

CAREER LADDER

HIGHLIGHTS 2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



IEA President Penni Cyr (at podium) joins Governor Butch Otter, State Superintendent Sherri Ybarra and key legislators at the signing ceremony for the Career Ladder legislation.

MULTI-YEAR PLAN AIMED AT INCREASING TEACHER COMPENSATION

After a great deal of debate, discussion, and sometimes disagreement, Idaho now has a new compensation structure for professional educators. If fully funded in subsequent years, the new plan should add about \$125 million to teacher salaries over the next five years. The Career Ladder formula also introduces a two-tiered system that will classify teachers in either a residency tier or a professional tier, and includes some student growth and performance evaluation metrics.

The final version of the Career Ladder legislation represented substantial, and often critical, feedback from IEA members. Teachers turned out in large numbers for public hearings around the state last fall and again late in the session as legislators were trying to push through a bill that would have been detrimental to the specified goal of the entire process—attracting and retaining quality teachers.

Legislative leaders took a step back and engaged in meaningful conversation with those impacted the most by the new policy—classroom teachers. Speaker of the House Scott Bedke and House Education Committee Chairman Reed DeMourant even took the unprecedented step of coming to the IEA office for a two hour discussion with IEA members about teacher compensation issues. Ultimately, a new and improved version of the Career Ladder legislation was introduced, passed, and signed into law by Governor Otter.

IEA President Penni Cyr was invited to speak at the bill-signing ceremony, where legislative leaders and education stakeholders shared a moment of consensus regarding the importance of professional educators to the state's future.

“We are hopeful that this bill will represent a re-investment in public education in Idaho and a re-awakening on the part of policy-makers about the value of our teachers’ expertise and experience,” Cyr said after the ceremony.

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Delegate Assembly 2015

The Idaho Education Association held its 2015 Delegate Assembly and Annual Meeting April 10-11 at the Boise Centre in downtown Boise, with 365 delegates from around the state on hand to represent their local associations and steer the course of IEA business for the next year. The theme for this year's DA was **“What Do Educators Make?”**, accompanied by the parenthetical answer—**“They Make a Difference”**.

The joint address by IEA President Penni Cyr and Executive Director Robin Nettinga focused on the association's strategic plan for the future, including specific attention paid to membership, professional development, leadership development and public relations. They noted that the IEA is developing a toolkit for membership recruitment, and touched on a number of professional development initiatives that have been launched (or soon will be).



Democracy in action! IEA members cast their votes during the 2015 Delegate Assembly.

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See more photos of IEA events at
idahoea.org/iea-reporter

2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION: A LESSON IN PERSISTENCE

We enter each legislative session filled with determination, hope, and apprehension. We know you count on us to help you navigate the sometimes confusing process that is lawmaking. We serve as your voice while you go about the most important work—educating your students. We strive to engage you with lawmakers about crucial issues and keep you informed about the complicated matters legislators are dealing with.

Colin Powell—retired four-star Army General and US Secretary of State under President George W Bush—said, “There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, learning from failure.”

As each session ends, we take time to reflect on the work we’ve undertaken during the session and contemplate our successes. There have been years when the list of our successes has been rather short. Fortunately, 2015 is not one of those years. Here’s a review of some of the issues we worked on this session.

CAREER LADDER

IEA members can attest to the hard work and preparation that went into ensuring that the State Board of Education’s proposed rule on teacher tiered certification and career ladder legislation was good for students and professional educators. The initial State Board rule tied local teacher evaluations to certification; any teacher who did not meet the ridiculous expectations outlined in the rule would have run the risk of losing the ability to teach in Idaho.

After a combination of emails, telephone calls and comments from hundreds of teachers, administrators, and parents in three separate public hearings all across Idaho about the unworkable plan, the State Board retreated...marginally.

Throughout the four month legislative session, multiple concepts were considered and tossed. When a plan eventually emerged in early March, teachers were troubled. After more than five and a half hours of public testimony and an unprecedented lunch meeting with IEA members by House Speaker Scott Bedke and House Education Chair Reed DeMordaunt, teacher voices were heard and their ideas were heeded. In a matter of a week, the bill sponsor had reworked the bill to address each of the concerns raised by teachers.

As a result, Idaho school districts are poised to receive an influx of \$200 million over the next five years to significantly boost teacher salaries. You can read much more about this historic change in how the state will now allocate funding for teacher salaries in this edition of the Reporter.

ANTI-BULLYING

IEA has been working with lawmakers for nearly a decade to ensure that teachers have the training

they need to recognize and appropriately intervene when they witness bullying. This year, lawmakers were able to find the sweet spot that balanced local control with state oversight. As a result, school districts will now be required to provide professional development to staff members to help them recognize and authorize them to intervene when they witness bullying. Additionally, students and parents must be informed of districts’ anti-bullying policies.

6TH GRADE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL FUNDING

It’s sometimes better the second time around. That was the case for an idea pitched several years ago at IEA’s annual Delegate Assembly. Currently, state funding for alternative education is only allowed for grades 7-12. A number of school districts have 6th through 8th grade middle school configurations. Alternative school funding for 6th graders will allow schools to identify and provide interventions for students one year earlier and help at-risk students to be more prepared for 7th grade. The new law passed this session will increase funding for middle schools that offer alternative education programs for 6th graders.

TEACHER CONTRACTS AND REDUCTION IN FORCE

Following the defeat of Propositions 1, 2, and 3 in 2012, three laws that impact teacher contract law were introduced. In each instance, a sunset date was attached to the laws. Over the ensuing years, the IEA and the school boards association have been monitoring the laws with the goal of identifying their value. This session, we agreed to make modifications to some of the laws and allow others to continue as they are. As a result of our consensus on the laws, next year a district will be able to increase or decrease a salary or contract days—as they have been able to do since 2013—as long as they first declare a Reduction in Force. In addition, the criteria under which a district can declare a RIF were greatly enhanced.



*IEA Executive Director Robin Nettinga
and President Penni Cyr*

GOVERNOR’S TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the Governor’s Task Force Recommendations were published in September 2013, the State Board has been fleshing out the recommendations and working to implement them. This session, lawmakers addressed most of the recommendations that they had not already dealt with. As a result, Idaho will create an incubator program to identify the roadblocks and solutions to creating a mastery-based education system in Idaho; middle school, junior high, and high school students will have even more opportunities to move through their secondary school experience at a faster rate and to earn more dual credits also that will follow them to an Idaho college or university.

We’ve all seen the poster commonly displayed in classrooms across the state that says, “Success is a Journey, Not a Destination.” The past decade has not been necessarily kind to public schools and public school employees. However, as the poster reminds us, success is overcoming. Success is persisting. Success is persevering. The work we have been able to accomplish together this legislative session is a testament to your perseverance and persistence. We are grateful for your membership. Thank you.

Penni Cyr, IEA President
Robin Nettinga, IEA Executive Director

IEA FUNDS PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS

The Idaho Education Association maintains two funds for the benefit of members in need of assistance. Contributions to both funds are strongly encouraged so that resources are available to help our fellow members.

The IEA Dues Hardship Fund has been established to assist members facing significant financial hardship. The DHF provides the opportunity to apply for funds that assist in covering the costs of national and/or state and/or local association dues.

The IEA Catastrophic Emergency Fund can assist members in replacing personal possessions lost or destroyed by an unforeseen catastrophic event at the school worksite (fire, flood, tornado, etc.).

To apply for either fund, to make a donation or for more information, please contact the IEA Office of Business and Finance at 208-344-1341.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: BEN HARDCASTLE

IEA Helps Teachers and Administrators **Improve Education**

Even though he had been a teacher for several years, it wasn't until **Ben Hardcastle** became an administrator that he fully recognized the value and effectiveness of the Idaho Education Association. The Gooding High School principal had an extremely positive experience working with local and regional association leaders on improving instruction and teacher growth in his building. That interaction was one of the primary factors that led Hardcastle to join the IEA and set out on a collaborative path toward improving education.

"We all value what is best for students," Hardcastle says. "The Association is helping to make that happen." He is also a member of the Idaho School Administrators Association (IASA), which gives him a glimpse into the mission and motivations of both organizations. "I'm proud to be a member of both, because everyone involved with the public school system needs to be doing whatever they can to advocate for education," he says.

Hardcastle grew up in rural Southeast Idaho, attending school in the Bear Lake district. His wife, Laney, hails from Montpelier, Idaho. He started college studying pharmacy at Idaho State University, but it was the experience of a two year mission in Spain that fueled his interest in education. "I taught English in the community and helped find work and clothes for Nigerian immigrants. I encountered some pretty heart-wrenching stories," he says. "That was a big turning point as far as deciding what I wanted to do with my life and career. What I really wanted was to help people access the American dream." Upon returning to the United States, he transferred to BYU and graduated with a teaching degree. Then, he and his young family found themselves at another crossroads.

Hardcastle had a job offer in Bear Lake, but the low salary prompted him to look at other options. He chose a teaching opportunity in the Aldine Independent School District near Houston, Texas, where he began his classroom experience as a middle school teacher. He also coached football, tennis, track and soccer. "It was a tough area with a large portion of the students coming from government housing," Hardcastle says. "I enjoyed teaching there and still visit with a number of friends and former students." He spent five years in the Lone



Ben Hardcastle (center) with sons Charlie (11) and Frank (8).

Star State, and picked up his Master's Degree in education administration from Lamar University.

In 2010 the Hardcastles started to look at coming back to Idaho, and within a few days, Ben had teaching offers in Heber City, Utah and Gooding, Idaho, along with the option of staying in Texas. He decided to return home, but the move came with a financial hit. The former district Teacher of the Year in Texas with six years of experience and a Master's degree dropped down to a \$31,500 salary—a far cry from Texas, where the starting teacher pay even in 2006 had been \$40,000. Hardcastle landed the middle school principal job in Gooding when it came open in 2011, and then moved to Gooding High School in 2104.

"I hadn't joined the Association as a teacher because I thought you only needed it if you needed help in a crisis," Hardcastle says. That mindset changed, partly as a result of his interaction with Association representatives like **Linda Jones** and **Sally Toone**, who helped him set attainable benchmarks and improve instruction in his Gooding schools.

Hardcastle was even more impressed with the IEA when the Association set about advocating for a fair and reasonable version of the Career Ladder legislation this fall. He became more involved himself, joining fellow IEA members in testifying in front of the House Education Committee and taking part in discussions with legislators. "It is imperative that we interact with legislators, and also take our message about education to our communities," Hardcastle says.

Coming into the IEA with both a teacher's and an administrator's viewpoint gives Hardcastle a fairly unique perspective on the difference that the Association can (and does) make. "The IEA helps make me a better administrator, which leads to an environment that fosters better teachers and better education."



JULIE FLEHARTY

Julie joined the IEA as an associate late in 2014. She works as the Public Policy associate, but her role extends well beyond that, as she lends assistance with membership, office management, Delegate Assembly, communications and a number of other areas.

She has previously worked in the office management field for many years, but is excited about being able to help impact education in Idaho. Julie grew up in South Dakota, then moved to the Pocatello area in 2004 and to the Boise area in 2012, where she attended Brown Mackie-Boise. She has three adult sons and four grandchildren.



TISHA CASE

It is a return to the IEA for Tisha, who has rejoined the Association to assist with the Western Region Organizing Center (WROC) as an associate. The Boise State University graduate previously worked for 10 years as the associate for Region 6, and jumped at the chance to

return to the IEA family. "I truly believe that teachers and public education are the foundation for everything that we hold close to our hearts," she says. Recently, Tisha was the Program and Operations Manager for a charter school. She has a blended family with three boys and three girls ages 15-22.

IEA PEOPLE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

TEACHER SALARIES: \$33.5 million in funding for the first year of the Career Ladder has been signed into law, with salary allocations for starting teachers increasing from \$31,750 to \$32,700 for the 2015-2016 school year. Allocations for teachers at all levels will also increase next year, with additional boosts in allocations built into the grid through full implementation of the Career Ladder in 2019-2020 (contingent upon funding from future legislatures). The legislation also includes the possibility of additional compensation through leadership premium awards, master teacher awards and National Board Certification, advanced degrees and continuing education credits. \$16.1 million was committed to funding the leadership premium awards for next year.

The Career Ladder applies only to allocations from the state to local districts—individual teacher salaries will continue to be determined by collective bargaining at the local level. The new plan should provide the maximum salary allocation over a much shorter period of time than the current model,

allowing teachers to receive a larger lifetime salary and boosting retirement benefits.

To see what the state allocation would be for specific criteria, utilize our Salary Allocation Calculator, which is part of the Career Ladder resource page on the IEA website at idahoea.org/career-ladder-teacher-pay-system.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Idaho's new Career Ladder framework shifts salary allocation from a model based on the experience and education level of teachers to one that places more emphasis on student growth and teacher performance evaluations. Due to passionate feedback from teachers, the most onerous aspects of the so-called "accountability" metrics have been removed or greatly modified. Unlike the initial plan prepared by the State Board of Education, teachers cannot lose their certification or their ability to teach in Idaho. Local school districts will determine what measures will be used to determine student achievement and they are required to include teachers in discussions about those measures. In addition, only the achievement of a majority of those students

who are enrolled in and attend at least 80% of a course can be considered when determining individual teacher accountability.

EVALUATION: Administrators will now be required to take a three credit course in how to properly evaluate teachers. This requirement will be in place every time that an administrator recertifies (typically every five years). The State Department of Education will be required to conduct random audits on the evaluations generated by administrators to ensure that they are meeting professional standards.

ENDORSEMENT: For a residency-tier teacher to receive a professional endorsement, the teacher must have held their residency certificate for at least three years, meet performance criteria in two of the last three years, have a written recommendation from the employing school district, and have an individualized professional learning plan (IPLP). Current teachers who meet the requirements for the professional rung of the Career Ladder will automatically move to the professional level.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

While the Career Ladder debate took center stage during the 2015 session, the legislature also passed a number of other bills with ramifications for public education.

- In the K-12 public education funding bill, lawmakers approved \$101 million in new money, representing a 7.4% increase. In addition to funding the first year of the Career Ladder, they also approved
 - A \$33.2 million increase in discretionary/operational funding to districts.
 - \$13.2 million for teacher's professional development.
 - \$6 million for high school students to complete advanced college courses.
 - \$5 million for classroom technology
- Legislation was also passed that provide districts with funding for broadband services previously provided by the troubled (and now defunct) Idaho Education Network.
- A new law recommends that Idaho shift to a mastery-based system, with the State Department of Education designated to lead efforts to identify and implement the most effective plan.
- A parental rights bill emphasizes parents and guardians have primacy over decisions involving the care, custody and education of their children.
- Consensus legislation between the IEA and the Idaho School Boards Association removes the sunset clause on one year master agreements.
- Anti-bullying legislation provides for training and orientation to help staff recognize and intervene when circumstance warrant.

For more information on the Career Ladder law and other activity from the 2015 legislative session, visit our website at idahoea.org and listen to a podcast featuring insight from IEA President Penni Cyr, Executive Director Robin Nettinga and Director of Public Policy Matt Compton.

They Make a Difference!



Julie Abbott from Bonneville (left) and Heidi Graham from Blackfoot with their hands raised during the Career Ladder Q & A at Delegate Assembly.

The IEA's Instructional and Professional Development hearing was one of the most popular at this year's Delegate Assembly, with **Ingrid Spence**, **Valerie Aker**, **Jolene Dockstader** and **Becky Hannifin** leading the discussion on becoming a better educator and career advancement. A number of new business items addressed professional development as well, including a directive to develop a Jump Start training program for National Board Certification candidacy as part of the run-up to this year's IEA Summer Institute. Information on how to register for the Summer Institute, July 31-August 1, is on page 8.

Among the other directives coming out of the 2015 Delegate Assembly were instructions to approach the State Department of Education to engage in conversation aimed at reducing class sizes in all grades, and the development of a candidate questionnaire for all IEA statewide offices. The ESP and women's caucuses were also well attended, and a standing room only crowd heard from Nettinga and IEA Director of Public Policy Matt Compton about the new Career Ladder legislation.



The Boise High School Cheer Team helps fire up the delegates.



IEA CHILDREN'S FUND

A fixture at the IEA's Delegate Assemblies has been the Children's Fund silent auction, where a wide variety of items are put up for bid. The proceeds from the silent auction, as well as cash contributions, go to benefit the IEA Children's Fund, which provides help to school children around the state who lack the basic necessities (clothes, food, school supplies, health care, etc.) to help them succeed in the classroom. The silent auction and cash contributions each raised about \$10,000 for the Children's Fund.



Eva Ochoa

One of the most touching and memorable moments of the entire Delegate Assembly was the \$3,000 contribution from IEA member **Eva Ochoa** (Firth), to the Children's Fund in honor of her grandmother, Lucrecia (Lucy) Ayala, who passed away recently at the age of 98. "Whenever I would visit, she would proudly share the fact that I am a teacher and belong to the union", Eva says. "My way of honoring her and also my colleagues, is to donate to the children in our schools."

For more information about the IEA Children's Fund, visit idahoea.org/parents-community/iea-childrens-fund

IEA's Award Winners

In a long-standing tradition, the IEA honored some of its most exemplary members at the annual meeting. Congratulations and thanks to these dedicated and passionate educators.



Award winners Dick Chilcote, Mary Lee Ruch, Stacie Aspiazu-Johnson, IEA President Penni Cyr, Travis Manning and John Hyatt.

DICK CHILCOTE

Shane Anderson Outstanding Member Award

MARY LEE RUCH

Marsha Nakamura Award for Teaching Excellence

STACIE ASPIAZU-JOHNSON

Edythe Crowe Educational Support Professional Award

TRAVIS MANNING

Larry Caldwell Member Advocacy Award

JOHN HYATT

Friend of Education Award

The IEA Board of Directors also voted to create a new award in honor of long-time member and leader Sue Hovey, who passed away recently. Starting next year, the **Sue Hovey Mentoring Award** will be bestowed upon a deserving member in her honor.

STARTING EARLY

U of I Student Group Looks to Educate Future Teachers



It seems rather intuitive that getting education students well versed in the ways of the profession at the college level would be widespread, but that has not traditionally been the case in Idaho.

Emma Ludington is the leader of a small group of students looking to change that. Ludington is the President of the University of Idaho branch of the Student National Education Association, which is making inroads with would-be teachers in the area of professional development and preparing them for aspects of the job that they may not have learned in their college classroom.

"There has been a mindset that the Association doesn't really apply until you actually become a teacher," says Ludington. "We are trying to show students how beneficial it can be to have interaction with a real teacher and set up mentoring relationships in their area of focus."

The upcoming IEA Summer Institute, with its many professional development opportunities, is a major point of emphasis for the group. They have also hosted several workshops, including a resume-building seminar and a presentation via Skype from IEA President Penni Cyr about Idaho's controversial tiered certification proposal.

Time and turnover are two of the major obstacles facing the group at the University of Idaho, which operates under the guidance of longtime Idaho educator **Ingrid Spence**, a clinical assistant professor in the College of Education. "At most we usually have people for two years, because they don't look into our program until their junior or senior years," she notes.

Ludington recently switched from specializing in elementary education to secondary education with a math focus, which has added another year to her experience at the University of Idaho. That gives the Stevensville, Montana native more time to devote to the Association, and may provide the perfect opportunity to invigorate the SNEA branch. She and fellow member **Grant Severts** made the trip to the capitol for the public hearing on the career ladder plan, and they also have plans to build membership by growing awareness

President Emma Ludington and Adviser Ingrid Spence lead the Student NEA chapter at the University of Idaho.

on campus. "Ingrid and Jason McKinley (IEA Region Director) have been very supportive and patient," Ludington says. "They are always coming up with good ideas and providing whatever resources they can."

For her part, Spence is thrilled to see the growing passion for the Association in Moscow, and hopes that more college students will see the intrinsic value in active, engaged student programs. "The idea is to plant a seed with students that they are professionals and will need to know the issues as embark on their careers," Spence says.

GET INVOLVED IN THE STUDENT NEA PROGRAM—AND GET A JUMP START ON YOUR CAREER

Participation is the most vital component to the success of SNEA, so come to a meeting or join today. There are many benefits to membership.

- Training workshops
- Networking opportunities with professional educators
- Discounts on products and services through Member Benefits
- Rebates on membership during your first year of teaching

For more information and answers to Frequently Asked Questions, visit www.nea.org/home/17770.htm

ESP CORNER

NEA'S NATIONAL ESP CONFERENCE

Eight Education Support Professionals from Idaho attended this year's National Education Association ESP Conference in New Orleans, LA. The NEA ESP Conference provided a great opportunity for ESP's to enhance their skills, build student achievement, organize and advocate for members, and build strong communities. The eight Idaho ESP's represented a geographic cross-section from across the state, and many had never met prior to the conference.

This year the theme was: Organize, Educate and Lead: ESPs Meeting the Needs of the Whole Student. The presenters of the conference focused their topics of discussion around this theme, and gave ESP attendees valuable affirmation of the positive impact that ESP's make in educating the whole student. ESP attendees were able to select from over 100 different classes/sessions on a variety of topics including: grant writing, social media, earning respect, building your toolbox for special education, keeping schools safe and clean, and many others.

On Friday evening during the conference, more than 1,100 ESPs from around the country gathered for a formal awards dinner. Idaho was able to honor and recognize its chosen ESP of the Year, **Bobbie Steffensen**, along with ESP's of the Year from other states. This was an amazing evening that allowed for ESPs to receive the recognition that they so richly deserve.

Next year's NEA ESP Conference will be held March 11-13, 2016 in Orlando, Florida. This conference is open to all ESP members, and funding is available for those applicants selected as a state or national attendees. Be on the look-out for the 2016 NEA ESP Conference nomination form in January 2016. — *Stacie Aspiazu-Johnson, IEA ESP-At-Large*



The IEA's ESP of the Year, Bobbie Steffensen, is flanked by NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia (left) and NEA Executive Committee member Maury Koffman (right).

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Member Spotlight:
Ben Hardcastle



2015 Summer Institute:
Jul 30-Aug 1 at the University of Idaho

Space is limited, so register now at
idahoea.org

Back by popular demand, the 2015 IEA Summer Institute will take place July 30 through August 1 on the University of Idaho campus in Moscow. This great professional development opportunity is free for IEA members, but space is limited. You can also earn continuing education credits. This year's even theme is Zen and the Art of Teaching, and will feature sessions on . . .

- Becoming a Zen Master: Mentoring and Leadership
- Using the Force: Technology
- Job Karma: Your Profession
- Yen and Yang: Education Support Professionals

Visit **idahoea.org** to watch a video featuring the fun, fellowship and learning that took place at last year's Summer Institute.

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STARTING EARLY:
Educating Future Teachers
at the University of Idaho

IEA 24/7

Sign up for the IEA Hotline at
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daily e-mail updates on legislative
action relevant to public education.

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