

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 08, 2023

**TIME:** 2:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Lent, Vice Chairman Toews, Senators Den Hartog, Nichols, Dunn (Carlson,) Herndon, Lenney, Ward-Engelking, and Semmelroth

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None

**NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the Committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

**CONVENED:** **Chairman Lent** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 2:00 p.m.

**PRESENTATION: Idaho Public Television (IdahoPTV) Education Overview.** **Jeff Tucker** and **Kari Wardle** presented the background of and the educational services provided by IdahoPTV, a State agency operated under the State Board of Education (SBE). IdahoPTV had a non-profit arm called Friends of Idaho Public Television that was responsible for the purchase of programming, production of local content, and education services. The agency was allocated 71 full-time employees (FTP's) by the Legislature, 14 of which were funded by Friends of Idaho Public Television and supported the day-to-day operations of the agency. In recent years, **Mr. Tucker**, General Manager of IdahoPTV, said local program offerings were increased to six, which included: Outdoor Idaho, Idaho Experience, Idaho in Session, Idaho Reports, createid, and Science Trek. On March 24, IdahoPTV were set to release a new program called Idaho Lessons as a component of education services offered. **Mr. Tucker** reported that 62 percent of Idahoans regularly engaged with IdahoPTV content, and they were able to generate over 8.4 million views during the month of June in 2022 (Attachments 1 and 2).

Through work with the Idaho Military Division and the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, IdahoPTV was able to expand the scope of emergency support service offered, with the agency, reaching 99 percent of Idahoans.

**Mr. Tucker** and IdahoPTV recently began a partnership with the Department of Health and Welfare, using Millennium Fund dollars, to produce the No Vape campaign to combat youth vaping. Part of that project included a documentary film and an anti-vaping video contest. In the future, **Mr. Tucker** said it was the agency's plan to add for-credit, professional development trainings for educators. Private and grant-award dollars through Friends of Idaho Public Television had been used to fund segments that promoted two-year, apprenticeships, certificates, skilled trades, and other in-demand career tracks. IdahoPTV worked to increase its PBS Kids offerings, and created a nation-first for a local PBS station website for parents to learn about TV episodes, learning objectives, and more.

**Kari Wardle**, Education Manager at IdahoPTV, said the station put on 120 events across the State that reached over 14,000 families. She said some elements of the education team's work were the production and distribution of free education materials, resources, and creation of professional development opportunities for educators. Their PBS Kids programs reached 1.8 million views per month. **Ms.**

**Wardle** noted some other programs her team put on were in-person workshops, webinars, and work-at-your-own-pace courses, which included thousands of interactive lessons and plans that were aligned with State standards. Storytime in a Box was a program that was originally a pandemic-era pilot program where IdahoPTV distributed books and other storytime materials to libraries, and recent efforts were made to expand it to include childcare facilities. Another new program was the creation and distribution of Kindergarten Readiness Kits, which contained school supply materials for parents to help kids be prepared to enter kindergarten - the deployment of those resources were focused on high-need communities. IdahoPTV received the Ready to Learn Grant, which was to be used to conduct outreach, identify assets, and assess needs in North Idaho communities.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Herndon** asked what the viewership breakdown was in the Idaho market by distribution medium. **Mr. Tucker** said it was roughly even thirds, between air, satellite, and cable, but admitted streaming platforms ate into some of the margins. **Senator Herndon** asked if there was a percentage figure for the number of households that accessed IdahoPTV programming. **Mr. Tucker** said that, since roughly 62 percent of Idahoans watched IdahoPTV a year, that number would be about one million people, and that average was great compared to other markets across the country, where it was reported Idaho was seventh in viewership per capita. **Senator Herndon** asked how IdahoPTV programming was aired in more remote areas, like Bonners Ferry. **Mr. Tucker** said there was a translator outside Sandpoint on Mount Baldy they used.

**Senator Nichols** asked how IdahoPTV selected its programming. **Mr. Tucker** said Nielsen ratings were used to determine what people in the Idaho market were most likely to watch, and use that, in conjunction with PBS, to determine what programming would air and when.

**H 202** **Adds to Existing Law to Provide for the Display of the National Motto in Certain Circumstances.** **Representative Cornilles** said **H 202** amended State Code to permit public universities, colleges, and schools in Idaho to display the national motto "In God We Trust" in a high-visibility location if they wished. He said this legislation was modeled after one that passed in Texas in 2022, but added a provision that no signage was allowed that recognized the person or group that donated the funds or motto to the institution.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Dunn (Carlson)** asked if a school had multiple buildings would they be required to add the motto to each of their buildings or if it was acceptable to be displayed in one. **Representative Cornilles** said it had to be displayed at just one building on the campus. **Senator Dunn** asked if murals were accepted under the proposed legislation. **Representative Cornilles** said it was his understanding murals were not acceptable.

**Senator Ward-Engelking** expressed concerns about the potential alienation of students that were members of different religious groups.

**Senator Semmelroth** asked if a school had to display the slogan if it was donated, and there was no refusal procedure allowed. **Representative Cornilles** said that was correct. **Senator Semmelroth** asked if, regardless of affiliation, any group, like the Satanic Temple, was able to donate, and a school was required to accept it. **Representative Cornilles** confirmed that was correct. **Senator Semmelroth** asked if a donated banner had the slogan spelled out in a different language if it had to be hung up. **Representative Cornilles** said it had to be in English.

**Senator Lenney** asked what was the inspiration for the legislation's introduction. **Representative Cornilles** said that when he saw Texas passed a similar bill he was inspired to try the same in Idaho. **Senator Lenney** asked if, to the

Representative's knowledge, there had been instances in Idaho where the slogan was donated to a school and had it rejected. **Representative Cornilles** said he had no examples of that scenario.

**MOTION:** **Senator Herndon** moved to send **H 202** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Nichols** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senators Semmelroth and Ward-Engelking** asked to be recorded as voting nay.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 2:43 p.m.

---

Senator Lent  
Chair

---

Linette Grantham  
Secretary

---

Kieran Sprague  
Assistant Secretary