

**REFERENCE: APPROVED MINUTES – October 5, 2006 Public Charter School
Commission Meeting**

**PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2006
BEST WESTERN VISTA INN
SAWTOOTH-BITTERROOT ROOM
2645 AIRPORT WAY
BOISE, IDAHO**

A meeting of the Idaho Public Charter School Commission was held on Thursday, October 5, 2006 at the Best Western Vista Inn, Sawtooth-Bitterroot Room, at 2645 Airport Way, Boise, Idaho. Chairman Hammond presided. The following members were present:

Joe deVera	Bill Goesling	Alan Reed
Paul Powell	Ann Souza	Esther Van Wart

Chairman Hammond called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

1. Commission Work

Chairman Hammond inquired whether there should be any changes to the agenda. No changes were requested.

The Commission considered a date and time for the next regularly scheduled meeting.

M/S (deVera/Van Wart): To set November 30, 2006 in Boise, ID, as the date and location for the next regular Commission meeting. *The motion carried unanimously.*

The Commission considered minutes submitted from the June 8, 2006 and August 3, 2006 meetings.

M/S (Powell/Van Wart): To approve the minutes from June 8, 2006 and August 3, 2006 as submitted. *The motion carried unanimously.*

2. Xavier Charter School Petition

Tamara Baysinger, Commission staff, said this is the first time the Xavier Charter School petition would be considered by the Commission. She said that due to the timing of its submission, the petition was not revised as thoroughly as staff would recommend, but suggested the Commission consider its larger concerns and allow additional time for staff to work with the petitioners on more minor issues.

Becky Baird, chair of the XCS board, introduced herself as well as XCS founders Cindy

Fulcher and Renee Robbins. She said XCS is named after St. Francis Xavier, who was involved in the preservation of a body of knowledge during the Middle Ages, in acknowledgement of the proposed school's focus on providing a classical education and core knowledge.

Ms. Fulcher described the founders' experience with education and school improvement. She said the XCS petition was referred to the Commission by the Twin Falls school district board due to that board's unwillingness to take on the effort involved in overseeing a charter school at this time. She described the school's philosophy and anticipated school environment.

Ms. Baird said XCS will focus on the trivium of grammar, logic, and rhetoric to provide a classical education. She emphasized the value of core knowledge and shared knowledge for all students, so they may participate fully in our national culture.

Ms. Fulcher expressed the willingness of the XCS founders to value and use the expertise of others in developing the school. She said the founders are currently working to write more specific, measurable student educational standards and a more substantiated budget.

Chairman Hammond invited the Commissioners to comment on the petition.

Commissioner Powell commended the petitioners for their vision and dedication. He asked the petitioners to further substantiate their sitework and facilities budget, and to correct grant and salary numbers in the budget.

Commissioner Van Wart also commended the petitioners and commented that she feels charter schools benefit most from being authorized by their local school district rather than by the Commission. She asked whether the petitioners had discussions with the district, other than the public hearing at which the petition was referred to the Commission.

Ms. Fulcher explained that the district board had expressed support of the choice Xavier would offer, but said she was under the impression that recent high turnover in the district office had contributed to the district board's reluctance to take on a charter school. She also said she felt the district was open to a working relationship and possible partnerships for the provision of special education, transportation, and nutrition.

Ms. Baird said the district also seemed to misunderstand its level of responsibility for a charter school and the problems it might experience.

Commissioner deVera inquired about the XCS board's plans to cover a down payment on a possible loan for facilities.

Ms. Fulcher said the petitioners have discussed options with several benefactors, who will be willing to discuss details upon approval of the petition.

Commissioner Souza said she, too, would like to see as much substantiation as possible of feasible financing options.

Commissioner deVera noted that for a million dollar land purchase, most banks would require a 20-30% down payment. He advised the petitioners to check the facts and be sure their options are realistic.

Ms. Fulcher asked whether XCS should depend on the Federal Start-up Grant being renewed, and Chairman Hammond directed her to contact Commission staff for this information.

Commissioner Van Wart asked the petitioners to be prepared to present plans for the provision of special education and other services should the local district be unwilling or unable to assist XCS.

M/S (Powell/Goesling): To hold the decision on Xavier Charter School until the next meeting of the Commission and to direct Commission staff to work with the petitioners to address concerns with the petition.

Jan Sylvester of Meridian, Idaho said she was concerned that bylaws were not included with the XCS petition. She questioned the appropriateness of membership fees described in Article V(b), Article VII, and Article XV of the articles of incorporation. She also noted a discrepancy in the voting methods used to change the articles of incorporation and the bylaws.

Chairman Hammond asked Commission staff to prepare comments with regard to Ms. Sylvester's concerns prior to the next meeting. He then called for a vote on the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Idaho Distance Education Academy Transfer Petition

Daryl Bertelsen, superintendent of the Whitepine School District and superintendent of I-DEA, introduced himself. He also introduced Dan Porter, member of the I-DEA board; Shauna Krone, Educational Director for I-DEA; and Julie Leonard, member of the I-DEA board.

Ms. Krone said I-DEA is in its third year of operation and is applying for a transfer in order to achieve virtual and LEA status so as to obtain federal flow-through funds for Title 1 and Title VI. The school currently has 1200 students enrolled, is financial viable, and has a full staff including special education providers. She said I-DEA's objective is to create an educational opportunity not confined by a traditional classroom environment, but rather a free-flowing exchange of ideas through technology. I-DEA views the Idaho state standards as essential knowledge and ensures its students have well-rounded educational plans and participate in standardized testing. I-DEA

continually analyzes student, parent, and staff effectiveness and provides its staff with 24 days of professional development training. I-DEA employs Family Representatives to provide information and orientations to parents, serving as liaisons between parents and the school, while certified contact teachers are assigned to a certain number of students to empower parents via online technologies to become informed and effective in student instruction.

Commissioner Reed asked whether there is a certified teacher for each family.

Ms. Krone said each certified teacher works with approximately 100 students, which equals roughly 50-70 families per teacher.

Commissioner Reed verified that Family Representatives are classified, not certified, staff. He asked for additional explanation of how parents receive help through subscriptions.

Ms. Krone said I-DEA provides online site licenses so all families can access PLATO, BrainPop, and similar enrichment resources.

Commissioner Goesling asked about the typical structure of an I-DEA student's school day.

Ms. Krone said there is no typical structure because each parent applies his or her own educational philosophy and family pattern to his or her child's schedule. She said most academic seatwork tends to take place in the morning.

Commissioner Goesling asked whether the parent is the primary educator.

Ms. Krone said the parent is a facilitator.

Commissioner Goesling asked for a description I-DEA's procedure for dealing with student problems the parent is unable to resolve.

Ms. Krone said the contact teacher, who introduces himself or herself within two weeks of enrollment, remains available to parents and will ask questions in search of the root cause of a problem, then help find a solution. She said I-DEA provides ongoing training to parents to help them understand learning styles and instructional methods.

Commissioner Goesling asked how contact is made between parents and teachers.

Ms. Krone said contact is primary by phone and email, and parents may meet teachers at activities. She said contact teachers are located throughout the state.

Commissioner Goesling asked how frequently teachers interact with students.

Ms. Krone said contact is made monthly, at minimum. She said 2-3 contacts per month

is more typical and that this is a high level of contact considering each teacher works with 50 or more families.

Commissioner Goesling asked by what means student-teacher contact takes place.

Ms. Krone said most contact is by phone and email, but teachers travel for face-to-face meetings with families if necessary.

Commissioner Goesling asked what, since the home is the primary educational environment, occurs if a student is not receiving basic family support in the home. He expressed concern that an unsupportive family environment would be unable to offer an effective educational environment.

Ms. Krone said I-DEA's certified teachers are federally mandated to report neglect, and that they endeavor to have a warm and open relationship with the families to which they are assigned. She said I-DEA trains teachers to have effective conversations with families.

Commissioner Goesling asked what occurs when such conversations are not successful.

Ms. Krone said there is not a blanket policy, but I-DEA takes action on a case-by-case basis. This action may include interventions involving traditional schools, or having a Family Representative work to reduce fear.

Chairman Hammond said the Commission's decision today is whether to approve I-DEA's request to bring their authorization under the Commission's control. He said the real question is whether I-DEA is properly before the Commission; that is, whether I-DEA is truly a virtual school. He clarified that the Commission is not attempting to ascertain whether I-DEA's methods are proper, but whether it is appropriate for the Commission to consider taking authorization authority over I-DEA.

Commissioner Powell asked why the Whitepine District is seeking I-DEA's transfer to the Commission.

Mr. Bertelsen said that at the time the charter was approved, Idaho Code allowed local school districts to authorize virtual schools. He said I-DEA's transfer would clarify operations between the district and the charter school and entitle I-DEA, as an LEA, to receive Title 1 and Title VI funds. He said this would significantly increase the funds available to serve I-DEA's students.

Commissioner Powell said his understanding is that when a charter school is part of a school district, federal funds flow through the district to the charter school. He said many non-LEA, district-authorized charter schools in Idaho are receiving federal funds and asked why the Whitepine School District can't address the funding issue by other means.

Mr. Bertelsen said federal funds are distributed through the district only for students who live within that district's geographic boundaries, so I-DEA does not receive such funds for its students who live in other parts of the state. He said that if I-DEA were an LEA, it would receive significantly more federal funding.

Commissioner Powell verified with Mr. Bertelsen that the real reason for the transfer request is to make I-DEA eligible for LEA status. He asked for clarification of the relationship between I-DEA's governance and that of the Whitepine School District, including the overlap of board members.

Mr. Bertelsen said I-DEA was formed by individuals in the Whitepine district under the assumption that I-DEA would be its own LEA. He said he was the primary force behind the I-DEA petition and some of the Whitepine district board members were supportive of his efforts.

Commissioner Powell asked Mr. Bertelsen to define who, according to I-DEA's bylaws, would comprise the I-DEA board. He specifically asked what would be the relationship between the members of the district board and the members of the charter school board.

Mr. Bertelsen said the I-DEA board is composed of five members and their chairman is also a member of the Whitepine board. He said the other I-DEA board members are not on the Whitepine board, but that he himself is superintendent of both I-DEA and the Whitepine district schools.

Commissioner Powell asked what role the Whitepine district will play if I-DEA's authorizing authority is transferred to the Commission.

Mr. Bertelsen said that if authorizing authority is transferred, there will not be any overlap of employees or governance between the Whitepine district and I-DEA.

Chairman Hammond clarified that the Commission is considering not just whether I-DEA is a virtual school, but whether it can be defined as a school.

Commissioner Van Wart asked whether I-DEA provides curricular materials and computers. She also inquired whether I-DEA students are taught by teachers or by their parents, who are in turn supported by I-DEA.

Ms. Krone said parents may choose to lease a computer from I-DEA. She said that when a student is enrolled, the parent receives a login enabling him or her to access the student's learning plan online.

Commissioner Van Wart asked if I-DEA provides the learning plan.

Ms. Krone said the school provides a form for the learning plan and the standards it

must include, then parents fill out the form in cooperation with the contact teacher. The contact teacher then verifies the learning plan, at which time an account becomes available through which approved curricular materials may be ordered. She said teachers must verify that purchases made via the account align with the learning plan, and I-DEA does not purchase faith-based materials, furniture, or sports equipment. She said the parent provides the actual instruction and assessment to the student, with strategic support from the contact teacher.

Commissioner Van Wart asked staff whether I-DEA can be considered a public school since the parent, who is not highly qualified, is the primary instructor.

Ms. Baysinger said Idaho statute does not provide a definition of “school” or “public school.” She said staff is concerned that while I-DEA provides a useful service to homeschool parents and involves homeschool students in statewide testing, it does not directly provide instruction to students. She said I-DEA’s primary purposes are to consult with parents in the creation of learning plans that will, if followed, meet Idaho’s educational thoroughness standards; to reimburse parents with state monies for the purchase of curricular materials and reimbursable activities such as ballet lessons; and to ensure that student participate in standardized testing. She said staff feels that although I-DEA provides a valuable service, it is not a school.

Commissioner Powell asked Ms. Krone to describe the primary delivery method of student instruction.

Ms. Krone said the mode of instruction depends on each family’s educational philosophy. Some instruction is delivered via internet technology and some through text, depending on the student’s needs.

Commissioner Powell noted that 20% of I-DEA’s budget goes toward textbooks, indicating that a significant portion of instruction is not through virtual means.

Ms. Krone said very little completely-virtual educational material exists.

Commissioner Powell asked whether I-DEA contracts with any of the online curriculum providers that are available nationwide and used by other Idaho virtual schools.

Ms. Krone said how the instruction is delivered is not as critical as what instruction is delivered, and whether that instruction meets the state’s thoroughness standards. She said I-DEA’s purpose is to make sure everyone involved in the education of its students understands what the standards are and how to teach and measure them. She said the method used to delivery such instruction is secondary.

Commissioner Van Wart confirmed with Ms. Krone that I-DEA students receive instruction from their parents, who use curricular materials paid for by I-DEA and verified to be in alignment with state standards; however, I-DEA students do not learn or test via an online curriculum provided by I-DEA. She said it is her understanding that as

the primary instructors, parents should be highly qualified teachers.

Ms. Krone said the parent is the facilitator of daily student work, but the certified contact teacher is responsible for final grades and the success of the child.

Commissioner Van Wart asked for verification that the teacher trains the parent to better help the child, but the teacher does not instruct the child directly.

Ms. Krone said this is true for the most part, but there are instances such as reading intervention in which the teacher works directly with the student.

Commissioner Van Wart said that although she is pro-homeschool and pro-charter, she is concerned that I-DEA does not meet No Child Left Behind requirements for highly qualified teachers. She said that although she sees the value of the service I-DEA provides, she questions the validity of I-DEA as public school because parents are the primary instructors.

Chairman Hammond dismissed the presenters and invited the Commission to discuss the transfer request.

M/S (deVera/Souza): To deny the transfer of chartering authority over the Idaho Distance Education Academy to the Commission.

Chairman Hammond invited discussion on the motion.

Commissioner deVera explained that, despite his appreciation for the service I-DEA offers, he does not feel I-DEA should be defined as a public school, especially since students are not instructed by highly qualified teachers.

Commissioner Powell said he feels I-DEA does not meet the definition of a virtual school because it does not deliver instruction primarily through virtual means. He also expressed concern that I-DEA is not a school but a consultation service for home school parents who do not meet No Child Left Behind standards. He said he would like to see all these questions resolved before considering a transfer to the Commission.

Chairman Hammond called for a vote on the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. Falcon Ridge Public Charter School Corrective Action Plan and Update

Ms. Baysinger said Falcon Ridge would be presenting their corrective action plan regarding the delay of its expansion to include 9th grade, as well as new 3-year budgets as requested by the Commission at its August 3, 2006 meeting. She said staff's opinion is that Falcon Ridge failed to submit all the budget materials requested, which included both an 3-year ideal plan and a 3-year contingency plan in which all financing

possibilities would be fully substantiated. She said Falcon Ridge submitted a 1-year contingency budget followed by a 2-year budget that included a \$20,000 bank loan for which there was no documentation.

Derry Shaul, Falcon Ridge director, said Falcon Ridge has encountered difficulty in locating a facility for its 9th and 10th grades, which are to begin with the 2007-2008 school year. He said Falcon Ridge is considering leasing space from a church or leasing additional portables. Mr. Shaul also said the Falcon Ridge board had voted the night before this meeting to accept a \$178,000 loan proposal from Bob Barnes. The proposal is not yet signed and its verbiage is still being finalized.

Chairman Hammond pointed out that Falcon Ridge has referred to the loan from Mr. Barnes many times in the past, but signed documents have yet to be procured. He said that until the financing is actually in place, the Commission will not be comfortable with Falcon Ridge's assertions of its financial security.

Commissioner Powell asked after Falcon Ridge's current debt situation.

Mr. Shaul said the construction debt incurred at the beginning of the last school year is paid off, but there remains approximately \$160,000 debt for continued sitework. He also said that Mr. Barnes' loan option is more substantiated now that it has been in the past, and that this loan would be sufficient to cover the sitework deficit.

Commissioner Powell asked whether Falcon Ridge finished the school year operating in a deficit.

Mr. Shaul said the fiscal audit has not yet been completed, but he believes the school did end the year with a small negative balance.

Commissioner Powell asked whether, since the budgets reflect the recently incurred sitework costs but not the Barnes loan, Falcon Ridge anticipates ending the 2006-2007 school year with a positive balance of approximately \$150,000.

Mr. Shaul said he did expect a financial cushion, but it was likely to be less than \$150,000.

Brenda Lamphere, Falcon Ridge director, clarified that the Barnes loan was not included in the budget material submitted for this meeting because Falcon Ridge was not, at that time, able to document its feasibility.

Chairman Hammond asked the Commission what, if any, action it would like to take with regard to Falcon Ridge.

Commission Goesling said Falcon Ridge has appeared before the Commission many times in the past to present possibilities that have not become reality, so the time has come for the Commission to take further action.

M/S (Goesling/Reed): To direct staff to issue to Falcon Ridge Public Charter School a notice of defect on the grounds of failure to meet generally accepted accounting standards of fiscal management.

Commissioner Powell said he was not convinced that Falcon Ridge's financial difficulties constituted failure to meet generally accepted accounting standards of fiscal management. He said he was frustrated by Falcon Ridge's situation but was not comfortable issuing a notice of defect on these grounds.

Commissioner Souza asked for an explanation of the notice of defect process.

Ms. Baysinger explained that when a notice of defect is issued, the charter school must be given a reasonable amount of time to respond with a written corrective action plan. She noted that the statute does require the Commission to approve the corrective action plan.

Jennifer Swartz, counsel to the Commission, added that statute does not specify a time frame in which the defect must be corrected. Rather, it allows for a "reasonable amount of time" in which the school must cure the defect.

Ms. Baysinger said that if, after a reasonable amount of time, the school failed to cure the defect, the Commission could issue a notice of intent to revoke the charter.

Commissioner Souza said she wants the Falcon Ridge board to understand that this notice of defect does not mean the school is facing immediate closure; rather, it is a strong warning that actual progress must be made toward resolving the school's financial difficulties.

Chairman Hammond noted that it is the Commission's responsibility to promote the success of the schools it authorizes, even when this means using tough enforcement measures. He then called for a vote on the motion.

The motion passed 5-1, with Commissioner Powell voting nay.

5. Garden City Community School Update

Ms. Baysinger said the GCCS board contacted her on September 7 to make staff aware of a serious financial situation; the school has provided weekly updates since that time. She said the school is working on lease and loan possibilities to cover the additional expenses it has incurred due to problems with its anticipated facility on 44th Street. She said the school has received approval for a \$52,000 line of credit from Wells Fargo but is still awaiting documentation.

Barbara Gaston, president of the GCCS board, introduced herself and GCCS director Linda Vermette. She said the school opened on time but has experienced some major setbacks, and she thanked Commission staff for its support as the school attempts to

resolve the problems it is facing. She also updated the Commission on the status of its board, staff, curriculum, and facilities. Ms. Gaston said the school opened at a Unitarian church in Garden City and is currently working to renegotiate its lease while continuing to work on preparation of the 44th Street site. Two GCCS parents have offered their expertise in finding financing options. GCCS's goal is to reduce facilities costs to \$10,000 per month, which Ms. Gaston acknowledged is an aggressive goal. She said current enrollment is 99 but inquiries continue to come in. 12 students currently enrolled are on IEPs and about 33 students are receiving free lunch. Four students are English Language learners. Ms. Gaston said that Rosemary Abell at the State Board of Education office gave GCCS permission not to participate in fall ISAT testing due to the school's inability to locate an available computer lab.

Commissioner Van Wart reminded the schools that it is difficult for Commissioners to evaluate material that has changed immediately prior to a meeting. She cautioned GCCS to be patient regarding the construction of a permanent facility.

Ms. Gaston clarified that the 44th Street facilities plan involves the use of modulars for 3 to 5 years.

Commissioner Van Wart verified with Ms. Gaston that GCCS is providing sufficient monitoring of recess time. She asked what amount of time the school anticipates will be required to repay a facilities loan, and commented that she has never heard of the ISAT being waived in any circumstance.

Ms. Gaston said the school hopes to pay off such a loan within five years, but could not guarantee this.

Ms. Vermette said GCCS did not have the infrastructure necessary to administer the test and was unable to rent or borrow equipment. She said that Ms. Abell agreed GCCS had made every effort to administer the test and waived therefore waived the requirement until spring. She said GCCS would like to be able to administer the ISAT during the December testing window as well.

Commissioner Powell asked the GCCS board to provide the Commission with a description of the "triggers" that will make or break the school. He added that he would like to see all charter schools, regardless of their authorizer, take responsibility for their own financial difficulties and make wise decisions without waiting for their authorizers to decide for them.

Ms. Gaston said she would continue to provide weekly updates to staff.

Ms. Baysinger said staff is concerned about the advice GCCS may have received regarding the fall ISAT. She said the GCCS charter should, and Board rule does, require all Idaho students to participate in the test.

Chairman Hammond directed GCCS to work with staff to resolve the ISAT issue as

quickly as possible.

6. Compass Public Charter School Proposed Charter Amendment

Ms. Baysinger said staff has no concerns, except a minor wording change, regarding Compass Public Charter School's proposed amendment allowing expansion to include high school grades.

Christina Jensen, Compass board member, introduced herself as well as Compass' attorney Chris Jorgensen and the school's administrator, Kelly Trudeau. She said that in designing its high school program, Compass reviewed the proposals presented by the State Board of Education at its High School Redesign Summit and chose to adopt the proposed high standards in order to prepare students for college. She said 8th grade enrollment is currently full and there is strong student and parent interest in a high school program. Compass has budgeted for realistic remodeling costs to be rolled into its facilities purchase loan.

Ms. Trudeau said many of its current staff members have appropriate certification to allow them to provide high school instruction. She said Compass will be hiring new staff to teach health and art.

Commissioner Van Wart commended the Compass board on their responsible efforts to prepare this high school proposal. She expressed concern about the heavy load teachers will need to carry if they take on 9th grade classes in addition to their current duties.

Ms. Trudeau said her teachers are aware of the effort that will be involved, but said they are passionate about the school's expansion and willing to take it on.

Commissioner Van Wart asked about the school's current waiting list numbers.

Ms. Trudeau said the 8th grade currently has a waiting list of 12, and the lower grades have much larger waiting lists. There are about 243 children on the waiting lists for all grades combined.

Commissioner Powell asked for a general update on the school's financial condition.

Ms. Jensen confirmed that Compass has a positive cash flow as well as a contingency fund.

Commissioner Powell said he had had the opportunity to tour the Compass facility and feels it will be very adequate to house high school grades.

Commissioner Goesling asked whether Compass sees future opportunities for its high school students to participate in competitive sports.

Ms. Trudeau said Compass is currently partnering with the YMCA so its 6th through 8th grade boys and girls may participate in basketball. She also noted that several Compass students participate in sports through other public schools without charge, and the Compass facility does have a full-sized gymnasium.

M/S (Powell/Van Wart): To approve the amendments to the charter for Compass Public Charter School. *The motion passed unanimously.*

7. Rolling Hills Public Charter School Facilities Update

Ms. Baysinger said that at the August 3rd Commission meeting, the Commission directed Rolling Hills to provide to staff monthly reports regarding the construction of its new facility. She said that these reports have been submitted in a timely fashion and demonstrate that construction is proceeding on schedule for completion by January 26, 2007.

Doug Varie, Rolling Hills board member, said construction is still on schedule and procedures are in place to address any delays that might arise.

Commissioner Powell asked after the state of relations with the Meridian school district.

Mr. Varie said Rolling Hills has submitted to the district the same updates received by the Commission, and the district has not expressed any questions or concerns.

Commissioner Van Wart thanked Rolling Hills for their continued updates and asked about the school's current enrollment.

Carolyn Mauer, administrator of Rolling Hills, said enrollment is currently at 268 and there is a waiting list of over 300 students, though there are open 8th grade seats.

Commissioner Van Wart asked what opportunities Rolling Hills students have to participate in sports.

Ms. Mauer said some of its students do participate in sports through other public schools.

Commissioner Powell asked whether the school is experiencing any financial issues of which the Commission should be aware.

Mr. Varie said Rolling Hills received a very positive audit and finished the year with surplus funds, and its financing for the new building is very manageable.

8. INSPIRE Connections Academy Update

Ms. Baysinger said INSPIRE will be providing an update in follow-up to its annual oversight visit that took place in May. She said the visit did bring to light two concerns

which have already been addressed by the school. She noted that that INSPIRE charter provides an excellent of the specific, measurable student educational standards that staff is looking for in new petitions.

Steven McNamer, chair of the INSPIRE board, said INSPIRE's program is functioning very well and the school has recently moved to a new facility. He described a live, web-based method by which INSPIRE provides mathematics instruction in real time. He said INSPIRE finished the year \$50,000 in the black and anticipates an even larger balance next year.

Commissioner Van Wart complimented the school on its success and an administrator about whom the Commission has received many positive reports.

Chairman Hammond thanked the INSPIRE presenters and said a citizen had asked to speak.

Ms. Sylvester of Meridian said that at INSPIRE's annual meeting, the school's board agreed to put a cap on its enrollment. She expressed concern that the purpose of this cap would be to benefit the school financially, though they seem to have excess funds. She also pointed out that INSPIRE's web-based math instruction could be very beneficial to other public school students and suggested it be available as a dual-enrollment option.

Chairman Hammond invited the INSPIRE presenters to respond to Ms. Sylvester's comments.

Mr. McNamer said dual-enrollment is available as provided by Idaho law. He said the enrollment cap is necessary to ensure modest growth and financial stability, and current enrollment is 150.

Commissioner Souza asked staff whether an enrollment cap is allowable by law.

Ms. Baysinger confirmed that the establishment of an enrollment cap is legal for a virtual school just as it is with a brick-and-mortar school.

Mr. Powell noted that the school's fund balance at the end of the year represents a modest 7% of its budget.

Commissioner Goesling asked whether INSPIRE advertises the instructional opportunities it has to offer, particularly with regard to the math program.

Commissioner Souza asked staff whether a traditional public school student would need to pay for dual-enrollment in a public charter school.

Ms. Baysinger said that since INSPIRE is an LEA, the situation is similar to that between any two traditional districts. She said the law provides the districts much

flexibility in how they handle dual-enrollment arrangements, including financial arrangements. She said statute does not require districts to advertise dual-enrollment opportunities, but they do have to make these opportunities available.

Commissioner Souza asked whether a school could refuse a request for dual-enrollment.

Ms. Swartz said dual-enrollment could be denied if the school is already at capacity for the requested program.

Commissioner Souza asked what INSPIRE's charter says about its enrollment cap.

Mr. McNamer said the cap is currently 150 and INSPIRE anticipates raising the cap over time.

Commissioner Souza noted that one of the intents of the charter school legislation was to allow charter schools to serve as education labs whose successful programs might then be implemented in the traditional public school system.

Commissioner Van Wart cited two examples of how traditional districts have limited popular program sizes in order to protect the effectiveness and integrity of those programs. She suggested that other districts consider implementing their own programs similar to INSPIRE's math program.

Chairman Hammond agreed that there is no reason other district couldn't imitate INSPIRE's successful program.

Dallas Taylor, administrator of INSPIRE, noted that last year, being INSPIRE's first year, was an experiment and therefore the school had nothing to advertise at that time. She said last year's success has led to further implementation this year, and visitors are welcome to observe the program as it continues to be developed.

Commissioner Van Wart said she feels it is not INSPIRE's responsibility to advertise the success of its program; rather, it is the districts' responsibility to seek out ideas that they may want to implement. She said she hopes to see the word of INSPIRE's success spread.

Ms. Swartz pointed out that statute does not require charter schools to provide dual-enrollment opportunities. She said the statute provides that students enrolled in non-public schools or public charter schools must be allowed dual-enrollment opportunities in traditional public schools. She said this does not prevent charter schools from allowing dual-enrollment.

Commissioner Goesling suggested that information about charter school successes be included in the State Board of Education's newsletter and/or upcoming presentations.

Commissioner Souza asked about the current relationship between INSPIRE and BSU.

Ms. Taylor said INSPIRE uses BSU computer labs for ISAT testing and participates in the university's online teaching research.

Mr. McNamer added that INSPIRE assisted BSU in developing a graduate course that covers online teaching methods.

9. Staff Update on ISAT Results

Christine Ivie, Chief Elementary and Secondary Academic Officer for the State Board of Education, said all but one of the Commission-authorized charter schools are making AYP. She said Richard McKenna did not make AYP on the third indicator. She suggested the Commission ask staff to prepare bi-annual reports updating the Commission on spring and fall ISAT results and growth.

Commissioner Van Wart confirmed that Richard McKenna's student population includes a high percentage of at-risk students.

Ms. Ivie said this is true, but NCLB does not make exception for schools with high at-risk populations. She noted that many such schools are successfully making AYP and suggested Richard McKenna examine the practices of these schools.

Commissioner Goesling asked that Richard McKenna report at the next Commission meeting to describe the steps it is taking to improve ISAT scores.

Chairman Hammond noted that growth is more important than the actual scores.

Commissioner Goesling asked about Board staff's opinion of the state's ISAT scores as a whole.

Ms. Ivie said that overall, Idaho's students are performing well. She said there has been much growth among at-risk students but that scores tend to level out in middle and high school, and that current graduation requirements do not demand more than 8th grade proficiency.

Commissioner Souza thanked Board staff for its assistance to Sandpoint Charter School, which is located in her area.

Chairman Hammond asked whether there were any further items to discuss.

Ms. Baysinger said it has become apparent that the Board office did not give Garden City Community School permission to skip the fall ISAT. She said staff would need to do additional research to discover what actually occurred.

Chairman Hammond adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

