

RISING in the EAST

ENERGETIC LEADERSHIP HAS IDAHO FALLS AND POCATELLO ON THE RIGHT TRACK



Idaho Falls EA President Angela Gillman with Westside Elementary student Colten Wray.



Pocatello EA President Tom VanDeren (right) and IEA Region Director Maggie Calica.

IDAHO FALLS

The passion that Idaho Falls EA President **Angela Gillman** has for her students, her profession and her association is impossible to miss. The Westside Elementary School teacher excels in making learning enjoyable and interesting for her second graders, and has experienced growth in and out of the classroom as a result of her expanding role with her local association and the IEA.

“The association has given me such inner strength and empowered me in ways that I couldn’t have imagined,” says Gillman. “I always wanted to be a teacher, and now I have a chance to share what I have learned with colleagues.”

Gillman grew up in Twin Falls and earned her degree in education from Lewis Clark State College. She returned to Twin Falls to begin her teaching career before moving to Idaho Falls. In recent years she has taken an even more active role with the IEA and the IFEA, serving two years as president-elect before taking the reigns as president last year. “I did it somewhat reluctantly at first and I had some big shoes to fill,” she says. “I learned so much from people like Nancy Caldwell, John Conquergood, Gerry Gripper and Mitzi Ellingson, who laid a strong foundation for the rest of us.”

She has also taken advantage of opportunities through the National Education Association. “My first NEA Representative Assembly in Washington, D.C. three years ago was a real

RISING IN THE EAST, IDAHO FALLS continued on page 4

POCATELLO

Tom VanDeren spent several years as a teacher and IEA member before deciding to embrace the challenges and opportunities that come with being a local association president. Now in his 19th year of teaching, but his first as president of the Pocatello Education Association, VanDeren is working hard to develop an active, engaged membership in Pocatello’s 26 public school buildings.

“We need to have a larger presence and be more visible,” VanDeren says. To that end, the PEA has partnered with area businesses for a series of Educators Night Out events. An insurance agency and a financial institution are among several local businesses that make donations of money or services that are included in a raffle. This creates an added incentive for teachers and educators to attend the event, which also includes information about career advancement and professional

RISING IN THE EAST, POCATELLO continued on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Rising in the East
- 2 Q&A with Sherry Ybarra
- 3 Member Spotlight: Melissa Hunt
Delegate Assemblies
- 4 Rising in the East, continued
- 5 Tiered Certification/Career Ladders
IEA Professional Training

- 6 IEA People
ESP Corner
- 8 IEA News

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

We have dedicated the space typically set aside for an update from the IEA President and Executive Director to a Question & Answer piece with Idaho's new Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sherri Ybarra. We wanted to allow her an opportunity to introduce herself to our members, so we recently posed some questions pertinent to education in Idaho. We know that a strong working relationship with the State Department of Education benefits kids, teachers and schools, and the IEA is committed to building that relationship over the months ahead. Now, here is your chance to get to know your new state superintendent a bit better.

Q & A with Sherri Ybarra

Q - Who is Sherri Ybarra? Tell us about yourself. Where did you grow up and go to school? What can you tell us about your family? Are there other teachers in your family?

A - *I grew up in West Virginia, where I attended the public school system. My father and mother were married young, and my father was a hard-working coal miner, who often worked long hours in dangerous conditions to support his family. My parents encouraged me all of my life to get my education. Until recently, I was the only teacher in my family. I have a cousin who just graduated this past May, with a B.A. in education. This is her first year as a high school English teacher.*

I am married to a Federal Police Officer who works in Boise, and we have a son, who attends the public school system in Mountain Home.

Q - Who was your favorite teacher as a child? Why?

A - *I give credit to my parents as being the first and favorite teacher(s). Without them, along with the voters of Idaho; I would not be in such a trusted position as State Superintendent of Public Instruction. They always encouraged me to put my education first and were constantly reminding me, "No matter how tough you think your life is at this very moment, keep resisting the urge to give up; because this moment in your life is only temporary; however, you will be in your future forever. So, get your education because not only is it the way out of poverty, it will also give you better opportunities and choices in your life."*

However, I did have a favorite classroom teacher: She was my third grade teacher, and her name was Miss Nadolski. She was my favorite because she knew I wanted to be a teacher someday, so she was always giving me stickers, old note pads, red ink pens, and chalk to "play school" with at home. She would also ask me to help her grade spelling papers, claiming it was a "second

set of eyes" helping her. She was also sure to assign me as a tutor for my classmates, who might have needed extra help with reading or math assignments, so you know she was somebody who could make connections far beyond the classroom for me.

Q - What caused you to want to become a teacher? Of all the roles you've held in the education field, which job gave you the most satisfaction? Why?

A - *I wanted to become a teacher because I liked the way it felt to watch others succeed. I loved it when my teacher would ask me to help a classmate with his or her assignments. So, I knew in or about the second grade that I was going to be a teacher and I never desired to be anything else. It was such a passion of mine while growing up — I spent countless hours making my two sisters, neighbors, cousins, best friends, and anybody else I could find — pretend to be my students — while I pretended to be the teacher. For Christmas I always asked for money to spend at a "Teacher Store" called Imperial Display, back in West Virginia. I would spend all of my Christmas and birthday money on stickers, workbooks, bulletin board decorations, stamps and markers!*

Q - During the campaign, your theme was "Educating the Whole Child." Can you tell us a bit more about what that means to you?

A - *Educating the Whole Child is about addressing our students' needs — as unique individuals. It's about personalization in our educational system in Idaho. You can do this through supporting choices for our students, adopting a testing system that takes a motion picture of growth over time (versus just one snapshot in the day of the lives of our students). It also includes collaboration and coordination of community resources, more local control for spending that reflects the needs of our local communities, and eliminating a one-size fits all approach to education.*

Q - Every educator knows that they can't do their work in isolation; they need

the support of others to be successful. If you could make one request of educators as you begin your new role, what would that be?

A - *Because I was a classroom teacher for 11 years, I recognize they are the most important influence on a student's success, which is why I trust them! I am someone who understands that the top-down approach has its place, but gathering information from professionals, parents and students, prior to a decision — is what really works, so I believe in leadership that works from the bottom up. As an educator myself, I have walked in their shoes for nearly the past two decades, and I am keenly aware of the challenges they face everyday. Therefore, the one request I would make is to always advocate for what is best for Idaho's students and keep that as guide — for all of their efforts and decision making. Winston Churchill said it best, "Never, never, never give up;" so, never give up on fighting to improve education in Idaho.*

Q - Let's fast forward four years. It's 2018 and you've been carrying out your duties as Supt. of Public Instruction for the past 4 years. What has changed?

A - *The priority for my administration is to provide the vision, the resources, and the support necessary to help ensure student achievement. The State Department of Education will be the agency that exemplifies a true service organization — to deliver the highest level of client satisfaction. Collaboration will be the norm, communication and discussion will be the way to solutions, respect will be nurtured, Idaho teachers will feel proud and appreciated, and business and commerce will come to Idaho because of our focus and dedication to Idaho's educational system. As a result, all of our work will reflect those objectives and will have left education in a stronger position for future generations to come.*



Sherri Ybarra.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Blackfoot Teacher “Dreams Big”— and Wins \$100,000 Grant

Stoddard Elementary School teacher **Melissa Hunt** entered the “Dream Big Challenge” contest with the most noble of motivations—but very little expectation of actually winning. Then came the announcement that she was one of three finalists for the \$100,000 grant from Farmers Insurance that goes to the winner of the contest—but still she was skeptical that a little school in Blackfoot, Idaho might actually take home the prize. So imagine Melissa’s surprise at a regularly scheduled school assembly on December 5 when it was revealed that she and Stoddard Elementary had, in fact, won the grant and the large check that goes with it.

“I’ve never been a part of something that involved the entire school like this,” says Hunt. “It was really exciting, but also nerve-wracking. There was a lot of pressure.” As a result of Melissa’s efforts, and those of many others, Stoddard Elementary is receiving \$100,000 worth of technology equipment and support. She is in the process of finalizing her request, with I-Pads, Smartboards and other essential technology due to be in place as early as February.

Hunt put together the grant proposal in hopes of addressing a pressing need for her small, rural school. “About 70% of our students are below the poverty level and have minimal technology in their homes,” she says. “These kids need to be trained on technology because those are the kinds of jobs that they will be looking at when they grow up. We want them to have every opportunity to succeed.”

Winning the “Dream Big Challenge” required getting people to go online and vote for her proposal, with the other two finalists being a public school in Washington and



Melissa Hunt (center) poses with her family—Sherise, Lindsay, Farren, and Katelyn—and a large check.

a private school in Billings, Montana. This meant that Hunt needed support from family, friends, colleagues, and even strangers. “There is just story after story about people who cared and took time to vote and help the school,” she says.

The viral nature of social media played a big role in the campaign; somewhat by design and somewhat organically. Melissa started doing posts on Facebook and Twitter every day, with new content and graphics in almost every post. Her daughter Katelyn, who is a high school senior, put together a video parody of the popular song, *It’s All About That Bass*, which garnered substantial plays on YouTube and put a light-hearted spin on the competition. (To see the video, go to bit.ly/1Fb3Ihs. Highlights from the surprise announcement can also be found on youtube.com)

The Blackfoot Education Association and the IEA played a sizeable role in the campaign. “Among the first people I contacted were Rae Ann Brown (BEA President) and Maggie Calica (IEA Region 5 Director),” Hunt says. “They were tremendously helpful in getting the word out.” Hunt has been an IEA member since starting her teaching career 27 years ago. She is in her seventh year in Blackfoot after 20 years in the Snake River School District.

DID YOU KNOW ?

The IEA occasionally offers grant-writing workshops that can help you with write and submit grant proposals that can make a significant difference for your classroom and school. Contact your region office for more information.



IEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

The IEA’s annual Delegate Assembly will take place April 10-11, 2015 at the Boise Centre in downtown Boise. Registration information will be sent to local associations in mid-late January. At DA we honor educators we have lost in the past year. If you have names to include for 2014 please email them to jfleharty@idahoea.org

NEA Representative Assembly Delegates

The NEA Representative Assembly will be held July 1-6, 2015 in Orlando, FL. IEA members wishing to run for a state delegate position to the NEA RA should complete a resume form, including photos. More information can be found under the “Grants and Events” tab on the NEA website (www.nea.org). The NEA and the IEA are committed to ethnic-minority involvement and strongly encourage ethnic-minority members to submit a resume.



Part of the IEA contingent at the 2014 NEA RA—Dick Chilcote, Monica Beaudoin, Amy Galloway and Kim Kalberg.

For more information, please call the IEA office at 208-344-1341 or e-mail Sue Scott at sscott@idahoea.org or Robin Nettinga at rnettinga@idahoea.org.

eye-opener,” Gillman notes. “I have learned so much about organizing from attending the RAs, as well as useful strategies for engaging with our members and with the community.”

Beage Atwater, the IEA’s Region Director for Region Six in Eastern Idaho, has been amazed by Gillman’s enthusiasm and effectiveness. “Angela just brings so much energy and commitment to the association, and really to everything she does,” says Atwater. “Her experience and passion for education have helped her earn the respect of her peers, and she has done a tremendous job leading the IFEA.”

One of the successful tactics that Gillman has used in Idaho Falls’ 18 public schools has been moving away from the traditional building representative model and morphing into an approach utilizing “building teams”. “I look at it as guiding leadership rather than being leadership,” she says. “We are stronger together and this way we are able to delegate more and give all of our members a sense of ownership.”

Gillman’s passion for education is also profoundly evident in her second grade classroom at Westside Elementary. She controls the classroom with precision and a firm, yet affectionate presence. Her students pay rapt attention as they move almost seamlessly from activity to activity and subject to subject. Ask them what they like about having Ms. Gillman as their teacher and you hear things like “she’s really cool—best teacher in the world” and “she’s really organized and helps us double check our notebooks” and “she’s super good at the Daily Five”.

The woman who always wanted to be teacher has fulfilled her dream and continues to put her passion to work—for her students in the classroom and for her colleagues as the president of the Idaho Falls Education Association.



*“She’s really cool—best teacher in the world.”
— Westside Elementary Student.*



Tom VanDeren’s testimony at the Tiered Certification hearing was heartfelt and powerful.

development, IEA membership, IEA Member Benefits and more.

“Professional development is potentially a very powerful resource, both for educators and the association,” VanDeren says. With the Idaho Core Standards and the ISAT by SBAC both a part of the landscape for professional educators in the state, the IEA and many local associations have

stepped in to provide information and training for members. VanDeren is in his second year helping teachers understand the Idaho Core Standards, serving as a state core coach.

Wearing multiple hats is nothing new for VanDeren. He started his teaching career in Richfield, Idaho, which had a total enrollment of 200 students. Early on in his career he did-it-all and saw-it-all, including far too many unfortunate cases of students from disadvantaged backgrounds struggling to keep their heads above water. VanDeren’s passionate testimony to the State Board of Education about the potential impacts that the new Tiered Certification rule could have on underprivileged children was heartfelt and powerful. VanDeren also worked in the Bear Lake and Preston school districts before settling in at Highland High School in Pocatello, where he has been for the last seven years.

Connecting with younger and early-career teachers is also a priority for the Pocatello Education Association. “Many of the newer educators take things for granted and don’t have a good understanding of how the profession is better as a result of the work done for many years by their professional association,” VanDeren says. “It is also essential that we make them understand the necessity of having a thriving, strong association.”

Collaborating with Districts has **Positive Results**

Both the Idaho Falls Education Association and the Pocatello Education Association have seen the benefits of working in a collaborative fashion with their district leadership. While every local situation is different, and sometimes the relationship between the local association and the district can be adversarial, the two largest cities in Eastern Idaho have managed to build relationships that help everyone concerned.

- “The district appreciates the fact that the IFEA can put out fires and run interference, which makes their job easier.”
— Angela Gillman, IFEA President
- “This relationship developed over time and like any relationship, you have to work at it. Our school board has been supportive and we check our egos at the door. We have set up monthly meetings and stress open communication and a collaborative culture, even at the building level. Angela is great to work with—she doesn’t overreact, but asks questions and gathers information to help us find solutions to problems.”
— George Boland, Idaho Falls School District Superintendent
- “We have a very good relationship with Superintendent Mary Vagner and district leadership. I meet with the superintendent for lunch twice a month and we are able to be open and honest with each other. They include me on their budget committee and value the role that we can play as “good cop” on a variety of issues.”
— Tom VanDeren, PEA President

TIERED CERTIFICATION & CAREER LADDERS

IEA MEMBERS MAKING THEIR VOICES HEARD ON CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSALS

The Idaho State Board of Education has passed along to the legislature two proposals that could significantly alter how teachers are evaluated and compensated. The original Tiered Certification proposal drew heavy criticism from IEA members and other education stakeholders at public hearings in Pocatello, Lewiston, and Meridian. In addition, the State Board received hundreds of email messages, all except for a handful of them in opposition to the proposed rule. As a result, the State Board modified some of the more onerous aspects of the Tiered Certification proposal that they ultimately approved. Nevertheless, the IEA has serious concerns about the ramifications of this proposal and the lack of input from professional educators that continues to be the norm in Idaho when it comes to developing policies for public education.



IEA member Kelly Holder speaks out against the Tiered Certification rule at a public hearing in Meridian.

For more photos of IEA members in action at the Tiered Certification public hearings, go to bit.ly/1KeXsoT

On December 18, the State Board of Education also passed a proposal for a Career Ladders formula. Once again, professional educators were largely excluded from the process, and the end result was a plan that has not been fully thought-out or vetted. As presented, the legislation could result in even more pressure on students by tying teacher compensation directly to student achievement measures, including scores from high stakes tests. This proposal also has a strong likelihood of taking autonomy away from local districts and relies on an inconsistent and inappropriate methodology for evaluations.

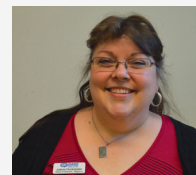
As was the case with the defeat of the Luna Laws in 2012, IEA members have risen to the occasion and made their voices heard regarding these proposals. As they head to the legislature, the IEA will continue to monitor developments and update members with relevant information as well as avenues for sharing ideas and opinions with elected officials.

For more information about the Tiered Certification and Career Ladders proposals, as well as the IEA's position and concerns, please visit idahoea.org/tiered-certification

IEA CAREER RESOURCES AND TRAINING

What You Need to Know About ISAT by SBAC

Since 2010 the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium has worked to create a common, innovative assessment system for mathematics and English language arts that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and helps prepare students for college and careers. The Spring 2015 ISAT by SBAC is just around the corner. Are your students prepared? Are you sure that you've taught what will be tested?



Jolene Dockstader

IEA members have access to professional workshops that can help you answer these questions! The major element of these workshops is to begin, encourage and expand academic conversations around the components of the SBAC ELA assessment. Then we take an in-depth look at how educators can support student learning to ensure that their students are prepared for these important assessments. Participants gain a greater understanding of the SBAC tests, share intense academic conversations around the SBAC assessments, discuss implications of the test on instruction and, most importantly, develop strategies for preparing students.

The ISAT by SBAC continues to be a central part of accountability for teachers and students. It is important that educators shore up their understanding and hone their skills to assure success for their students and themselves. This assessment can be a valuable tool in preparing students for college and career. Take advantage of the experience and expertise of veteran IEA members, and look for a workshop near you.

— Jolene Dockstader, IEA member and ISAT by SBAC trainer.

IEA Evaluation Toolkit

The IEA Evaluation Toolkit training focuses on three major goals. The first is to help members see evaluations in a new light. Instead of viewing an evaluation as an opportunity for an evaluator to point out weaknesses, the training helps teachers see the evaluation as a tool to help them improve instruction for students.



Luke Franklin

The second goal of the training is to provide examples of evidence that empowers members to present a case that allows them to receive the highest scores possible on summative evaluations. Finally, the IEA wants teachers to see the professional development courses that we offer in a new light where trainings are driven by members' needs and attempt to fuse concepts like advocacy and professionalism.

The Evaluation Toolkit training is conducted at the local level and gives members the tools they need for the best evaluation possible, while also giving them practical techniques to do so. Members who attend the training will receive the entire toolkit on a flash drive.. The flashdrive contains multiple examples of evidence that have been created by members for members. If you are interested in participating in or hosting this training, please contact an IEA Local and Regional President.

— Luke Franklin, IEA Region Director and evaluation trainer

The IEA Calendar of Events is a great resource for information about events, trainings and seminars around the state. Visit idahoea.org/about-iea/events



VENNY BAKER

A veteran of many years with the IEA, Venny recently moved

into a new role as Senior Accountant in the HQ business office. She originally worked with the IEA as an associate from 1985-90, then re-joined the IEA family in 1994 and has been a key component in keeping headquarters working smoothly ever since. The implementation of E-dues will be a big piece of her new role. "It's completely new and a great option for our members," Venny says. "I am excited about working with our membership and local presidents as E-dues continues to grow."

JAIME RUSSELL

Jaime recently moved from the IEA Member Benefits office to serve as the IEA Business/Membership Associate. The Meridian High School and Boise State University graduate started with Member Benefits in 2008 and is looking forward to getting a broader perspective on the activities and goals of the entire organization. "I will be responsible for accounts receivable, making sure that dues are appropriated and accounted for correctly, and assisting Sandra Tisdale and Venny Baker in the business office," Jamie says. "My favorite thing about working for the IEA is the people and their dedication and integrity."



LINDA MCGUIRE

"The first thing that I did was throw my alarm clock in the

garbage," says Linda McGuire about her retirement after more than 14 years with the IEA and some 35 years of working in the education field. Since joining the IEA in 2000, Linda has been a valued associate with responsibilities for the Boise Education Association and the WROC (Western Regional Organizing Center) team.

"This has been a very rewarding experience and I will miss my dear friends and the opportunity to work with educators," says Linda. She is excited about being available for her ten

year old grandson and being a housewife for the first time in 47 years. She also plans to travel, including to her husband's homeland of Ireland. Erin go bragh, Linda!

HANNAH HYSSELL

After more than ten years of dedicated service to the IEA, Hannah has moved on to new challenges. For most of her time with the IEA, she served as the Public Policy Associate, where she was instrumental in numerous campaigns, most notably the "No on 1,2,3" campaign that repealed the Luna Laws. Hannah's assistance with elections and working with legislators and political figures around the state is greatly appreciated.

ESP CORNER

TIME TO GET INVOLVED

Education Support Professionals know only too well that when budgets get tight, the first place districts look to make cuts is among their ranks. It seems that the acronym "ESP" begins to stand for "Expendable School Personnel." It is imperative that ESPs work to make themselves appear less expendable and more valuable to a school staff. There are many ways that we can take matters into our own hands to effect this change in perception:

- **Take advantage of professional development opportunities.** Don't assume that professional development is only for certificated personnel. Advocate for your right to be adequately and properly trained for your job. The IEA offers professional development workshops specific to ESPs during the Summer Institute, and periodically throughout the school year.
- **Become visible in your school and your community.** Volunteer to help in school events, after school activities, and especially in your community. By showcasing your abilities and talents in different venues, you create a broader network of support and future opportunities.
- **Become actively involved in your association.** The opportunities and protections available to you as an ESP member came as a result of efforts made by active and involved ESP members before you. These gains need to be safeguarded and new gains need to be made. **Be willing to step up!** Run for a local office or volunteer to help on a committee. Make sure that the concerns of the ESPs in your school are heard and help come up with a solution. Run as a delegate to Delegate Assembly – learn first-hand how governance works and meet with other ESPs who share your same goals.

ESPs in Idaho cannot afford to sit back and wait to see what happens or hope others will champion our cause. Change and improvement require action. Be the one who makes it happen. As Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Working together, as ESP members united, great things can – and will – happen. Be a part of it!

– Bobbie Steffensen, ESP Committee

IEA 24/7

The IEA Facebook page recently passed 2,000 "Likes" and is growing rapidly. Make sure that you are following us for the latest news on members, as well as issues that are important to professional educators.

Sign up for the IEA Hotline at idahoea.org/hotline-home and get daily e-mail updates on legislative action relevant to public education.

Contact us at editor@idahoea.org with feedback on the IEA Reporter and/or our social media outlets.



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PAGE 1



New energetic leadership
has **EASTERN IDAHO** on
the right track

PAGE 3



Dream Big Challenge
winner **MELISSA HUNT**



New Video and Brochure Reflect the IEA's Mission

The IEA recently completed work on two projects that give members, potential members and the public a better sense of what the association stands for, what it does, and why there is so much value in membership.

- **VIDEO.** *Why IEA?* is a three minute video that offers a brief synopsis of what the IEA is all about, then launches into perspectives from four IEA members about why they joined and how they benefit from their membership. See the video at idahoea.org.
- **BROCHURE.** *Your Profession. Your Career. Your IEA.* This new full-color brochure outlines the ABCs of the IEA—Advocacy, Better Teachers-Better Schools, and Clout. It also discusses IEA accomplishments, the Children's Fund, ESPs, IEA Member Benefits and much more.

PAGE 5



Teachers speak out on
controversial **TIERED
CERTIFICATION ISSUE**

Feedback on the IEA
Reporter? Great story
ideas or news about IEA
members that you want
to share?

E-mail us at editor@idahoea.org.