued legal guidance, and fielded countless questions.

The Governor issued several executive orders that closed businesses and required Idahoans to stay home. Those orders proved to be very controversial. Many Idahoans don't believe the Governor has such authority or that the pandemic is as bad as is being reported. On the other hand, we have many Idahoans who don't think the Governor did enough. They believe he should have issued a statewide mask mandate and kept things closed for longer.

Legislature Goes Home Early: Because of COVID, the legislature completed their work two to three weeks before they likely would have done under normal circumstances. As a result several bills that would likely have passed ended up not moving forward because of their swift departure.

ISEE Employees from the SDE to the SBOE: One thing that did occur is that the legislature moved all of the ISEE employees from the SDE to the SBOE. The employees did not actually move and still

remain in their same offices. They are now employees of the SBOE. Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sherri Ybarra, filed suit against the State indicating that because she is a constitutional officer, the legislature had no authority to move the employees. She filed her case with the Supreme Court. They eventually ruled against her and the move enacted by the legislature remains in place.

SCR132 Content Standards Study Committee: After years of complaining that Idaho's Content Standards don't meet the needs or requirements of the citizens or students of Idaho, the legislature finally agreed to create committees to study the content standards. That process has started and will last two years. The goal is to bring back new standards for the legislature's ultimate review and approval during the 2022 legislative session.

Attendance at High School Athletics: We hope that we never hear this term again!! Attendance at high school activities turned out to be the hottest topic of the fall and winter season. Once again, we had Board members on both sides of this issue when the Governor limited the number of people that could attend any athletic event. As we have done since 2009, we had a seat at the table with the Governor and other stakeholders as we worked to negotiate a less stringent attendance policy. That policy has changed numerous times and will likely change again.

2020 - Other Pieces of Legislation

BILLS PASSED

HB500 Ban on Transgender Girls in Sports: Requires athletes to play sports based on their gender assigned at birth. A court challenge was filed by the ACLU and this case is currently working its way through the court system.

HB501 Excision: This new law revised who is allowed to vote when a community wants to move from one district to another.

HB624 Remove Master Educator Premiums from the Career Ladder: This law removed the Master Educator Premium. Those teachers currently in the pipeline to receive them will continue to do so but no new applications will be accepted.

SB1323a Teaching Certificate Revoked, Certain Crimes: This law sets out several felony offenses for which a teaching certification can be lifted.

BILLS KILLED OR DIED

HB530 Executive Session Sale of Public Property: Despite our repeated attempts, we can't seem to get this one moving

SB1293 Flexible Schedule, Elementary Students: Second attempt to allow elementary students to take time off if they are able to keep up with their courses.

SB1279 Superintendent Evaluations: This would have set out certain criteria for superintendent evaluations.

SB1285 School Board Training: This bill would have set out requirements for mandatory Board training.

SB1327 School Funding Formula: This bill died because of the short session but was a 2nd attempt at changing Idaho's Funding formula.

SB1328 Advanced Opportunities, Non-Public Schools: This would have allowed the use of public funds for private purposes. The first step toward vouchers.

SB1384 Employee Gun Carry in K12 Schools: This bill passed the House and died by one vote in the Senate. This bill did not leave the decision with the Board.

continued on next page...

2021

Impacts of COVID: The pandemic continues to impact schools, the legislature, and the State. We are attempting to lobby remotely which we are finding to be very difficult. Schools are still struggling to find the right answer for their local communities whether that be online, hybrid, or remote learning.

Changes to Lobbying: This year, as we always do, we have met with several legislators on bills we are trying to move forward or that we are trying to defeat this year. We were struck by a similar theme with all of our conversations. Everyone talks about how the legislative process has changed over the years.

As we are seeing at the national level, there seems to be a standoff between parties and not enough people in the middle that are willing to negotiate and compromise and come to an agreement. Also, there was a time when legislators would come to local taxing districts and

ask for our help in drafting language or coming to consensus on bills. Now we find out about bills the night or day before when we see them on the calendar and we are told, "this is the way it's going to be". It is difficult to navigate and very defeating at times. I'm sure you feel the same way when you contact your legislators as well.

We ask ourselves if it is because of the pandemic, national events, or just changing demographics in Idaho. We suspect it is a combination of all of those things. But, one thing is for sure. It is definitely not as fun as it used to be. I actually laughed out loud when I just wrote that. It sounds like something an old person would say.

The 2021 Legislature is still in session.

While we had hoped the session would be done by the time we went to print on this issue, they are still here and still printing bills. Quinn will do a recap for you and we will print a similar table in the summer issue of the SLATE.



Whew! As you can see, a lot has changed over the years. Some good, some bad for education. But, we worked hard each year to do what was best for Board members, administrators, support staff, and the students they serve. On average, we track around 60 bills a year and we actively work around 22 bills each year. That means we either testify, seek votes, or send floor notes on those bills that we work.

We are keenly aware that we would not have been able to do it without your support. Your calls and letters to legislators and forming personal relationships have been integral in our process. It takes a village, which brings me back to my main point I had in my previous article when I started in 2008. Our original goal was to assure that Board members were informed and able to discuss issues. We think we have done that. Our second goal was to assure we have a seat at the table. This is one of those, "be careful what you ask for" sort of things. We are now asked to sit on more committees than we can possibly cover. We are thankful for those of you that have agreed to sit on committees on behalf of ISBA.

As I close out my career as a lobbyist, I want to ask you all keep advocating. It's important that your legislators hear from you, and it makes a difference!

A 16 YEAR HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON . . .

. . . ISBA's IMPACT ON LEGISLATION

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