

Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education

Evaluation Report
January 2012

Office of Performance Evaluations
Idaho Legislature



Report 12-01

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Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education

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Office of Performance Evaluations

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January 13, 2012

Members
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Last March, you directed us to identify barriers to postsecondary education in Idaho. Our report discusses access, readiness, and affordability as the three most common barriers. The report also highlights key data limitations that the State Board of Education will have to overcome in order to accurately establish a baseline of Idaho's current levels of educational attainment and to measure progress toward achieving its 60 percent postsecondary education goal.

The Governor, the Board of Education, and the Albertson Foundation support our recommendation to have a statewide counselor who would be able to better coordinate academic and career counseling information and activities for students and families. We also recommend a stronger focus on need-based scholarships and more data-driven decisions when determining the dollar amount and criteria for state-funded scholarships. In its response to our report, legislative Budget and Policy Analysis supports our recommendation in light of concerns with the current management of scholarship funds.

Ultimately, efforts to reduce barriers will fall short in achieving the intended purpose if students in Idaho are unable to find relevant employment upon completing postsecondary education. Despite a multitude of efforts, Idaho lacks a comprehensive, statewide strategy to clearly link educational outcomes with employment needs. Strategies for moving forward rest in the hands of policymakers and will require coordination among education, labor, and business leaders.

Responses from the Governor, the Board of Education, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, legislative Budget and Policy Analysis, and the Albertson Foundation underscore the importance of the issues discussed in the report (see pages 67–79). We thank each of them for their assistance during our study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rakesh Mohan".

Rakesh Mohan

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Executive Summary

Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education

Postsecondary education is a major focus in Idaho and throughout the country. Idaho's State Board of Education recently set a goal that 60 percent of adults between the ages of 25 and 34 will have a college degree or certificate by the year 2020. Currently, just a third of Idaho residents have an associate's degree or higher. To understand why, we found that barriers to postsecondary education in Idaho generally fall into three major areas: access, academic readiness, and affordability. These barriers play a significant role not only in the decisions students and families make, but also in the success of reaching the 60 percent goal.

Access, academic readiness, and affordability are major barriers to postsecondary education.

In addition to overcoming barriers to postsecondary education, a statewide comprehensive strategy is needed to match the right types of postsecondary education with the right types of employment opportunities. Of the students we surveyed, 31 percent of respondents listed the likelihood of getting a job once they complete additional education as one of the greatest challenges when making decisions about postsecondary education. In fact, employment projections suggest that the majority of jobs in Idaho will continue to be those requiring less than an associate's degree. Better linking education and employment will not only encourage students to "go on," but also give them the opportunities they need to stay in Idaho once they complete their education.

A comprehensive strategy will help produce the right types of graduates for the right types of jobs in Idaho.

Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education Will Require Better Access and Affordability for Idaho Students

For students who are interested in pursuing education beyond high school, we found a wide range of barriers that affect their ability to successfully pursue postsecondary education. Both national literature and our survey results categorized barriers in three main areas: college access, academic readiness, and affordability. Because the Department of Education has already taken steps to

improve college readiness through initiatives such as the development of common core standards and dual credit scholarships, our study focused primarily on barriers related to college access and affordability.

Preparation for postsecondary education should begin early; national literature suggests that intervention of students for college and career readiness needs to occur as early as elementary school. School counselors play an integral role in preparing students for education beyond high school. However, we found two challenges that hinder Idaho's ability to facilitate early interventions: a lack of a statewide counselor coordinator and a student-to-counselor ratio that exceeds national guidelines.

Recommendation: The Department of Education should have a dedicated position to serve as a liaison between all K–12 counselors to facilitate communication and training efforts and ensure information is provided to counselors accurately and timely. The department should also take steps to reduce student-to-counselor ratios (for additional details, see recommendations 2.1 and 2.2).

Increasing college access is just one method to reduce barriers to postsecondary education. Among our neighboring states, Idaho ranks the lowest in terms of state and local financial aid per student. In fact, the ability to pay for college was consistently identified by our survey respondents and national literature as the most common barrier to pursuing postsecondary education. Whether it is access to financial aid and scholarships or insufficient grant amounts, paying for postsecondary education is a significant concern expressed to us by both counselors and students.

Recommendation: The State Board of Education should work with the Legislature to increase the amount of need-based aid either through the creation of new scholarships or the reallocation of existing funds. The board should also analyze outcome data of scholarship recipients to better assess the impact scholarships have on the completion of postsecondary degrees and certificates (for additional details, see recommendations 3.1 and 4.3).

More Comprehensive Data Will Allow the Board to Establish an Accurate Baseline of Current Education Levels in Idaho

Before the board can measure progress in reaching its education goals, it must first set a baseline that accurately establishes Idaho's current levels of educational attainment. The board's newly set education goal will include degrees and certificates that take at least one academic year to complete. However, we found that current data collection methods do not include all

institutions and schools that offer these types of degrees and certificates. More importantly, national data does not report a level of detail that will provide the board with sufficient information to accurately gauge how many individuals have a degree or certificate that meets the board's criteria.

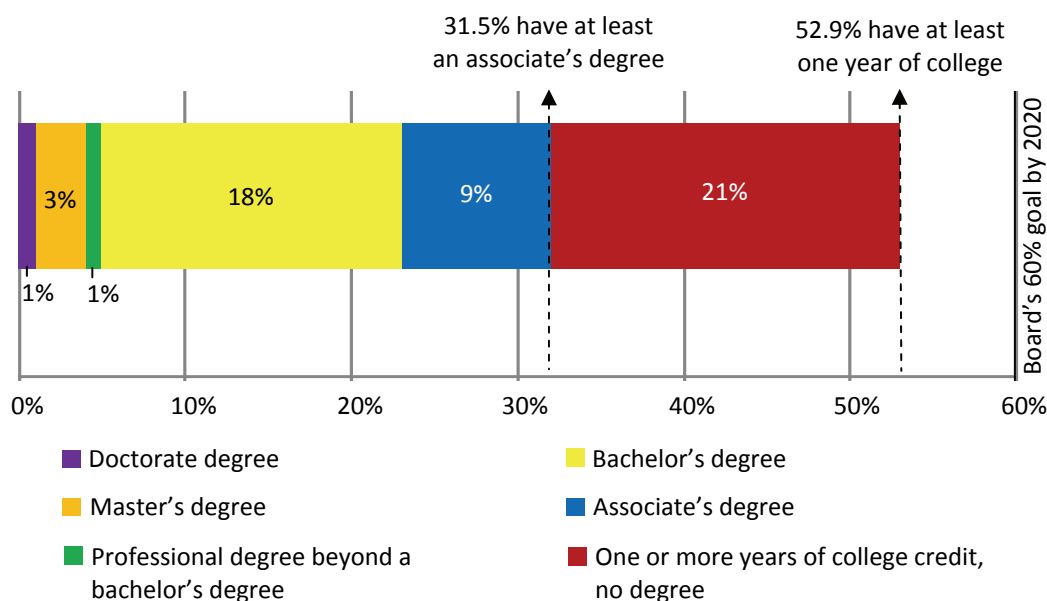
The board does not have a way to establish a baseline of current education levels.

As shown in exhibit E.1, we found that 52.9 percent of 25–34 year olds have one year or more of college. While not all of those individuals have a degree or certificate, many of them likely do. By taking steps to more comprehensively measure all levels of education offered in Idaho, the board may find that Idaho is much closer to reaching its education goal.

In addition to not capturing all levels of education, the Board of Education does not account for students who enroll in private institutions or institutions outside of Idaho. Given that the board's outreach efforts to increase college access are intended for all K–12 students, following the students who enroll in other institutions will provide the board with more accurate information on how many students are pursuing postsecondary education, regardless of their destination. For example, in our review of postsecondary enrollment data for nine school districts, including the Boise

Of the districts we sampled, nearly 30 percent of students would not be included in existing data collection methods.

EXHIBIT E.1 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF IDAHOANS 25–34 YEARS OLD, 2010



Source: Analysis of data from the 2010 American Community Survey.

Note: Percentages may not sum because of rounding. Eight percent of Idahoans have some college but less than one year. This eight percent was excluded from the graph to align with the board's definition of counting only postsecondary credentials of a year or more for the 60 percent goal.

School District, we found that 29 percent of those students would not be captured using the board's current approach.

Recommendation: To help ensure the State Board of Education's 60 percent goal is achieved, the board should take steps to account for all Idaho students pursuing postsecondary education. As it moves forward establishing a baseline and measuring progress, the board should answer the following questions (for additional details, see recommendation 4.1):

1. Which institutions or schools, both public and private, offer degrees or certificate programs that take at least one year to complete?
2. Are those institutions or schools currently reporting data to the Board of Education? If not, how will those certificates and degrees be included in measuring progress toward reaching its goal?
3. Given these considerations, what data will the board use to determine the state's current baseline of educational attainment and to measure progress in meeting its goal?

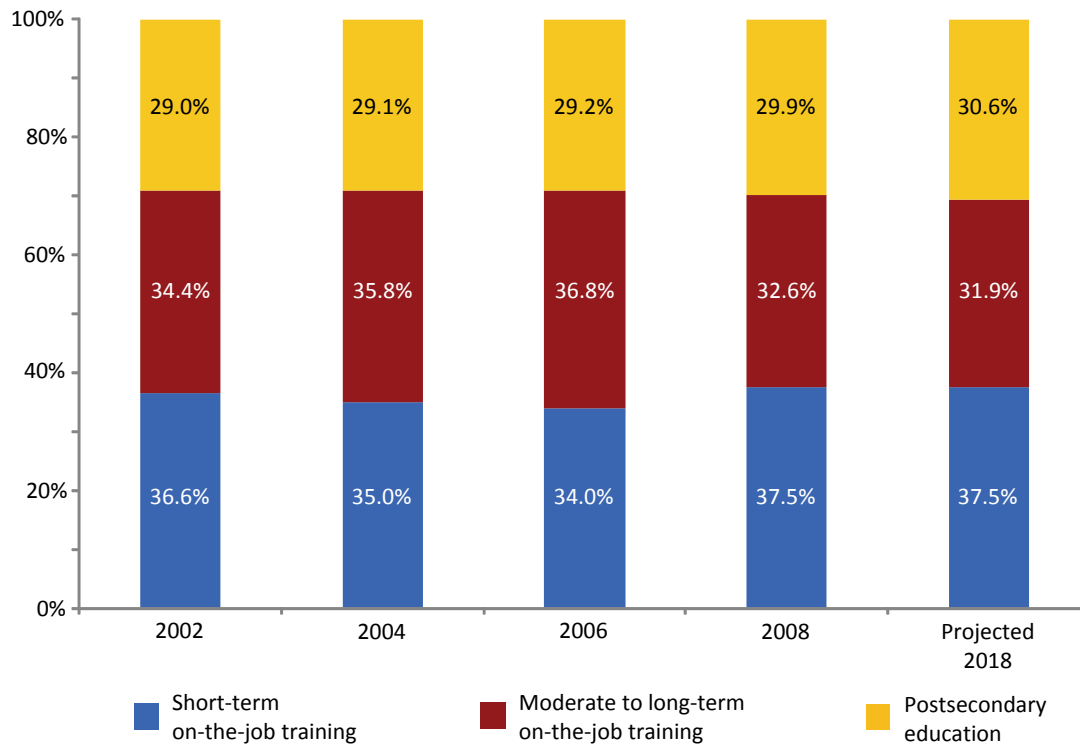
Successfully Linking Education and Employment Will Depend on a Coordinated Long-Term Strategy

Even when students are able to overcome barriers and successfully complete postsecondary education, an uncertain labor market can make employment in relevant fields challenging for recent graduates. According to a study through the University of Idaho, Idaho has continued to grow in low-wage, low-skill jobs over the past ten years.¹ As shown in exhibit E.2, the percentage of jobs in Idaho requiring postsecondary education has changed little over the past ten years. According to 2018 projections, the exhibit also suggests that Idaho's overall workforce needs will not change significantly over the next decade.

There is much to be done for Idaho to reach its education goal. The Board of Education has taken preliminary steps by creating a framework called Complete College Idaho. To support the 60 percent goal, the board has also tasked the public institutions with increasing the number of degrees awarded. However, neither of these efforts have yet identified a specific strategy on how to increase the number of students who graduate with a degree or certificate in a way that would meet the needs of the projected labor market.

¹ Cooke and Kulandaisamy, vol. 40, no. 1, "Wage Divergence between the Rocky Mountain States and the U.S.: Idaho Measures and Sources, 2001–2009," *The Review of Regional Studies* (2010): 99–124.

EXHIBIT E.2 EDUCATION OR TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF IDAHO JOBS, 2002–2018



Source: Analysis of data provided by the Idaho Department of Labor, *Occupations by Education or Training Level-Statewide, 2002–2018*.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

In moving forward, a long-term strategy should consider the following questions:

- Should Idaho first increase the number of college graduates in order to attract employers that require a more educated workforce?
- Does Idaho need to first attract the employers requiring an educated workforce in order to incentivize more students to pursue postsecondary education?
- Should coordinated education and employment initiatives take place simultaneously?

Recommendation: The State Board of Education and the Department of Labor, along with other relevant education and workforce stakeholders, should more formally coordinate their efforts to help ensure that Idaho is producing the number and types of degrees that best align with workforce needs (for additional details, see recommendations 5.1 and 5.2).

Acknowledgements

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance we received from the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and the J. A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation.

We also appreciate the assistance we received from the TRIO staff and students throughout the state.

Amy Lorenzo and Bryon Welch of the Office of Performance Evaluations conducted this study. Margaret Campbell was copy editor and desktop publisher.

Dr. Kathleen Sullivan, professor and former director of the Center for Education Research and Evaluation at the University of Mississippi, conducted the quality control review.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Legislative Interest and Study Focus

The successful pursuit of postsecondary education, which is any education beyond high school, is an important issue in Idaho and throughout the country. Unfortunately, Idaho continues to rank behind the national average in terms of the education level of its residents.¹ Legislators have expressed concerns about Idaho's low "go-on" rate and want to learn more about which barriers students and their families currently face in making decisions about education beyond high school.

Approximately one-third of Idaho residents age 25 years and older have an associate's degree or higher.

Our study was designed to identify current barriers, acknowledge current efforts to reduce barriers, and recommend ways to build on existing work. As part of our study, we evaluated how the State Board of Education defines and measures postsecondary education and then examined the board's recently set goal that "60 percent of Idahoans between the age of 25 and 34 will have a college degree or certificate by the year 2020." We then evaluated how well this goal aligns with the state's employment projections. By examining more closely the goal's relationship with those projections, policymakers can consider whether a lack of employment opportunities impacts the number of students who pursue education beyond high school or leave Idaho upon completing their education.

To maintain a manageable study scope, which is in appendix A, our evaluation focused primarily on barriers to college access, academic readiness, and affordability. Two other important issues, early childhood development and college completion, were not part of this study but could be considered for a future evaluation.

The Board of Education has recently set a goal to increase the education level of Idaho residents.

¹ The percentage of adults age 25 years and older with an associate's degree or more is 35.8 percent for the US and 32.7 percent for Idaho. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010.

Methodology

The decision to pursue education beyond high school takes into consideration multiple factors. To better understand those factors, our evaluation included a variety of methods:

- Conducted a focus group of 18 TRIO students from the Treasure Valley to brainstorm about which barriers students currently face in planning for postsecondary education and to seek input about development of the student surveys²
- Met with staff at the Public Policy Center at Boise State University about survey methodology
- Surveyed 28 TRIO staff who work directly with middle and high school students to increase college access
- Surveyed 72 school counselors from all six education regions about their perceptions of barriers currently facing high school students and their families
- Surveyed 710 middle (or junior high, depending on the district) and high school students throughout the state to better understand the challenges they are currently facing in making postsecondary education decisions³
- Surveyed recent high school graduates about their postsecondary education plans, but the response rate was too low to include the results in this report
- Reviewed several large initiatives underway in Idaho, such as the Career Information System, the College Access Challenge Grant, GEAR UP, and TRIO, designed to reduce barriers to postsecondary education, including the types of students generally served and the funding sources of those efforts
- Participated in a two-day forum sponsored by the Lumina Foundation to learn more about college access efforts underway in other states
- Worked with the J. A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation to learn more about its various education initiatives in Idaho
- Attended a meeting of the Northwest Career College Foundation
- Analyzed data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse for nine Idaho school districts on where their high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions across the country

² TRIO is a federally funded outreach program designed to target students who are at risk of not pursuing postsecondary education.

³ Survey respondents are current participants in at least one TRIO program.

- Reviewed national and Idaho historical labor data and projections for overall job growth and the growth of occupations requiring postsecondary education
- Interviewed Idaho stakeholders in workforce development including staff at the Department of Commerce, the Department of Labor, the Division of Professional-Technical Education, the Division of Financial Management, the Bureau of Occupational Licenses, and the Idaho Business Coalition for Education Excellence
- Attended a seminar at the University of Idaho and interviewed Dr. Stephen Cooke about his 2010 study *Wage Divergence between the Rocky Mountain States and the U.S.: Idaho Measure and Source, 2001–2009* to better understand his analysis of historical data and context about Idaho’s labor market
- Interviewed stakeholders about educational attainment, including staff at the State Board of Education (including the president and vice president of the board), the Department of Education, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, legislative Budget and Policy Analysis, ACT, and the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

Literature Review

To supplement the original data that we collected through surveys and interviews with various stakeholders, we conducted a review of national literature identifying research and data on barriers to postsecondary education. Below are several examples of the literature we used from credible and nationally recognized organizations:

- The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Measuring Up* (2008)
- National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, *National Postsecondary Enrollment Trends* (2011)
- National Conference of State Legislators, *The Path to a Degree: A Legislator’s Guide to College Access and Success* (2009)
- Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018* (2010)
- College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, *The College Completion Agenda* (2010)

- American College Testing (ACT), *The Condition of College and Career Readiness* (2011)
- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Benchmarks: WICHE Region* (2011)

Data Sources

In addition to the literature review, we gathered data from several national sources that provide statistics on various postsecondary education themes. Below are examples of these sources:

- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
- The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
- College Board (SAT)
- American College Testing (ACT)
- US Census, American Community Survey (ACS)
- National Student Clearinghouse

Report Organization

We have organized the rest of our report into four chapters:

Chapter 2 identifies some of the common barriers students are facing when making decisions about postsecondary education, both at the national level and within Idaho. Barriers specific to Idaho students were identified through surveys of students, counselors and TRIO staff across the state. The chapter has recommendations to strengthen the role of counselors increasing college access.

Chapter 3 outlines some of the efforts currently underway in Idaho through a variety of entities to reduce barriers and increase college access. The chapter provides recommendations to strengthen current efforts and provides considerations for legislators when they are making decisions about the state's role in funding postsecondary education outreach efforts.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the board's current education goal including its initial strategies to meet the goal and the data it uses to measure its progress in reaching the goal. The chapter has recommendations to improve outcome data and better measure progress in reaching the board goal.

Chapter 5 examines the relationship between the state's education goals and its employment projections and has recommendations for policymakers in creating an educated workforce that best meets our state's employment needs.

Chapter 2

Identifying Barriers

In our review of national literature, we identified numerous barriers to postsecondary education. However, national data alone does not provide sufficient context to understand the prevalence of specific barriers in Idaho. To better understand that context, we collected a wide range of stakeholder input and found that many of the barriers identified in the national literature align with the barriers in Idaho. For the purposes of this report, we are highlighting three major barriers according to national literature and Idaho stakeholders: college access, academic readiness, and affordability.

Our report highlights three major barriers: access, academic readiness, and affordability.

Stakeholder Input Is Key to Identifying Barriers in Idaho

One of the major components of our study was gaining stakeholder perspectives on factors that students must consider as they progress through high school. We received input from counselors, TRIO staff, and current middle and high school students that helped inform our findings.¹ Appendix B lists the complete results of our surveys.

Counselors and TRIO Staff

We surveyed school counselors from across the state during an annual meeting of the Idaho School Counselor Association. We also surveyed TRIO staff who work with students in middle and high schools. Our goal with these surveys was to identify the most common barriers to postsecondary education according to counselors and TRIO staff. Collectively, we received responses from 100 individuals representing schools from all six education regions and both urban and rural districts.²

¹ TRIO is a federally funded program that offers 24 programs to over 7,000 students and adults in Idaho. This program will be described in more detail in chapter 3.

² We surveyed 28 TRIO staff and 72 school counselors.

The TRIO staff and the school counselors were asked to identify the barriers their students encounter when making decisions about postsecondary education. According to the responses we received, the most common barriers are

1. the ability to pay for college (affordability),
2. little or no parental support (access),
3. fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations (readiness),
4. poor academic performance while in high school (readiness), and
5. family or other obligations (access).

The top three barriers that TRIO staff and counselors identified align with the issues identified by national literature: college access, academic readiness, and affordability.

Our survey results
aligned with
national literature.

The counselors and TRIO staff we surveyed also stated that barriers to postsecondary education have changed over time. Because of the economic recession, today more than ever, the affordability of college has become a barrier to many families. Rising tuition costs and insufficient scholarships amounts have all had an effect on families being able to afford postsecondary education. Counselors also noted another barrier is the large amount of student debt that some students have to take on to fund their postsecondary education.

A lack of parental and family support was mentioned frequently as one of the most common barriers that counselors observe. This lack of support includes insufficient education on the parents' part to help their children properly prepare and navigate the college and financial aid application process as well as a lack of parental involvement in their children's academic work. However, many counselors mentioned that this barrier could be one of the easiest to overcome if parents were more involved in and concerned with their child's education at an earlier age.

When asked what can be done to help overcome these barriers, counselors and TRIO staff offered various solutions. Some solutions included an increase in scholarship money, lower student-to-counselor ratios, career and college counseling at a younger age, an increase in the number of professional-technical programs, and a reduction in the cost of higher education.

Students Currently in Secondary Education

We surveyed more than 700 middle and high school students and asked them to identify the barriers influencing their postsecondary education decisions.³ According to respondents, the most common challenges they are facing when

³ Survey respondents are current participants in at least one TRIO program.

making decisions about their postsecondary education are generally associated with financial constraints. Exhibit 2.1 highlights our survey results.

In addition to financial challenges, another common barrier students identified is concerns about finding employment once postsecondary education is complete. In chapter 5, we discuss the relationship between education and the job market, and provide recommendations to improve the coordination between education and labor stakeholders to better meet employment and student needs.

Comparison of Survey Results Among Groups

The survey results of counselors, TRIO staff, and students have several similarities. For example, counselors, TRIO staff, and students all responded that the most common barrier to pursuing postsecondary education is the ability to pay for college. However, the respondents differed on other barriers. The barriers that counselors ranked high in our survey, after the ability to pay for college, were the lack of family support and academic preparedness. Students responded that access to financial aid and scholarships were also barriers.

These findings highlight the reality that the ability to pay for college is by far the greatest barrier to overcome when making decisions about pursuing postsecondary education. Whether it is access to financial aid and scholarships

EXHIBIT 2.1 MOST COMMONLY IDENTIFIED BARRIERS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

When thinking about education after high school, what are the top three challenges you face in making decisions? (N=672)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents ^a
Ability to pay for college	557	83
Access to financial aid, such as grants or loans	226	34
Access to scholarships	208	31
Likelihood of getting a job once I complete additional education	205	31
Insufficient scholarship amounts	165	25
Fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations	164	24
Poor academic performance while in high school	141	21
Family or other obligations	102	15
Lack of support from my parents or family	83	12
Lack of interest in attending college	76	11

Source: Office of Performance Evaluations survey of middle and high school students, November 2011.

^a Totals will not sum to 100 because respondents could select more than one response.

Ability to pay for college was identified as the most common barrier to pursuing postsecondary education.

or insufficient grant amounts, paying for postsecondary education weighs heavily on the minds of both counselors and students. Our survey results, combined with the findings in national literature, highlight the prevalence of access, readiness, and affordability as major challenges that students in Idaho encounter.

An Inadequate Student Support Network Can Negatively Affect College Access

Parents and school counselors play an important role in laying the foundation for students to continue their education beyond high school. Often, this role is different from the role teachers provide in ensuring that students are prepared to meet the academic demands of postsecondary education. Parents and counselors play a much more direct role in ensuring that access to postsecondary education is available and in providing the necessary support network that students need to experience success. Without adequate parental involvement and support from

Sufficient parental and counselor involvement is key to improving college access for students.

trained counselors, students are often faced with navigating the complex college preparation and entrance processes alone.

Parental Support

A lack of parental support, which includes parental involvement, can create barriers for students and their families in understanding the complex college admission and financial aid process. For example, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) depends on parents sharing financial information with their child.⁴ National events such as College Goal Sunday are intended to educate families on how to apply for federal financial aid.

According to the American Council on Education, many students who are eligible to receive federal financial aid through the FAFSA program never receive the award because they never applied for financial aid. Unfortunately, many of the FAFSA events held in Idaho have had little public participation; participation during the 2010–2011 school year was lower than the prior year. Of the 672 high school students who responded to our question asking what college access programs they have participated in, only 17 students (2.5 percent) responded to participating in the FAFSA completion day.

⁴ The FAFSA process determines financial need for each student based on income and other family information. It determines the amount of financial aid, such as federal need-based grants and student loans, for which each student qualifies.

Counselors said that the lack of parental support is a barrier that some students have to overcome if they wish to pursue postsecondary education. Eleven percent of counselors and 13 percent of TRIO staff identified lack of family support as one of the hardest barriers that students have to overcome. Without a supportive network of family or concerned adults, students often get frustrated with trying to gain access to postsecondary education.

In a survey of college-bound high school seniors conducted by the College Board, nearly 30 percent of respondents said that they desired more parental involvement in the college search process. For those students who had lower SAT scores and lower household incomes, this figure increased to more than 40 percent. In another study by ACT, students identified parents as the adult most helpful in exploring education, training, and work options after high school.

National literature also suggests that intervention of students for college and careers needs to occur as early as elementary school. Research from ACT found that access to college and careers can be improved when behaviors are developed at the upper elementary and middle school grades that are known to contribute to successful academic performance. In order for students to be able to be properly prepared to take college preparatory courses in high school, the foundation must be established before that student enters high school, and those outreach efforts should take place in the upper elementary grades and in middle school.

Outreach efforts involving parents should begin as early as elementary school.

Student-to-Counselor Ratios

Traditionally, high school teachers and counselors have played a major role in educating students about the necessary steps to properly prepare and succeed in education beyond high school. Even middle school counselors play an important role to ensure that students complete the proper courses so that college preparatory classes can be taken in high school. Counselors, especially those focused on career and college counseling, help students and parents navigate college admissions and the preparation process. To help families effectively, counselors must have adequate time and resources.

In 2009–2010, Idaho’s student-to-counselor ratio was 447:1, slightly below the national average of 459:1 but nearly double the American School Counselor Association’s recommendation of 250:1, as shown in exhibit 2.2. Idaho’s student-to-counselor ratio increased from the 2008–2009 academic year when the ratio was 434:1. This increase may be due in part to the way counselors are funded. Counselors in Idaho may be paid through discretionary funds; as that money is reduced, so is the district’s capacity to pay for counselors. While the ratio does not quantify the quality of the counseling that occurs in Idaho, it raises questions as to whether counselors have enough time to spend with students on career and college readiness.

**EXHIBIT 2.2 NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER K–12 COUNSELOR, SCHOOL YEAR
2009–2010**

	<u>Students Per Counselor</u>
ASCA recommendation	250
Idaho	447
Montana	302
Nevada	493
Oregon	540
Utah	711
Washington	505
Wyoming	183
US average	459

Source: American School Counselor Association.

Idaho's student-to-counselor ratio exceeds national standards.

As noted in exhibit 2.2, several of Idaho's neighboring states also have counselor ratios above the recommended standard established by the American School Counselor Association. We recognize that for Idaho, reaching the ratio of 250:1 is a daunting task; however, nearly half of all states have ratios lower than Idaho and some incremental steps can be taken to decrease Idaho's ratio.

When we surveyed school counselors, we asked them approximately how much time they spend talking with students about college readiness and college access as well as career placement. Of those that responded to this question, 51 percent said that they spend 25 percent or less of their time counseling students on college readiness and college access, and 63 percent said that they spend 25 percent or less of their time counseling students about career placement. We heard from several Idaho counselors that their job duties are moving away from career and college counseling and centering more on noncounseling tasks such as test administration. According to our student survey, roughly 46 percent of respondents are not aware of or do not have access to college and career counseling at their schools.

Statewide Counselor Coordinator

Idaho lacks a statewide comprehensive school counseling coordinator at the Department of Education. The department has several program managers that focus on programs, such as special education and school safety, but no specific person assigned to college and career readiness.⁵ Through the College Access Challenge Grant, which is discussed in chapter 3, the board is developing a

⁵ The Division of Professional-Technical Education has a federally funded career guidance counselor who serves students in grades seven and up within its programs but whose position is not designed to work with administrators and counselors statewide.

statewide counselor training program. However, these efforts are in their first year of implementation and only involve a small number of counselors.

Idaho does not have a statewide K–12 counselor coordinator.

In addition to our survey, several stakeholders expressed concern that counselors are being overlooked and under-appreciated because a statewide advocate or coordinator does not exist. Having a department individual who could coordinate all of the various programs that counselors often manage would help in the communication and collaboration between school administrators and counselors. By working with the department and districts, a state-level counselor coordinator could help ensure students' needs are properly addressed.

Lack of Academic Readiness Is a Barrier to Postsecondary Education

Of the students we surveyed, 41 percent of respondents identified academic readiness as one of the challenges they face in making decisions about postsecondary education. Survey respondents identified either poor academic performance in high school or fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations as concerns.

Additionally, many of the TRIO staff and school counselors we surveyed also identified a lack of academic readiness as a barrier to postsecondary education for the students they work with. Sixty-two percent of respondents identified either poor academic performance in high school or fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations as barriers to postsecondary education.

41 percent of students surveyed expressed concerns about academic performance, both at the high school and postsecondary levels.

Despite these concerns, one measure for academic readiness, college entrance exam scores, indicates Idaho students perform well. For the purposes of our study, we looked at the ACT and the SAT scores.⁶ In 2010, 10,647 Idaho students took the ACT exam and 3,336 took the SAT exam. Idaho students generally scored better than the national average in both tests. However, because not all students have been required to take an entrance exam and those students who choose to take college entrance exams are often a self-selected group who are more academically prepared than the general public, current scores may not be an accurate representation of Idaho's overall academic readiness.

⁶ Other more career-specific exams, such as the COMPASS Test, were not part of our evaluation.

ACT

The ACT measures college readiness in four subjects: English, mathematics, reading, and science. Benchmark scores, the minimum scores needed for each subject, indicate that students could have a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B grade or higher or a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C grade or higher in corresponding college freshman courses.

As shown in exhibit 2.3, the percentage of students in Idaho meeting all four benchmarks is increasing and has been higher than the national average since 2008.

EXHIBIT 2.3 PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING ALL FOUR ACT BENCHMARK SCORES IN READING, ENGLISH, MATH, AND SCIENCE , 2007–2011

Year	Idaho (%)	US (%)
2007	22	23
2008	23	22
2009	24	23
2010	26	24
2011	26	25

Source: American College Testing (ACT), *ACT Profile Report: Graduating Class* (2011-Idaho).

Note: A benchmark score is the minimum score needed on an ACT subject area test to indicate a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding college courses.

SAT

The College Board, the organization that designs the SAT exam, has recently established a college readiness benchmark score. For the SAT, a benchmark composite score of 1500 indicates a 65 percent probability of earning a first year postsecondary GPA of 2.67 (B-) or higher.⁷ In 2010, Idaho students outperformed the overall group means in all three subjects, as shown in exhibit 2.4. The mean scores also rank above the SAT benchmark scores, both for the composite score and the section scores.

Although the number of students who take the SAT in Idaho is much lower than those who take the ACT, beginning with the class of 2013, all Idaho high school

⁷ The composite benchmark score is most widely used to allow for some variation in performance across subject areas. Benchmark scores for each of the three subject area sections of the SAT (critical reading, mathematics, and writing) were set at 500 for each section.

EXHIBIT 2.4 SAT MEAN SCORES, GRADUATING SENIORS, 2010

Subject Area	Mean Score Idaho	Mean Score National	Benchmark Score
Critical Reading	543	501	500
Mathematics	541	516	500
Writing	517	492	500
Composite	1601	1509	1500

Source: The College Board, *2010 College-Bound Seniors: State Profile Report* (Idaho).

Note: 3,336 seniors in the class of 2010 in Idaho took the SAT exam. Nationally, 1,547,990 college bound seniors in the class of 2010 took the SAT. A benchmark score is the minimum SAT composite score needed to indicate a 65 percent probability of earning a first-year postsecondary GPA of 2.67 (B-) or higher.

juniors will be required to take at least one college entrance exam, with the state paying for students to take the SAT during the school day. Requiring all students to take an exam will help the state in several ways: (1) broaden the pool of students who take a college entrance exam and allow teachers and policymakers to better assess the college readiness of the entire student population, not just those who had previously elected to take a test; (2) remove the barrier of cost for taking a college admission exam for many students who may otherwise not be able to afford it; (3) relieve parents of scheduling conflicts with exam dates because the exam will be taken during school. The ACT exam will continue to be offered to Idaho students who elect to pay and take the exam on their own.

As more Idaho students take college entrance exams, the overall scores are likely to temporarily decrease.

Policymakers and educators should keep in mind, however, that by drastically increasing the number of students taking the SAT, mean scores in Idaho are likely to decrease initially. This decrease will be caused by a change in demographics of the test takers. Currently, students taking both the ACT and the SAT are a self-selected group that already have an interest in college and are more likely to have scores that are high enough to be considered for college admission.

Tuition Costs and Insufficient Financial Aid Make College Less Affordable

Both national literature and our survey results indicate the cost of postsecondary education is one of the biggest barriers to students who continue their education beyond high school. Idaho's public institutions generally have lower tuition costs than other states but still rank poorly in terms of how tuition compares with state income. In addition, the burden of significant student loans and a lack of sufficient state-funded financial aid affect students' ability to pursue education beyond high school.

Tuition

The national average for annual tuition and fees at two-year institutions is \$2,963 for the 2011–2012 academic school year. By comparison, the tuition and fees at Idaho’s four public two-year institutions ranged from \$1,932 to \$3,264, three of which were less than the national average. Idaho’s four public four-year institutions are also less expensive when compared with the national average. The national average in school year 2011–2012 is \$8,244 in tuition and fees. In Idaho, the tuition costs ranged from \$5,348 to \$5,856.

Despite these lower costs, postsecondary education continues to be financially challenging for many Idaho students. When considering the affordability of postsecondary education, personal and family income can be an indicator of how difficult conditions are for some to finance postsecondary education. According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, from 1999 to 2009, the percentage of change in tuition as compared with the median family income at Idaho’s public four-year and two-year postsecondary institutions has been sizable. While median family income has increased less than 10 percent, tuition has increased by more than 50 percent.

Despite low tuition costs, postsecondary education in Idaho may not be affordable for some students.

The Measuring Up report, released by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education in 2008, graded each state on several performance categories including affordability. Idaho, along with most of the nation, scored an F on how affordable higher education is for students and their families. The report noted that higher education in Idaho has become less affordable over time, specifically for poor and working class families. These families, on average, must pay about 34 percent of their income for costs associated with higher education at public four-year colleges, even after factoring financial aid.⁸

Exhibit 2.5 shows the median household income and average tuition costs at public two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions in Idaho and neighboring states. Among its neighbors, Idaho ranks near the bottom for median income and ranks in the middle for the percentage of median household income that tuition costs represent. Consequently, college in Idaho may not be more affordable than some of its neighboring states, despite the low tuition costs.

⁸ Higher education costs listed in the Measuring Up report include tuition, room, and board.

EXHIBIT 2.5 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2010, AS COMPARED WITH AVERAGE YEARLY TUITION COSTS PER STATE, SCHOOL YEAR 2010–2011

	Median Household Income (\$)	Public Two-Year Institutions		Public Four-Year Institutions	
		Tuition and Fees (\$)	Percentage of Income (%)	Tuition and Fees (\$)	Percentage of Income (%)
Idaho	43,490	2,405	5.5	5,279	12.1
Montana	42,666	3,267	7.7	5,165	12.1
Nevada	51,001	2,243	4.4	4,937	9.7
Oregon	46,560	3,720	8.0	7,242	15.6
Utah	54,744	2,783	5.1	4,708	8.6
Washington	55,631	3,355	6.0	7,567	13.6
Wyoming	53,512	2,152	4.0	3,927	7.3
US	50,046	2,713	5.4	7,605	15.2

Sources: Analysis of data from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), *Benchmarks: 2010*, and the US Census Bureau, *2010 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates, Selected Economic Characteristics*.

State-Funded Financial Aid

The amount of state aid that Idaho students receive is significantly lower than the amount of aid they receive from federal and institutional sources. Exhibit 2.6 displays the average amount that postsecondary students received in financial aid in Idaho, as well as neighboring states and nationally. As shown, Idaho students receive most of their financial aid in the form of student loans, followed by institutional grant aid, federal grant aid, and then state and local grant aid. When Idaho is compared with other Rocky Mountain states or even nationally, the average amount that a student receives in state and local aid is drastically lower. Of its neighboring states, Idaho ranks the lowest in the amount of state and local aid provided per student. Chapter 3 provides information on one type of state aid—state-funded scholarships.

Among neighboring states, Idaho ranks the lowest in the amount of state and local aid awarded per student.

**EXHIBIT 2.6 AVERAGE AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL AID RECEIVED PER STUDENT
ENROLLED IN FALL 2008**

	Federal Grants (\$)	State and Local Grants (\$)	Institutional Grants (\$)	Student Loans (\$)
Idaho	3,561	641	3,806	5,547
Colorado	3,700	1,909	4,318	6,836
Montana	3,434	1,757	4,835	5,459
Nevada	3,402	1,717	2,266	6,992
Oregon	3,667	2,103	6,117	6,195
Utah	3,354	2,955	3,209	5,727
Washington	4,240	3,177	7,308	6,625
Wyoming	3,784	3,691	3,532	10,373
Rocky Mountain region	3,588	1,971	3,964	6,538
United States	3,846	2,686	7,099	6,973

Source: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), *State Data Center: Financial Aid (2008–2009)*.

Note: Students are defined as full-time, first-time, degree or certificate-seeking undergraduates. The Rocky Mountain region includes Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming. Grants constitute all types of financial aid, including merit and need-based aid. Fall 2008 was the most recent year data was available.

Recommendations

Intent: A state-level counselor coordinator can provide support and guidance to all K–12 counselors. This position can serve as a liaison between districts and the Department of Education to ensure college and career information is communicated accurately and timely and represents counselors at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Recommendation 2.1: The Department of Education should have a dedicated position to serve as a statewide K–12 counselor coordinator. This person would spearhead communication efforts at the state level and coordinate training for all school counselors across the state, particularly related to college and career information.

Intent: A lower student-to-counselor ratio will assist counselors in spending more time advising students on issues such as postsecondary education and career readiness.

Recommendation 2.2: The Department of Education should take steps to decrease the student-to-counselor ratio, particularly for those positions that provide education and career counseling.

Chapter 3

Current Efforts

Chapter 2 identified some of the common barriers to pursuing postsecondary education. Throughout our evaluation, we found examples of current efforts to improve college readiness, to increase college access, and to reduce financial barriers when making decisions about postsecondary education. We also found that many of these efforts rely heavily on federal funds and are housed within different agencies. Concerns have been raised about the sustainability of these efforts without federal grant money or reliance on significant financial support from outside entities such as the J. A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation.

Most outreach efforts in Idaho are federally funded.

Federal Grants Play a Major Role in Efforts to Increase College Access

At the regional, district, and school level, we found numerous examples of outreach efforts designed to reduce barriers to pursuing postsecondary education. However, for the purposes of our study, we focused on efforts that operate on a statewide level or within a federal framework. We found that many of these efforts rely heavily on federal funds, and only one program, TRIO, has been in place long enough to have trend data on program participants. As a result, Idaho does not yet have measurable data on whether other outreach efforts have increased the number of students who pursue postsecondary education.

College Access Challenge Grant

The federal College Access Challenge Grant, which is authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965, is designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared for postsecondary education. The grant was initially awarded in Idaho in 2008 and is housed within the State Board of Education. The grant outlines nine major initiatives:

1. Increase students' ability to successfully complete the coursework required for a postsecondary degree (through dual credit or concurrent enrollment scholarships)

2. Increase schools' ability to provide coursework preparing students for postsecondary work (through alternative delivery systems)
3. Increase knowledge and skills for high school counselors and postsecondary financial aid and admissions counselors in facilitating students' participation in postsecondary education
4. Increase the knowledge and skill for K–12 school counselors to assist students and families preparing for high school and planning for postsecondary education (including development of a toolkit)
5. Increase the number of students completing the FAFSA
6. Assist students in career exploration, postsecondary planning, and financial literacy and increase the use of the Idaho Career Information System (CIS) to all regions of Idaho
7. Assist students in career exploration, postsecondary planning, and financial literacy (through a near peer pilot)
8. Conduct outreach activities for students who may be at risk of not enrolling in postsecondary education (through campus visits)
9. Conduct outreach activities for students who may be at risk of not enrolling in postsecondary education (through the establishment of a college access network in Idaho)

The annual federal award for this grant is currently \$1.5 million. The grant can be renewed annually for up to five years. The grant is managed by two employees (one full time and one part time), both of whom are paid with money from the grant. State dollars are not spent for the management and implementation of the grant's initiatives; in general, the public postsecondary institutions provide matching funds.

According to an August 2011 interim review, the grant is behind schedule in three areas: the counselor training module, campus visits, and the development of a statewide college network.¹ The review noted, "Efforts to establish a college access network have not been successful." However, the board has recently entered into a contract with the Idaho Business Coalition for Education Excellence to begin developing this network in early 2012.

¹ The board has partnered with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) to assist in implementation and review the success of current efforts through Idaho's College Access Challenge Grant.

The review also noted that one of the challenges the grant faced was a lack of measureable data to gauge progress. The review recommends reducing the number of initiatives to better focus on certain measures, and recommends revising outcome measures to focus on the effectiveness of each initiative. According to the grant manager, work is underway to find ways to sustain or complete existing efforts.

The review listed several areas of success. For example, from 2009 to 2011, the number of students who received scholarships for dual credit courses increased from 413 to 1,067, representing students in a total of 85 schools. In addition, the board is in the early stages of implementing a near-peer mentor program in two school districts. The program relies on the experiences of recent college graduates to help guide and mentor high school students as they make decisions about postsecondary education. Part of the program success hinges on the fresh perspective of graduates just entering the workforce, so new peers will be hired every one to two years. Although still being piloted, the program mirrors a successful framework currently in place in other states.

The College Access Challenge Grant has increased the number of students receiving dual credit scholarships.

The Board of Education is also in the first year of implementing the Collaborative Counselor Training Initiative. Using a framework created by the Southern Regional Education Board, the program is an online training module for middle and high school counselors to help improve their effectiveness in preparing all students for college. Initial participants of the training program are relatively low in number. Counselors are grouped in cohorts of ten, with a total of four cohorts. Because the program has just recently started, board staff does not yet have outcome data on the usefulness or effectiveness of the program in Idaho.

GEAR UP

The federal Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) initiative was first authorized in 1998 as an amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965. In Idaho, the program is housed within the Department of Education and currently serves students in 20 schools throughout the state. According to its 2011 annual performance report, GEAR UP provided postsecondary counseling and advising to over 5,000 students in the past year. The current grant will be ending in July 2012. However, the department was approved for a new \$23 million grant in October 2011 with plans to provide services to 27 new schools and 6,000 students statewide.

In the past year, GEAR UP provided counseling to over 5,000 students.

GEAR UP's purpose is similar to the objectives of TRIO and the College Access Challenge Grant, but it

provides students with opportunities by using a slightly different approach. Using an early intervention approach in qualifying schools, services begin in the seventh grade and serve every student within a grade level, regardless of economic status.² Under the current grant, these students receive outreach services through high school graduation. Because the initial cohort of students is still in high school, the current grant has not yet followed participating students beyond high school graduation, so Idaho does not yet have a way to determine whether those students were more likely to pursue postsecondary education.³

TRIO

Part of the federal Higher Education Opportunity Act, TRIO is a federally funded outreach program designed to target students who are at risk of not pursuing college. The program works primarily with low-income and first-generation students.⁴ In Idaho, TRIO is funded through grants at five postsecondary institutions: Boise State University, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, North Idaho College, and the University of Idaho.

One of the federal requirements for TRIO participation is that two-thirds of the students must be from low-income families and cannot have a parent who graduated from college. TRIO offers a variety of programs to students from the sixth grade to veterans of any age. For the purposes of our study, we focused on two programs: Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound. These programs help reduce barriers through a variety of services such as developing academic skills, providing information on postsecondary education, and offering assistance on financial aid and the college admission process. According to the 2011 TRIO Fact Book, nearly 90 percent of Upward Bound students in Idaho pursued postsecondary education. We surveyed 710 current TRIO students and found that more than 90 percent of respondents were planning to attend school beyond high school.

TRIO reported that over 90 percent of participants pursued postsecondary education.

The TRIO Fact Book also indicates that the program is funded through approximately \$7 million in federal funds each year. TRIO staff work directly in middle schools and high schools, but they are employees of their postsecondary institution and paid through that institution's grant. TRIO often coordinates with other federally and state-funded programs but does not operate using any state dollars.

² Qualifying schools are those with 50 percent or more of middle school students eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch under the National School Lunch Act.

³ According to the GEAR UP program manager, postsecondary enrollment data will be available for the first cohort of students in the fall of 2012.

⁴ First-generation students are those students for whom neither parent graduated from college.

State-Funded Efforts Are Designed to Increase College Access and Improve College Readiness

State-funded efforts to provide information on college access are primarily housed within the Idaho Department of Labor and provide students with additional information on employment and wages. In terms of college readiness, we found that efforts are already underway in schools and districts to provide more students with more tools to transition into postsecondary education upon graduation from high school.

The Department of Labor houses CIS, Idaho's only comprehensive tool to provide students with education and career information.

College Access

As discussed in chapter 2, a lack of college access is a barrier to both students and families. Of the federal grants we highlighted, each of them contains elements specifically designed to increase college access. In addition to federal grant efforts, we found at least two examples of efforts at the state level to increase awareness about college and provide families with the tools and information to make decisions about postsecondary education. For example, the Career Information System is the only state-funded interactive tool that provides comprehensive education and career information to students beginning as early as elementary school.

Career Information System

Housed in the Department of Labor, the Career Information System (CIS) is designed with middle and high school students in mind. Idaho statute designates CIS as the state's official career information system and describes the system in part as one "to provide current and accurate occupational, educational, and related career information."⁵ One of the few statewide tools not funded through the use of federal grants, it gives students up-to-date information on postsecondary education, employment, and wages. Beginning with junior high and middle school students, the system provides occupation and employment data, as well as links to websites focused on education and training. According to the CIS administrator, several schools in the Boise School District have recently expanded their use of CIS to include elementary schools. The administrator also noted that CIS is used in conjunction with other outreach efforts, including the College Access Challenge Grant, GEAR UP, and TRIO.

The CIS operating budget is currently \$598,100 and is primarily funded from a combination of dedicated funds through the Department of Labor and end-user fees from the schools that pay for additional features of CIS (the basic system is

⁵ IDAHO CODE § 72-1345A.

available free to all Idahoans). Idaho CIS is part of a 21-state consortium. Through the consortium, Idaho has access to extensive education and employment information in other states, including several neighboring states.

According to the administrator, CIS helps to meet Idaho's education goals in several ways, such as meeting state and federal career development standards and meeting requirements outlined in federal mandates. For example, Idaho statute requires that all students in the eighth grade develop parent-approved learning plans for high school and post-high school options.⁶ The course planner component of the CIS portfolio starts as early as sixth grade and can be linked with postsecondary institutions.

The administrator noted that schools with the most stable staff often have the most consistent success in using the system; however, measuring the effectiveness of career education in Idaho has been difficult due to a lack of systematic tracking statewide. Many districts have anecdotally reported an increase in college readiness, and national studies show a high correlation between students accessing career information services and increased postsecondary completion. Of the students we surveyed, approximately one in four said they had accessed CIS.

The success of CIS relies in part on the willingness and ability of teachers and counselors to incorporate the CIS tools into their curriculum and career development strategies. As student ratios increase, teachers and counselors may not have sufficient time to participate in training about how to advise students on using CIS. If educators do not feel confident in their own knowledge, it may create additional barriers in providing information to students. According to the administrator, CIS staff monitor each school's use of CIS and work with the schools when it appears they are not taking advantage of the benefits CIS offers.

Find Your Path

The Find Your Path website is hosted through the Board of Education. The website, which is supported through the College Access Challenge Grant, provides links to a variety of postsecondary institutions and includes information on scholarships and other financial aid. Although it does not function as an interactive tool, it provides answers to frequently asked questions and directs viewers to access CIS for more information. According to survey respondents, this tool was accessed less frequently than other college access programs. Only two percent of students we surveyed said they had ever accessed Find Your Path.

⁶ IDAHO CODE § 33-1212 and IDAHO ADMIN. CODE, 2011, IDAPA 08.02.03.104.02.

College Readiness

Sufficient academic readiness greatly increases the likelihood of success in college. Idaho performs well in several different measurements of college readiness. In 2009, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported that Idaho high school seniors scored above the national average in mathematics and reading. For mathematics, 66 percent scored at or above the basic level, 23 percent scored above the proficient level, and 1 percent scored at the advanced level. For reading, 78 percent scored at or above the basic level, 39 percent scored above the proficient level, and 4 percent scored at the advanced level.

Advanced opportunities such as Advanced Placement (AP) and dual credit courses further prepare high school students for the academic rigor of postsecondary education. In Idaho, many students are taking advantage of these and other advanced options.

Common Core

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a voluntary, state-led effort committed to developing state standards for proficiency in English, language arts and mathematics at the K–12 grade levels. These standards outline the knowledge and skills that students should achieve throughout their K–12 education to be successful in entry-level postsecondary academic courses and the workforce, without the need for remediation. The common core standards were developed to align with college and workforce needs and to align with benchmark standards in other countries.

In June 2009, Idaho joined 47 other states in developing the standards for English, language arts, and mathematics that would serve as the basis for the common core. In Idaho, the standards were developed with the collaborative effort of teachers, school administrators, community groups, and national groups representing postsecondary educators. The final standards were approved by the Legislature in January 2011 and will be fully implemented by the 2013–2014 school year. The State Department of Education is creating a statewide plan to implement the common core standards and will be working with school districts to align their curricular materials to the new standards.

Common core standards will help align state standards with college and workforce needs.

Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate

Another issue relating to academic college readiness is the number of students who participate in advanced opportunities in high school, such as Advanced

Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.⁷ In 2009, 14.1 percent of Idaho high schools offered AP or IB courses in four core subjects (English, math, science, and social studies). Nationally, 34.8 percent of public high schools offered these same advanced options. Four of Idaho's neighboring states have a higher percentage of schools offering AP or IB courses including Nevada (42.2 percent), Utah (39.4 percent), Washington (35.4 percent) and Oregon (24.4 percent). Only Montana was lower at 6.9 percent. Wyoming had the same percentage as Idaho. Of the students we surveyed, ten percent indicated they took an AP course in high school.

Dual Credit

Dual credit courses, another advanced opportunity, allow students to earn college credit while in high school. Currently, 112 high schools have received financial assistance from the College Access Challenge Grant to assist students in taking dual credit courses through local community colleges and universities. Offerings in dual credit courses have been increasing in Idaho through efforts such as the College Access Challenge Grant and the GEAR UP program.

As part of the recently passed legislation on public education reform, dual credit courses will be offered to students at a subsidized price, so that more students will be able to graduate high school with college credits. With advances in the Idaho Education Network, Idaho's web-based tool for providing courses, more opportunities are becoming available around the state, allowing students who previously could not participate in AP or dual credit courses, to participate online. Of the students we surveyed, 24 percent have taken a dual credit course.

Professional-Technical Preparation

In fiscal year 2010, 112 school districts and 12 professional-technical schools in Idaho offered secondary professional-technical education courses.

In fiscal year 2010,
two-thirds of Tech
Prep graduates
pursued
postsecondary
education.

Tech Prep, a program for secondary students, allows students to take courses in high school that also count as postsecondary technical credits. These courses give students a head start on their technical certificate or associate's degree in areas such as automotive technology or graphic design. In fiscal year 2010, 13,831 students were enrolled in Tech Prep courses and earned 13,869 credits. For these completers, 66.2 percent went on to college in fiscal year 2010.

⁷ Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses provide high school students with more rigorous course offerings than traditional high school course work and in the case of AP classes, can be taken for both high school and college credit.

Most State Scholarships Do Not Increase Affordability for Students in Need

Idaho has several state-sponsored scholarships for students based on their academic achievement in high school. These scholarships include the Opportunity scholarship, the Promise scholarships, and the Freedom scholarship.⁸ In fiscal year 2011, the Legislature appropriated \$7.6 million from the general fund to all scholarships programs. Additionally, the state received \$468,700 in federal funds for scholarships.

Because most of the state-sponsored scholarships are merit based, a number of the scholarships are awarded to all students who qualify and apply. For example, the Promise B scholarship was awarded to over 7,700 students in 2011.⁹ This scholarship represents a large portion of the state scholarship money. In the fiscal year 2011 appropriation, Promise B made up 47 percent of the total general fund appropriation for scholarship programs. Even though the appropriation is large, \$3.6 million, the average award amount per student will likely be \$200–\$250 per semester for up to four semesters. There are several other scholarships that offer a larger award per student but to significantly fewer students. For example, the Promise A scholarship awards \$3,000 a year for up to four years and, in 2011, provided 110 scholarships. Exhibit 3.1 shows a breakdown of the state-funded scholarships for fiscal year 2011.

Most state-funded scholarships in Idaho are merit based.

Merit-based scholarships are awards given to students based on academic achievement. The National Conference of State Legislatures and the College Board have noted that states have been putting more money into merit-based scholarships, such as Idaho's Promise scholarships. Merit-based scholarships keep some of the best students at in-state colleges and universities. However, research has shown that students who receive merit-based scholarships can often afford to go to college wherever they choose. As one official from the Lumina Foundation explained, scholarship funding based on merit is highly correlated with income. Consequently, merit-based scholarships often target financially stable families.

⁸ The board previously funded the federal LEAP and SLEAP scholarships, but that program has been discontinued. The board plans to absorb those state funds into existing scholarship programs for fiscal year 2013.

⁹ Recipients had to have a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher and score a 20 or better on the ACT or a 950 or better on the SAT.

EXHIBIT 3.1 STATE-FUNDED SCHOLARSHIPS, FISCAL YEAR 2011

Scholarship Name	Expended Funds (\$)	Scholarship Recipients	Type of Aid
Idaho Robert R. Lee Promise Category A	321,475	110	Merit
Idaho Robert R. Lee Promise Category B ^a	3,099,717	7,740	Merit
Atwell Parry Work Study ^b	1,298,927	1,073	Need
Minority/"At Risk"	102,000	34	Need
Teachers/Nurses Loan Forgiveness	25,075	44	Special purpose
Freedom Scholarship	6,024	1	Special purpose
Public Safety Officer Scholarship	—	3	Special purpose
Grow Your Own Teacher Corp	315,941	77	Special purpose
Opportunity ^b	349,829	129	Need and merit
LEAP ^c	618,999	1,832	Need
SLEAP ^c	100,000	475	Need

Source: Idaho State Board of Education.

^a Includes timing difference of cash reimbursement.

^b Includes funds expended from current year appropriation and program funds held on campus from prior year.

^c Federal funds for the LEAP and SLEAP scholarships have been discontinued. State funds for these scholarships are being redistributed to other state scholarships in fiscal year 2013. Excludes refunds from prior year that were returned to state or federal funding sources.

Need-based scholarships, which are awards given to students primarily based on economic need, are recognized as one of the most effective ways to increase the number of students going to college. The growth of need-based scholarships has been slower than merit-based scholarships, but aid to low-income students can greatly impact the number of students who enroll in postsecondary education than aid given to more affluent students.

The 2008 Measuring Up report found that for every dollar in federal Pell Grant aid that Idaho students receive, the state spends only five cents toward postsecondary education in need-based scholarships.¹⁰ Idaho's neighboring states vary in the amount of state-sponsored, need-based aid as shown in exhibit 3.2. At \$63 per full-time equivalent, WICHE ranks Idaho very low compared with other western states and the national average. Only Wyoming spent less than Idaho in state need-based aid per full-time equivalent student.

¹⁰ Pell Grants are federally funded, need-based aid to assist low-income families with the cost of postsecondary education.

EXHIBIT 3.2 ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF STATE-FUNDED, NEED-BASED AID PER STUDENT, SCHOOL YEAR 2008–2009

	Aid Per Full-Time, Undergraduate Student (\$)
Idaho	63
Montana	149
Nevada	189
Oregon	525
Utah	73
Washington	923
Wyoming	7
US	611

Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), *Benchmarks:2010*.

Note: School year 2008–2009 was the most recent year data was available.

Idaho Relies Heavily on Private Foundation Support to Promote the Importance of Postsecondary Education

The J. A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation is a major advocate for education in Idaho. Started in 1966, this private family foundation is currently focused on three major initiatives to prepare students to compete in a 21st century economy and workplace. Since the early 1990s, the foundation estimates it has invested over \$500 million to support education at the K–12 and postsecondary levels. Recently, the foundation completed a “go on” challenge for high schools to reward those who made measureable progress in three key areas of college and career readiness. According to the foundation, three primary issues hampered its efforts related to the challenge: a lack of data, a lack of cooperation in accessing existing data, and a lack of understanding about how to report on key performance indicators.

Foundation officials stated that “the lack of longitudinal and real-time data, combined with a cultural resistance to using data for day-to-day decisions as well as long-term planning and funding, essentially make it impossible to gauge an impact of our investments.”

In our interviews, foundation officials expressed concern over the lack of measureable data at every level of Idaho’s education system. Although the foundation is committed to supporting education in Idaho, officials expressed hesitation to continue without a clear statewide vision and plan for assessing progress and financially sustaining critical building blocks for education improvement. The foundation sees its role in education as a convener, a catalyst, a funder, a provider of research and development, and a strategic partner—but

not as the driver. Given the significant contributions the foundation continues to make to education in Idaho, officials noted that the absence of measurable outcomes on the part of those responsible for improving the education system could eventually hinder those contributions.

Recommendations

Intent: For those students with a financial need, an increase in need-based scholarships such as the Opportunity Scholarship, which has both merit- and need-based components, will enable more high school graduates to pursue a postsecondary education.

Recommendation 3.1: The State Board of Education should work with the Legislature to review the current appropriations for need-based scholarships and consider reallocating funds from merit-based scholarships or creating new scholarships that are primarily need based. (Note: As the board implements recommendation 4.3, outcome data will assist in implementing this recommendation.)

Intent: State-funded, sustainable efforts designed to increase college readiness and college access will improve Idaho's ability to provide access and outreach services.

Recommendation 3.2: In light of Idaho's significant reliance on both federal and foundation support to further its postsecondary education goal, the State Board of Education should work with the Legislature to create a strategy to financially sustain the statewide outreach programs for increasing college access in the absence of external financial resources.

Chapter 4

Measuring Progress for New Postsecondary Education Goal

According to the most recent census, Idaho ranks below the national average in the number of residents with a degree—33 percent of Idaho residents age 25 and older earned an associate’s degree or higher, compared with a national average of 36 percent. Census data for Idaho does not, however, include other types of postsecondary education and training many Idaho residents obtain.¹ We found the board has specified a goal that has not yet been fully operationalized because no information is currently available on the additional types of certificates the board will include in determining the extent of progress toward reaching its 60 percent goal. We also found insufficient information is available on how data will be collected to determine the number of people in the state who hold those certificates.

The Board of Education Has Set a New Goal for Educational Attainment in Idaho

The increased focus on postsecondary education in Idaho can be attributed in part to a recent study released by the Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce.² The study suggests that 61 percent of jobs in Idaho will require at least some postsecondary training beyond high school by 2018. After the release of Georgetown’s study, the Board of Education set a new education goal for Idaho. In its 2012–2016 strategic plan, the board outlined its goal that “60 percent of Idahoans between the ages of 25 and 34 will have a college degree or certificate by 2020.” As discussed at the end of this chapter, additional clarity in the board’s definition of postsecondary education will increase its ability to determine a baseline and then measure progress in reaching its goal.

¹ The census does not include degrees or certificates less than an associate’s degree.

² Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018* (2010).

Education Stakeholders Have Set Similar Education Goals

The board is not the only entity in Idaho to set goals to increase the level of education of Idaho's residents. As shown in exhibit 4.1, we found examples of at least three other organizations, the Education Alliance of Idaho, the Idaho Business Coalition for Education Excellence, and the Idaho Workforce Development Council, that have recently set similar goals.

Given the different role each organization plays in higher education and the workforce, each entity may be expected to have different goals and approaches to reaching them. However, setting goals that are somewhat inconsistent among the organizations could result in duplicative or uncoordinated outreach efforts. For example, the Workforce Development Council, which has representation from the board, recently set a goal to increase education levels for all Idaho

The Board of Education is not the only entity focused on increasing the education levels of Idaho residents.

workers by 2020, not just those between the ages of 25 and 34. Because of the significant difference in the target population of the council goal, the board may find itself in a position of trying to support initiatives that meet the needs of the council but are too broad and inclusive to help facilitate reaching the board's own, more narrowly defined goal.

Incomplete Data Creates Challenges in Establishing a Baseline and Measuring Progress

The board is developing a plan to reach its 60 percent goal and has recently approved the Complete College Idaho framework. This framework lists five goals: strengthen the pipeline, transform remediation, demystify college, structure for success, and reward progress and completion. Within each of these goals, the board has several strategies in place to help guide improvements. Appendix C has more information on the board's framework and strategies.

In addition to the recently approved framework, the board has tasked each of the public colleges and universities with developing strategies for increasing college

The board has tasked public institutions with increasing college completion.

completion in Idaho. However, we found that limitations with existing data, as well as the lack of a clear timeline for collecting more comprehensive data, prevent the board from accurately assessing current levels of educational attainment and will significantly limit the board's ability to accurately monitor progress in reaching its goal.

EXHIBIT 4.1 OVERLAPPING EDUCATION GOALS IN IDAHO

Entity	Entity Objective	Education Goal	Difference from Board Goal
Idaho State Board of Education ^a	Provide oversight and governance of public K–20 education. Policymaking body for all public education institutions.	Set in 2010, 60 percent of Idahoans between the ages of 25 and 34 will have a college degree or one-year certificate by 2020.	
Idaho Workforce Development Council ^b	Advise the Governor and the Board of Education on issues about workforce development.	Set in 2011, ensure that 60 percent of Idaho workers obtain a certificate, industry recognized credential, apprenticeship, or degree beyond high school by 2020.	Focuses on all Idaho workers regardless of age.
Idaho Business Coalition for Education Excellence ^c	Develop an Idaho education system that results in graduates who have postsecondary credentials and who are workforce ready.	Set in 2011, 50 percent of Idaho citizens 25 years of age or older will hold a postsecondary degree, certificate, or credential by 2020.	Focuses on all adults over the age of 25 with a benchmark of 50 percent.
Education Alliance of Idaho ^d	Develop strategic recommendations for Idaho to become a global leader in education.	Set in 2009, at least 50 percent of Idaho citizens 25 years of age and older will attain a postsecondary degree or certificate, as reported by the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey in 2015.	Focuses on all adults over the age of 25 with a benchmark of 50 percent. Goal will be measured in 2015, rather than 2020.

Source: Information received from the State Board of Education, the Idaho Workforce Development Council, the Idaho Business Coalition for Education Excellence, and the Education Alliance of Idaho.

^a The board has seven members appointed by the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

^b Council is made up of 32 members appointed by the Governor for three-year terms. The Board of Education is represented on the Council.

^c Nonprofit organization made up of Idaho CEOs and company presidents.

^d Membership comprises stakeholders who represent business and education, including both the Board of Education and the Department of Education. The alliance was developed by the Idaho Business Coalition for Education Excellence under the direction of the Governor.

Educational Attainment

One of the most common tools used to determine the level of educational attainment is the US census data. The American Community Survey (ACS), which is conducted each year by the census, is one method that the board plans to use to assess the progress of adults age 25–34 and their educational attainment. ACS is extremely valuable for measuring education levels starting with an associate’s degree. For example, the most recent ACS data showed that an estimated 31.5 percent of Idaho’s 25–34 year olds have an associate’s degree or higher. ACS also reports two lower levels of postsecondary education (1) some college but less than one year, and (2) one or more years of college credit, no degree.

The board will measure its goal beginning with certificates that take at least one academic year (nine months) to complete. As shown in exhibit 4.2, the current percentage of 25–34 year olds who have at least one year of college is 52.9 percent, but that number does not specifically separate out those individuals with certificates that take at least a year but are not considered an associate’s degree. The ACS data offers some encouragement that Idaho is actually much closer to reaching its 60 percent goal. While not all of these 25–34 year olds have a certificate of at least one year, it is possible many of them do. The board recognizes that in order to accurately establish a baseline, it will need to first calculate the exact educational attainment level for this population.

The board does not have a way to establish a baseline of current education levels.

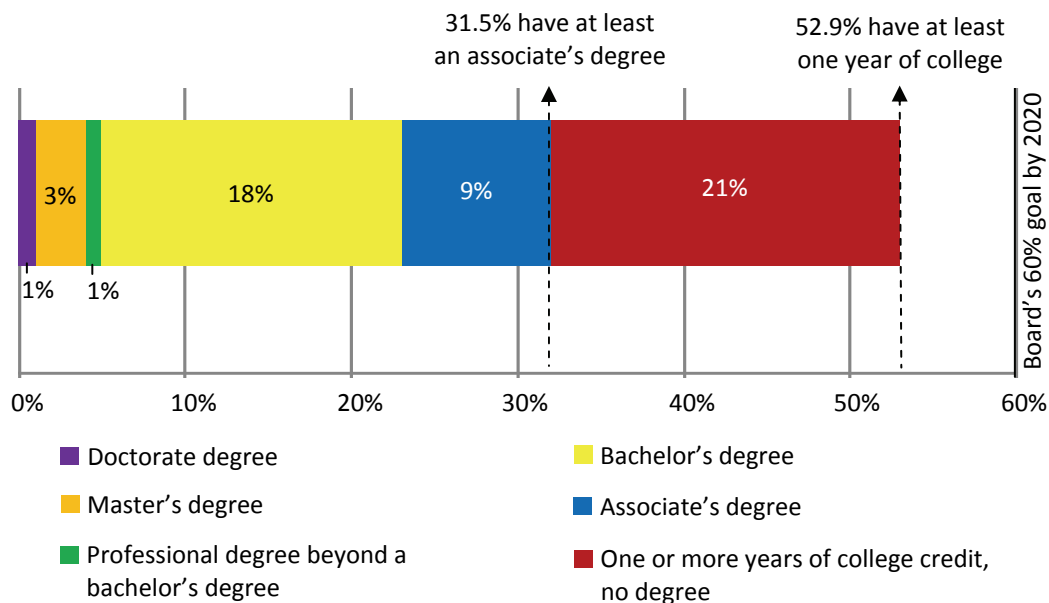
Until recently, it was the board’s understanding that ACS would begin reporting on certificate information in the fall of 2013. However, census staff have since confirmed that there are no current or future plans to change the educational attainment categories in the ACS survey. Consequently, the board cannot use ACS as a means to collect certificate information. Without that information,

the board does not have a way to accurately establish a baseline and measure Idaho’s current level of postsecondary education or to monitor progress in reaching its education goals. Board staff told us they are in the early stages of developing a statewide educational attainment survey to collect this information.

Institution Data

According to board staff, ACS is currently the best and only way to track the student data that meets the board’s data needs, as ACS is the only statewide survey that measures educational attainment of all residents. However, the board’s reliance on ACS data creates some challenges in measuring how many students are completing all types of postsecondary education. For example, if students complete college in Idaho and then move to another state, those students would be counted in their new state of residence, not the state they were educated in. The opposite is also true: if a large number of individuals with little or no education move to Idaho, they are counted as part of the overall educational attainment.

EXHIBIT 4.2 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF IDAHOANS 25–34 YEARS OLD, 2010



Source: Analysis of data from the 2010 American Community Survey.

Note: Percentages may not sum because of rounding. Eight percent of Idahoans have some college but less than one year. This eight percent was excluded from the graph to align with the board's criteria of counting only postsecondary credentials of a year or more for the 60 percent goal.

The board does not have any definitive data on the education decisions students make after completing high school. Data that is currently reported to the board is primarily limited to public institutions and does not take into account:

- Private, for-profit institutions
- Private, nonprofit institutions
- Out-of-state institutions

The statewide longitudinal data system, which is being developed to track students through the K–12 system and into the public postsecondary system, will not be used to measure the progress of the board's 60 percent goal. Rather, the system will eventually require postsecondary *public* institutions to report student enrollment data using a web-based application, which will standardize the level and type of data each institution reports. The board will then be able to generate more comprehensive information on overall retention and completion rates, as well as better track students who transfer between Idaho institutions.³

The statewide longitudinal data system will not be used to measure progress in reaching the 60 percent goal.

³ Once complete, the longitudinal data system will link with the Department of Education's K–12 system and, ultimately, tie in with data collected through the Department of Labor. The board is currently testing data among the institutions and has not yet finalized how or when its system will tie in with the other systems.

The board also collects some data from private institutions and proprietary schools as part of the annual registration requirements, but this data will not be included in the statewide longitudinal data system. This data is also not included in the board's annual report nor is it analyzed to identify any trends in the number of students who attend these types of institutions and schools or the types of degrees or certificates that students complete.

In general, larger private institutions such as Brigham Young University-Idaho and College of Idaho are exempt by Idaho Code and Administrative Code from registration and do not report any data to the board on the number of graduates or the degrees and certificates awarded. The board's registration process for private schools is primarily a way to "protect consumers and to ensure quality educational programs are provided throughout the state" not as a method of collecting data on the academic progress of students.⁴ If the board were to use the data from the proprietary schools on the number of non-degree credentials that are awarded in Idaho each year, the board may be able to better quantify the number of non-degree credentials, such as postsecondary certificates, awarded at all of Idaho's institutions, both private and public. However, the board has proposed changes to administrative rule that would increase the number of private schools exempt from the registration process, eliminating the board's ability to have access to the data from those schools.

Student Data

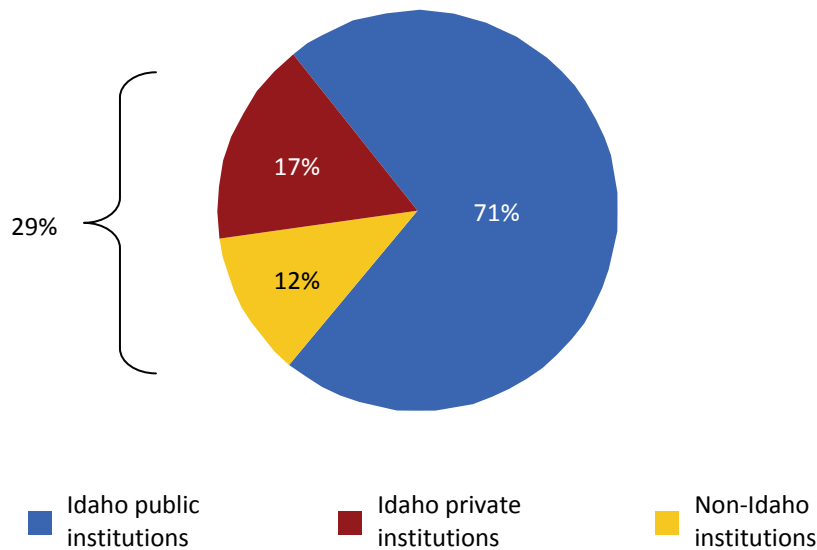
As part of its College Access Challenge Grant, the board is working with school districts to submit data into the National Student Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse database can track information at the student level to identify where students are enrolling after high school, whether they are completing school, and what level of education they are achieving. School districts are uploading historical data into the system and the board plans to have more complete information over the next year.

Before the College Access Challenge Grant, schools in 13 districts were already using the clearinghouse database to better understand trends in their districts. In the absence of any statewide data, we asked each of the districts that use the database to share any historical reports on their high school graduates. We received data from nine districts for more than 6,400 students over the past eight years.⁵ As shown in exhibit 4.3, we found that 29 percent of students in the data set were enrolled in a college that will not be captured with the development of the longitudinal data system—these students are enrolled in private institutions or in institutions outside of Idaho. The 2008 Measuring Up report found that

⁴ IDAHO ADMIN. CODE, 2011, IDAPA 08.01.11.301.

⁵ Not all districts reported data for each year. We analyzed data from Boise, Emmett, Homedale, Kuna, Jefferson, Middleton, New Plymouth, Post Falls, and Weiser school districts.

EXHIBIT 4.3 A SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION OF IDAHO STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION CATEGORIES



Source: Analysis of data from the National Student Clearinghouse for nine school districts: Boise, Emmett, Homedale, Jefferson, Kuna, Middleton, New Plymouth, Post Falls, and Weiser.

approximately 25 percent of students enrolled at postsecondary institutions in Idaho attend private institutions.

Given the limitations of the current data collection methods, as well as the limitations that will continue to exist once the new data system is finalized, the board's approach to measuring progress in reaching its 60 percent goal falls short of capturing not only all of the students who are completing postsecondary education in Idaho, but also those students who pursue education at a private institution or outside of the state.

Current data collection methods are limited in accounting for students who leave Idaho to pursue postsecondary education or who enroll in a private institution.

Scholarship Recipients

As part of the board's annual performance measure report, it tracks the distribution of scholarship money in terms of total dollars distributed. The board also provides the number of applicants who apply for and are selected to receive the Promise A and Promise B scholarships. However, it does not track any further outcome or performance data on state scholarship distribution and is unable to determine the college completion rate for those students who receive state scholarships.

As a result, we were unable to evaluate whether existing scholarships helped students who were already planning to attend college or also helped students who would not otherwise attend. Additionally, we were unable to measure the effectiveness of the current practice of providing a larger number of small scholarships rather than providing a smaller number of large scholarships. Larger scholarships may better meet the needs of students who are at the most risk of not pursuing postsecondary education. When we consider the average cost of tuition at a four-year institution in Idaho is more than \$5,000, a scholarship in the amount of \$250 per semester may not significantly reduce any existing financial barriers.

The board does not track outcome or performance data on scholarship recipients.

If the board were to begin tracking the academic success and graduation rates of state scholarship recipients, policymakers could then use that information to identify trends in completion rates by scholarship type and dollar amount. Although this information will not account for

all of the factors that affect whether a student completes postsecondary education, the absence of any completion data makes it impossible for the board to gauge whether its scholarships are helping recipients succeed.

Recommendations

Intent: Clearly accounting for specific elements of postsecondary education will allow the State Board of Education to more accurately measure Idaho's current levels of educational attainment and more accurately monitor the progress the board is making in reaching its education goal.

Recommendation 4.1: In light of the State Board of Education's newly defined education goal, the board should ensure that all postsecondary institutions or schools in Idaho that produce degrees or certificates requiring at least one year of academic study are captured in the board's data set. To accurately set a baseline and measure progress, the board should consider the following questions and include them as a part of their statewide educational attainment survey:

1. Which institutions or schools (public, private, or out of state) offer those programs?
2. Are those institutions or schools currently reporting data to the board? If not, how will those certificates and degrees be included in measuring progress toward reaching its goal?
3. Given these considerations, what data will the board use to determine the state's current baseline of educational attainment and measure progress in meeting its goal?

Intent: Because the State Board of Education has tasked the public institutions to formulate strategies to increase the number of Idaho residents who earn a degree or certificate, a specific performance measure for monitoring the progress of the institutions will better align the efforts of the institutions with the board's goal. In addition to public institutions, formal coordination with private institutions and proprietary schools will further ensure all types of postsecondary opportunities are considered as part of the board's progress in meeting its 60 percent goal.

Recommendation 4.2: The State Board of Education should establish performance measures and benchmarks to strategically increase the number of degrees awarded at public institutions as part of meeting its 60 percent goal. The board should also formally coordinate with private institutions and proprietary schools to better account for increases in degrees at those schools. (Note: Implementation of recommendation 5.1 will help ensure this objective aligns with employment projections.)

Intent: The use of trend data to assess the effectiveness of state-funded scholarships can assist the State Board of Education in making future decisions on the number and types of scholarships awarded.

Recommendation 4.3: The State Board of Education should collect data on scholarship recipients and track their academic progress throughout their postsecondary program. The board can then use that data in two ways:

- Help determine whether existing scholarships are a successful tool in increasing the number of students who go to college and the number who complete a postsecondary program
- Assist in implementing recommendation 3.1 when making specific decisions about funding need-based scholarships

Chapter 5

Linking Employment and Education

The long-term benefits of increasing the educational attainment levels of Idahoans will directly impact the creation of new businesses and will positively impact the economic and social well-being of the state. The College Board notes that “students who attend institutions of higher education obtain a wide range of personal, financial, and other lifelong benefits; likewise taxpayers and society as a whole derive a multitude of direct and indirect benefits when citizens have access to postsecondary education.” These benefits can include increased tax revenues, less spending on income support programs, and seeing a direct return on investments made to support higher education.

Increasing education levels in Idaho will have both social and economic benefits.

Looking ahead in the short term, however, job growth projections show a relatively incremental change in the proportion of jobs that will require postsecondary education. As the Board of Education moves forward in reaching its education goal, it needs to develop a more focused strategy to help ensure postsecondary institutions are producing the right types of graduates for the right types of jobs. At the same time, Idaho will need to continue to coordinate work in the fields of education and labor to attract more businesses that require educated employees.

Most Jobs in Idaho Have Not Historically Required Postsecondary Education

A 2011 study released by the University of Idaho examined industry growth from 2001 to 2009 across several major employment sectors.¹ The study found that the employment growth in Idaho over this period of time was focused on low-skill, low-wage sectors. Some of the largest areas of growth, such as retail trade and administrative and support services, were generally occupations that do not require postsecondary education and often pay low wages.

¹ Cooke and Kulandaisamy, vol. 40, no. 1, “Wage Divergence between the Rocky Mountain States and the U.S.: Idaho Measures and Sources, 2001–2009,” *The Review of Regional Studies* (2010): 99–124.

The University of Idaho study found that wages and employment in high-skill, high-paying sectors are declining while wages and employment in low-skill, low-wage sectors are increasing. Idaho also had an above average increase in the number of below average wage jobs. As a result, Idaho has a competitive disadvantage in jobs requiring postsecondary education when compared with the same jobs in other states in the Rocky Mountain region. The author of the study also found that the wage gap in Idaho is about \$11,000 per worker per year for the 690,000 workers. Collectively, this gap results in a total annual loss in wages of about \$7.6 billion per year, growing by about \$300 million annually.

Idaho has seen some growth in jobs requiring postsecondary education. The Idaho Department of Labor tracks the number of jobs for all occupations in Idaho and the education or training required to perform each job. According to the department, the total number of jobs requiring postsecondary education has been increasing since 2002, as seen in exhibit 5.1.

EXHIBIT 5.1 NUMBER OF IDAHO JOBS REQUIRING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, 2002–2008

Year	Number of Jobs
2002	175,621
2004	182,237
2006	203,753
2008	206,598

Source: Analysis of data provided by the Idaho Department of Labor, *Education of Occupations in Idaho, 2002–2018*.

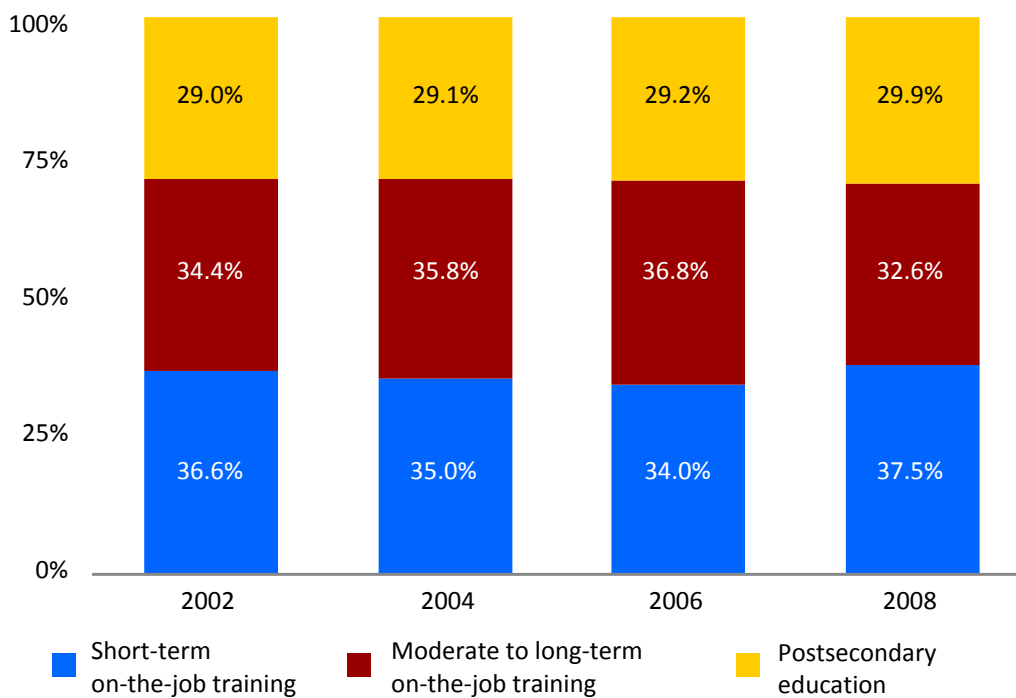
Note: These jobs require vocational training, an associate’s degree, a bachelor’s degree, a bachelor’s degree plus work experience, a first professional degree, a master’s degree, or a doctoral degree.

Although Idaho has seen overall growth in the total number of jobs requiring postsecondary education, when those jobs are compared with the total number of jobs in the state over time, we found a relatively small change from 2002 to 2008. Exhibit 5.2 shows that there has been little change between the percentage of jobs that require postsecondary education and those that do not. In 2002, 29 percent of total jobs required postsecondary education; by 2008, that number had grown to just 29.9 percent.

Slow Growth of Jobs Requiring Postsecondary Education Is Expected to Continue

When we looked at employment projections produced by the Department of Labor from 2008 to 2018, we found that the number of jobs requiring

EXHIBIT 5.2 PERCENTAGE OF IDAHO JOBS BY EDUCATION OR TRAINING LEVEL REQUIRED, 2002–2008



Source: Analysis of data provided by the Idaho Department of Labor, *Occupations by Education or Training Level-Statewide* (2018).

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

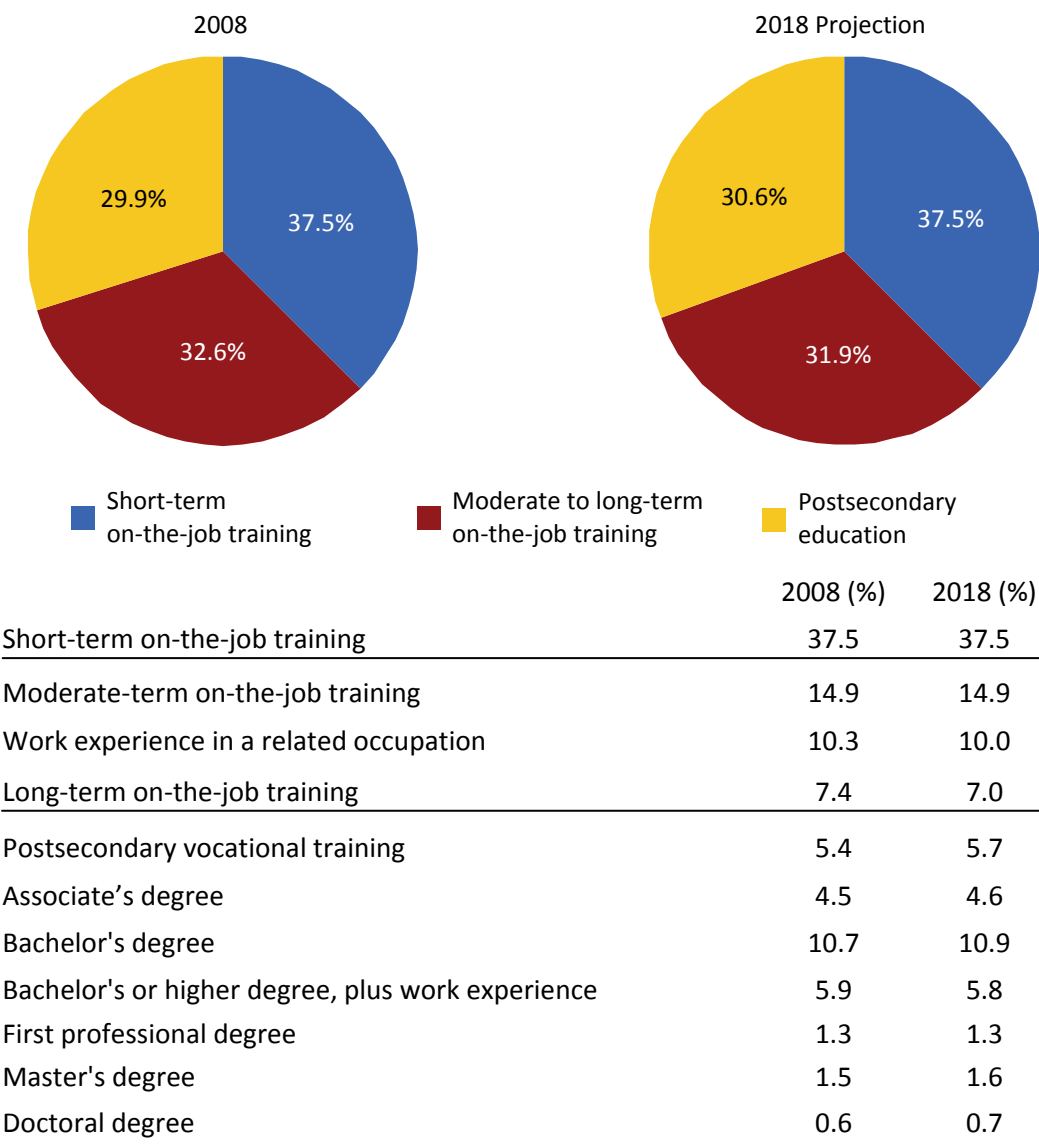
postsecondary education will continue to slowly increase. Although the change in the percentage of jobs requiring postsecondary education from 2008 to 2018 is small, over 87,000 jobs requiring postsecondary education will need to be filled by 2018.²

The percentage of jobs requiring postsecondary education are projected to only grow by a fraction from 2008 to 2018.

Despite this growth, exhibit 5.3 shows that the trend in jobs will continue to be similarly divided among three levels of education or training: (1) those requiring short-term on-the-job training, (2) those requiring moderate- to long-term on-the-job training, and (3) those requiring postsecondary education. The 2018 projections show that the largest category of jobs will only require short-term on-the-job training and that approximately 31 percent of total jobs will require postsecondary education, up only one percent from 2008. Exhibit 5.3 also highlights the modest growth in the percentage of specific education and training levels in 2018.

² According to the Idaho Department of Labor, many of these jobs will be vacated because of attrition, such as death, retirement, or current workers leaving the profession.

EXHIBIT 5.3 IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR PROJECTIONS FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF IDAHO JOBS BY EDUCATION OR TRAINING LEVEL, 2008 AND 2018



Source: Analysis of data provided by the Idaho Department of Labor, *2008–2018 Long-term Occupation Projections: Occupations by Education or Training Level*.

New Job Growth

When we looked specifically at new jobs projected for 2018, we found that the rate of growth for new jobs requiring postsecondary education is accelerating faster than overall job growth. However, that total represents a relatively small portion of total jobs, and that increase has very little effect on the total number of jobs requiring postsecondary education.

The department projects that the overall share of jobs requiring postsecondary education in Idaho will only rise by one percent every 12 years compared to a national growth rate of one percent every seven years. However, when compared with the nation, Idaho jobs requiring certain types of postsecondary education are expected to grow faster. For example, jobs requiring a bachelor's degree in Idaho are expected to grow by 1.9 percent through 2018, whereas the national growth for jobs requiring a bachelor's degree is expected to grow by 1.7 percent.

The overall share of jobs in Idaho requiring postsecondary education is increasing slower than the national average.

Despite this progress, the largest category of jobs in Idaho will continue to be those only requiring short-term on-the-job training, which are growing at a rate that is nearly double the national average.³ The sheer number of these jobs will limit Idaho's ability to significantly increase the overall proportion of jobs requiring postsecondary education.

Hot Jobs

The Department of Labor has identified 100 jobs that will help foster the growth of jobs requiring postsecondary education from 2008 to 2018. These 100 jobs, referred to as hot jobs, rank high in three areas: number of jobs in the economy, rate of growth, and level of pay. Hot jobs represent a wide range of industries including engineering, medical services, and education.

The growth of some hot jobs in Idaho will be quite high. For example, accountants and auditors, which require a bachelor's degree, are projected to grow by 24 percent from 2008 to 2018, adding over 850 new jobs.

Green Jobs

Green jobs are areas of work in pollution and waste control, sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency, and renewable or alternate fuels. They are found throughout Idaho and have a higher median wage than the median wage of all other jobs in Idaho.

According to department officials, Idaho had 17,000 green jobs in 2010, with roughly half requiring at least some postsecondary education. In addition, the vast majority of green jobs also require specialized training or licensure. The department projects that from 2010 to 2012, green jobs in Idaho will grow by 2.2 percent. This growth is greater than the overall job growth of 0.61 percent for all occupations over that same period.

³ According to Department of Labor staff, service sector jobs will continue to increase in part to meet the needs of Idaho's growing senior population.

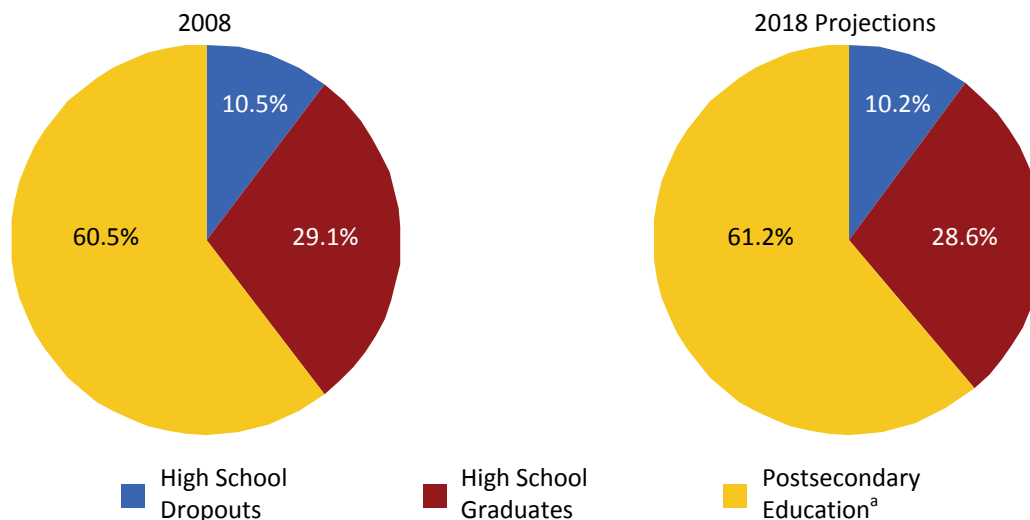
Idaho Employment Projections Differ from Georgetown Projections but Follow Similar Trends

As discussed in chapter 3, the Board of Education used data from a study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce to help inform the board’s goal that 60 percent of adults ages 25–34 will have a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2020. In that study, Georgetown projected that 61 percent of jobs in Idaho will require postsecondary education in 2018. However, as shown in exhibit 5.4, the report suggests that 60.5 percent of Idaho jobs in 2008 already required postsecondary education.

As previously mentioned, when we looked at projection data provided by the Idaho Department of Labor, it showed that the number of jobs requiring postsecondary education in 2018 is 31.9 percent—far lower than the Georgetown projection of 61.2 percent. We compared the levels and types of education for each data set and were able to account for some of the discrepancy in the totals for the Georgetown data and the department data.

Much of the differences between the data sources are linked to how each source defines the data elements. In the Georgetown study, the category of “some college, no degree” is derived from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS), which does not further define the category. As a result, this

EXHIBIT 5.4 GEORGETOWN PROJECTIONS ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF JOBS BY EDUCATION LEVEL, 2008 AND 2018



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018* (June 2010).

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

^a Georgetown defines postsecondary education as some college, no degree; associate’s degree; bachelor’s degree; and graduate degree.

category may include individuals with education credentials obtained through typing classes or other brief courses or could reflect individuals who started a program at a college or university but did not complete it.

In contrast, the Idaho Department of Labor breaks down its projections by level of education and then by levels of training necessary to complete job duties. According to the department, postsecondary education includes training or education beginning with vocational training and higher.⁴ When we compared the 2018 projections for both data sets using a standardized definition of associate's degree or higher, the differences in projections were greatly reduced.⁵ According to department data, approximately 25 percent of jobs will require an associate's degree or more, while Georgetown projects that percent to be 34.

Because the department and Georgetown used different methodologies and definitions to generate their projections, the percentages do not totally align. However, the trends in each data set follow a similar pattern and tell a similar story. Although Idaho is making progress in creating jobs that require an educated workforce, the majority of jobs in Idaho will continue to be those requiring less than an associate's degree.

Both Georgetown data and Department of Labor data indicate that most future jobs in Idaho will require less than an associate's degree.

Idaho Does Not Track the Majority of Postsecondary Graduates into the Workforce

One question that arose during our field work was whether postsecondary graduates are staying in Idaho after completion of their education. Currently, Idaho has no formal statewide agreements among the Board of Education, the postsecondary institutions, and the Department of Labor to determine where students are employed once they finish their postsecondary education. As we have mentioned, ACS data measures current residents of Idaho, not graduates of Idaho's postsecondary institutions. With an eventual plan to align the K–12 statewide longitudinal data system with the postsecondary education system and the workforce system, the board is linking these three systems so that graduates can be tracked into the workforce.

Formal data sharing agreements between institutions and the Department of Labor would help determine where students seek employment after graduation.

⁴ A program requiring less formal training than is required by a vocational education program would fall under the category of on-the-job training. The Department of Labor describes postsecondary vocational training as programs that last anywhere from a few weeks to more than a year. In some occupations, a license is needed that requires passing an examination after completion of the training.

⁵ For the Georgetown projections and the Idaho Department of Labor projections, an associate's degree was the lowest common definition for both sources.

However, currently only Idaho's public postsecondary institutions will be uploading student level data directly into the system. The board will receive some data from a third party provider, the National Student Clearinghouse, on enrollment and completion information for students enrolled in private institutions that will be incorporated into the longitudinal data system. There are some limitations to the Clearinghouse data as several private and proprietary schools in Idaho do not upload student enrollment data.⁶ Excluding the majority of the proprietary schools, which award certificates but not degrees, further limits the board's ability to quantify the number of certificates awarded in Idaho. Although some student enrollment and degree completion data is reported to the US Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), not all proprietary schools in Idaho are included in the IPEDS system. As a result, even with the use of the National Student Clearinghouse, student enrollment and degree completion data will be missing for those students who decide to pursue their education at one of these schools.

In order to link postsecondary education and employment information in advance of any longitudinal data system, the creation of a data sharing partnership would need to be established among the institutions of postsecondary education, the Idaho Department of Labor, and other states to track where graduates get jobs and whether their occupations align with their field of study. This partnership would allow educators, employers, and policymakers to better track Idaho graduates for analysis of job placement and compensation information. Some of the potential uses of this data include tracking students of a particular education program to find out whether they are finding work in Idaho or whether they need to go outside of Idaho. The data also could help find out whether graduates of a particular education program are securing jobs or whether they are receiving unemployment benefits.

According to Department of Labor staff, the use of Social Security numbers is the most accurate and comprehensive way to analyze this information. Staff noted "the availability and use of Social Security numbers greatly improve accuracy and reduce costs of wage record matching and longitudinal research. We believe the recently released federal interpretations of Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) should allow for the sharing of Social Security numbers among governmental research agencies and further the potential and success of these collaborations."

The idea of sharing information between the fields of education and labor is not new. Successful efforts in Idaho have used education information to help shape workforce decisions. For example, the Board of Nursing has partnered with the

⁶ The only Idaho schools uploading data to the National Student Clearinghouse for enrollment verification are Boise State University, Broadview University, BYU-Idaho, the College of Southern Idaho, Eastern Idaho Technical College, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, North Idaho College, Northwest Nazarene University, and the University of Idaho. Proprietary schools in Idaho do not upload data to the clearinghouse.

Department of Labor and Idaho's public postsecondary institutions to track nursing school graduates. The Department of Labor is then able to determine the percentage of graduates working in Idaho's health care industry six months after graduation, their average earnings, and their geographic employment profile. Additionally, the department cross-matched records with Board of Nursing licensure records to determine the percentage of graduates receiving a first-time Idaho license. The data produced by the Department of Labor has been useful to the Board of Nursing in making program decisions and has benefited the individual postsecondary institutions for their reaccreditation process.

Data Sharing Efforts in Other States

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services is able track graduates of its statewide community college system to determine whether these graduates are employed in the state of Wyoming. It has also entered into agreements with ten states, including Idaho, to find out where its community college graduates are employed. The Wyoming graduate tracking system allows educators and policymakers to track college graduates and determine where graduates find employment, whether in state or out of state. Decisions can then be made to find out whether programs are serving the local and regional needs of businesses and industry, and whether justifying, expanding, or contracting certain education programs are needed.

Idaho can partner with neighboring states to share existing education and employment data.

Formalizing a partnership between Idaho's Department of Labor and the postsecondary institutions is a step that could be implemented immediately with minimal economic cost by taking advantage of existing data. Postsecondary institutions can submit the names of their yearly graduates to the department, and the department can determine how many graduates are employed in Idaho, their industry, and other relevant data that educators and policymakers could use. The department could then enter into agreements with neighboring states to share similar data. If the Idaho postsecondary graduates were classified by the field of their degree, policymakers could also gather data on how specific programs fair in employment placement efforts. Ultimately, this partnership would provide educators, employers, and policymakers the most relevant, timely information on whether Idaho graduates are finding work in their field of study and whether Idaho is successfully retaining college graduates or losing them to neighboring states. This information would also help in formulating policies on program expansion or redirection of resources and could link graduate outcomes within the context of the state job supply.⁷

⁷ Idaho is in the beginning stages of a pilot program coordinated by WICHE to exchange student and workforce data among four states beginning in 2012. The states that are a part of this program are Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii.

Long-Term Planning Will Require Better Coordination of Education and Workforce Needs

Throughout this report, we have highlighted both the board's education goal and the state's efforts to help reduce barriers to postsecondary education. To reach its goal, the board has tasked each of Idaho's public postsecondary institutions with developing strategies to do their part in increasing the number of individuals who have some sort of postsecondary education. In our review of each institution's strategy for meeting the 60 percent goal, we found the strategies were inconsistent in their inclusion of a career component. Without a clear link between education and employment, Idaho's public institutions may not be producing the right type of graduates to meet our future workforce needs.

According to a 2009 study produced for the Division of Professional-Technical Education, Idaho has a number of highly skilled, high-wage occupations such as airline pilots and flight engineers, claims adjusters, librarians, optometrists, physicians and surgeons, and veterinarians. However, Idaho's postsecondary institutions do not have programs for these occupations. All jobs in these occupations have to be filled by individuals who received their training and education in another state.

Although relatively small in number, if Idaho's postsecondary institutions were to begin offering some of these programs, students could elect to stay in Idaho to receive their training and then immediately transition to the Idaho workforce. Institutions could also consider establishing more interstate agreements which allow students to attend out-of-state schools for programs that Idaho postsecondary institutions do not serve. Similar agreements already in place are the Washington-Idaho Regional Veterinary Medical Education Program between the University of Idaho and Washington State University, and the WWAMI program among Idaho, other states, and the University of Washington's medical school.⁸

Despite this skills gap for certain occupations, the majority of future jobs in Idaho will not need this type of specialized training. According to the Georgetown study, by 2018, Idaho will rank third in the nation for the number of jobs that need some college but no degree. When we look at the education levels for all jobs in 2018, as shown in exhibit 5.5, Idaho ranks sixteenth in the country for jobs needing an associate's degree, and forty-sixth in the country for jobs needing a graduate degree.

As Idaho moves forward in growing its economy and increasing the education levels of its workforce, policymakers need to keep in mind that producing more graduates may not immediately result in more jobs requiring a higher level of

⁸ WWAMI stands for Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho.

EXHIBIT 5.5 GEORGETOWN'S PROJECTED NATIONAL RANKING OF JOBS BY EDUCATION LEVEL, 2018

Education Level	2018 Jobs	Idaho's National Ranking
High school dropouts	84,000	19
High school graduates	235,000	31
Some college, no degree	222,000	3
Associate's degree	81,000	16
Bachelor's degree	146,000	35
Graduate degree	55,000	46
Total postsecondary education	504,000	27

Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018* (2010).

education. Until the jobs in Idaho necessitate more education, we may be either losing graduates to states that require a more educated workforce or producing graduates who are overqualified for the job market. Idaho is taking steps to create jobs that may need more education, but those efforts are either relatively new or creating changes in small increments.⁹ And although we have highlighted in this report several efforts currently underway in Idaho to increase the number of postsecondary graduates in the short term, Idaho lacks a coordinated effort to ensure employment projections align with education goals.

Without a coordinated strategy, producing more graduates may not immediately result in more jobs requiring postsecondary education.

As the state moves forward in meeting its 60 percent goal, we would encourage representatives from the fields of education, labor, and the workforce to build on current efforts and create a strategy to not only encourage high school students to go on to the most appropriate type of postsecondary education, but also to encourage additional growth in the types of business that need a more educated workforce to come to Idaho. A long-term approach to linking education and employment should take into consideration the following three questions:

- Should Idaho first increase the number of college graduates in order to attract employers that require a more educated workforce?
- Does Idaho need to first attract the employers requiring an educated workforce in order to incentivize more students to pursue postsecondary education?

⁹ Idaho has several initiatives underway designed to grow the economy and increase jobs, including efforts through the Workforce Development Council, the Department of Commerce, Hire One, and Project 60.

- Should coordinated education and employment initiatives take place simultaneously?

The order in which Idaho approaches this issue is ultimately a policy decision; however, regardless of the strategy, success in reaching our education goals will hinge on how effectively stakeholders can work together in creating a unified and sustainable vision for Idaho's future.

Recommendations

Intent: By more closely aligning our state's education goals with projected workforce needs, Idaho will be able to provide postsecondary education opportunities for students that will help produce graduates for relevant employment opportunities in Idaho. As workforce needs change, a comprehensive, statewide education and employment strategy will allow Idaho to be better equipped to adapt to those changes.

Recommendation 5.1: To help ensure the success of its 60 percent goal, the State Board of Education should develop a statewide strategic plan for meeting that goal in a way that will produce the right types of graduates for the right types of jobs available in Idaho now and in the future.

As part of its plan, the board should coordinate with the Department of Labor so that each of the strategies outlined by the public postsecondary institutions to meet the 60 percent goal aligns with the employment projections made by the department. The board should consider using the existing framework of the Workforce Development Council to facilitate a dialogue among the board, the department, and the institutions.

Intent: Assessing the job placement success of specific programs as well as identifying any trends in graduates of specific fields leaving Idaho will assist educators and policymakers in developing future education and workforce strategies.

Recommendation 5.2: The State Board of Education should work with both the public and private postsecondary institutions and the Department of Labor to develop formal agreements to share student-level information that allows the department to track graduates of Idaho's postsecondary institutions and determine whether they are employed in Idaho and, if so, where. The department should then enter into new or expand existing agreements in place with neighboring states to track Idaho's postsecondary graduates in the workforce outside of Idaho.

Appendix A

Study Scope

In 2011, more than 15,000 students will graduate from a public high school in Idaho. However, not all of these students will complete some type of postsecondary education. Legislators have expressed concerns about Idaho's low rate of postsecondary education and requested an evaluation to identify barriers to postsecondary academic success. The Idaho State Board of Education shares these concerns and has identified several goals as part of its 2012 strategic plan, including a focus to increase the number of Idaho residents with postsecondary education. According to the board, 31 percent of adults between the ages of 25 and 34 have a postsecondary degree or credential. By 2020, the board's goal is to increase that number to 60 percent.

Achieving this goal will rely not only on the ability of students to complete additional education but also Idaho's ability to recruit and retain an educated workforce. A better understanding of barriers to postsecondary success, including factors such as financial resources, academic readiness, and the state's overall economic and workforce needs, will assist legislators in making future decisions about education reform.

To provide recommendations for future policy and planning, our study is designed to address the following questions and evaluate the relationship between students' academic pursuits and the state's employment needs:

1. How is postsecondary education defined in Idaho? What criteria are used to measure postsecondary educational attainment?
2. According to stakeholders, what factors currently affect high school seniors in pursuing postsecondary education? What role does culture and family expectations play in making these decisions?
3. What role does the state and other organizations play in encouraging high school graduates to pursue postsecondary education in Idaho?
4. How do other states encourage or incentivize postsecondary education?
5. What are the current and future needs for Idaho employers in terms of an educated workforce?

6. When considering future job growth in terms of total growth and associated education levels, how do employment projections align with the state's current education goals?

Appendix B

Survey Results

We surveyed school counselors, TRIO staff, and current middle and high school students to determine what barriers to postsecondary education Idahoans experience. We used a combination of web-based and paper-based surveys to best meet the needs of the participants.

The paper-based survey of 72 counselors (out of approximately 100 attendees) was completed by participants at a fall conference of the Idaho Association of School Counselors.

The web-based survey went to TRIO staff from around the state. We coordinated with the TRIO offices at Boise State University, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, and the University of Idaho. Of the approximately 50 staff who received the survey, 28 responded.

We received feedback from a focus group of 18 TRIO students indicating that a paper-based survey may yield more respondents from students because they could have problems accessing a computer and internet to take a web-based survey.

We distributed paper-based surveys to current middle and high school students who participate in TRIO outreach programs. Students were given the survey in their TRIO class by TRIO staff. They completed their answers on a scannable form so that we could quickly process and calculate the results without concerns about data entry errors. Of the nearly 2,000 survey packets we distributed to TRIO staff statewide, we received responses from 710 students.

The results of each of these three surveys are provided on the following pages.

School Counselors Survey

Which grade levels do you primarily work with? (N=72)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Elementary school	35	49
Middle or junior high school	18	25
High school	27	38

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Approximately how many years have you been counseling students? (N=70)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 5	22	31
5 to 10	18	26
More than 10	30	43

Approximately how much of your time do you spend talking with your students about college readiness and college access? (N=72)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
1 to 25 percent	37	51
26 to 50 percent	20	28
51 to 75 percent	6	8
76 to 100 percent	5	7
I generally do not discuss college with my students	4	6

Approximately how much of your time do you spend talking with your students about career placement? (N=71)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
1 to 25 percent	45	63
26 to 50 percent	16	23
51 to 75 percent	3	4
76 to 100 percent	2	3
I generally do not discuss college with my students	5	7

School Counselors Survey—cont.

In your experience, which are the three most common barriers currently facing students in making decisions about postsecondary education? (N=49)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Little or no parental support	32	65
Ability to pay for college	31	63
Poor academic performance while in high school	19	39
Fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations	18	37
Lack of awareness of the importance of college	9	18
Family or other obligations	9	18
Access to financial aid, such as grants or loans	9	18
Lack of interest in attending college	6	12
Insufficient scholarship amounts	4	8
Access to scholarships	0	0
Other	6	12

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Of these barriers, which do you think are the easiest to help students overcome? (N=45)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Lack of awareness of the importance of college	16	36
Ability to pay for college	7	16
Fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations	7	16
Access to financial aid, such as grants or loans	4	9
Poor academic performance while in high school	3	7
Access to scholarships	3	7
Little or no parental support	2	4
Lack of interest in attending college	2	4
Family or other obligations	1	2
Insufficient scholarship amounts	0	0
Other	3	7

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

School Counselors Survey—cont.

Of these barriers, which do you think are the most difficult for students to overcome?
(N=46)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Little or no parental support	17	37
Ability to pay for college	12	26
Poor academic performance while in high school	6	13
Family or other obligations	5	11
Insufficient scholarship amounts	2	4
Access to financial aid, such as grants or loans	1	2
Fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations	1	2
Lack of awareness of the importance of college	0	0
Lack of interest in attending college	0	0
Access to scholarships	0	0
Other	5	11

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Based on your experiences, which type of postsecondary education are students most likely to pursue following high school graduation? (N=51)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Four-year institutions	31	61
Community colleges	18	35
Technical or vocational programs	16	31
Other	7	14

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

TRIO Staff Survey

Which grade levels do you primarily work with? (N=27)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
8th	7	26
9th	24	89
10th	26	96
11th	26	96
12th	27	100

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Approximately how many years have you worked with TRIO students? (N=27)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 5	10	37
5 to 10	12	44
More than 10	5	19

Based on your experiences with students, are they most likely to be interested in (N=27)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Four-year institutions	16	59
Community colleges	9	33
Other	2	7

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Based on your experience with students, where are they most likely to pursue postsecondary education? (N=27)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
In Idaho	26	96
In another state	1	4

TRIO Staff Survey—cont.

In your experience, which are the three most common barriers currently facing students in making decisions about postsecondary education? (N=27)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Ability to pay for college	23	85
Family or other obligations	12	44
Fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations	11	41
Insufficient scholarship amounts	10	37
Poor academic performance while in high school	7	26
Access to financial aid, such as grants or loans	4	15
Lack of awareness of the importance of college	3	11
Little or no parental support	3	11
Access to scholarships	2	7
Lack of interest in attending college	1	4
Other	4	15

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Of these barriers, which do you think are the easiest to overcome? (N=24)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations	6	25
Access to scholarships	4	17
Lack of awareness of the importance of college	3	13
Little or no parental support	3	13
Ability to pay for college	3	13
Access to financial aid, such as grants or loans	3	13
Lack of interest in attending college	1	4
Poor academic performance while in high school	1	4
Family or other obligations	0	0
Insufficient scholarship amounts	0	0
Other	3	13

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

TRIO Staff Survey—cont.

Of these barriers, which do you think are the most difficult to overcome? (N=24)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Ability to pay for college	10	42
Family or other obligations	6	25
Lack of awareness of the importance of college	3	13
Little or no parental support	3	13
Poor academic performance while in high school	3	13
Access to financial aid, such as grants or loans	2	8
Insufficient scholarship amounts	2	8
Lack of interest in attending college	0	0
Fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations	0	0
Access to scholarships	0	0
Other	2	8

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Student Survey

Which type of school do you primarily attend? (N=710)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Traditional public school	694	98
Alternative school	16	2
Charter school	3	< 1
Virtual school	1	< 1

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Which grade are you enrolled in? (N=702)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
8th grade	56	8
9th grade	101	14
10th grade	165	24
11th grade	192	27
12th grade	188	27

Which of the following programs or events you have participated in (select all that apply)? (N=672)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Educational Talent Search	432	64
Upward Bound	262	39
CIS or CIS Junior	163	24
GEAR-UP	66	10
FAFSA Completion Day	17	3
Find Your Path	13	2

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Are you enrolled in any of the following courses (select all that apply)? (N=705)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
None	467	66
Dual credit courses	170	24
Other honors courses	85	12
AP courses	72	10

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Does your school have a college/career counselor? (N=680)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	362	53
No	227	33
Not sure	91	13

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Student Survey—cont.

Are you planning to attend school beyond high school? (N=699)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	640	92
No	13	2
Not sure	46	7

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

If you planning to attend school beyond high school, which type of school? (N=704)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
4-year college or university	521	74
Community college	76	11
Professional or technical school	65	9
Other	55	8
Not applicable	24	3

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Which type of degree or program will you be pursuing? (N=700)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Bachelor's degree or higher	460	66
Other	82	12
Professional or technical certificate	75	11
Associate's degree	74	11
Not applicable	33	5

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Where do you plan to attend college? (N=703)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Undecided	281	40
In Idaho	262	37
Out of state	182	26

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

If you don't plan on attending school beyond high school, what are your plans? (N=441)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Work	209	47
Other	124	28
Military	92	21
Attend to family obligations	51	12

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Student Survey—cont.

When thinking about education after high school, what are the top three challenges you face in making decisions? (N=672)

	Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Ability to pay for college	557	83
Access to financial aid, such as grants or loans	226	34
Access to scholarships	208	31
Likelihood of getting a job once I complete additional education	205	31
Insufficient scholarship amounts	165	25
Fear or uncertainty about postsecondary academic expectations	164	24
Poor academic performance while in high school	141	21
Family or other obligations	102	15
Lack of support from my parents or family	83	12
Lack of interest in attending college	76	11

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Appendix C

Complete College Idaho

The State Board of Education created Complete College Idaho as a framework to meet its 60 percent goal. The following table lists the board’s strategies and steps to meet the goal:

Strengthen the Pipeline	<p>Develop intentional advising along the K–20 continuum</p> <p>Prepare students for postsecondary education before exiting high school</p> <p>Support accelerated high school to postsecondary pathways</p>
Transform Remediation	<p>Develop a statewide framework for transformational models of remedial placement and support. The statewide framework will accomplish the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine common statewide placement levels, and align assessments and data for placement decision making • Establish common elements for remedial support programs but leave room for local innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Base upon learning outcomes – Embrace emerging best practice models such as co-requisite, emporium, or embedded support and be linked to and through gateway courses • Require institutions justify alternate or modified approaches with data and evidence • Require institutions include remediation transformation plan with goals and benchmarks in their annual strategic plans to the State Board of Education
Demystify College	<p>Create a student web portal with clearly articulated pathways to certificates and degrees</p> <p>Implement systemic advising that links education and careers</p> <p>Communicate strong, clear, and guaranteed statewide articulation and transfer options to students and families</p>
Structure for Success	<p>Package certificate and degree programs for accelerated completion</p> <p>Create a cost effective delivery option for students in eastern Idaho</p> <p>Engage faculty as the leaders of course quality and continuous improvement</p>
Reward Progress and Completion	<p>Establish metrics and accountability tied to institutional mission for measuring state and institution progress toward completion goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use data to drive statewide and institution investment choices • Recognize and reward progress and completion through performance funding

Source: State Board of Education

Responses to the Evaluation



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER

GOVERNOR

January 12, 2012

Rakesh Mohan, Director
Office of Performance Evaluations
954 W. Jefferson Street
Boise, Idaho 83702

Dear Rakesh,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the impressive, in-depth research and data surveying which your office conducted to produce this Postsecondary Education Barriers report.

I am supportive of the final report recommendations concerning public school guidance counselors, better student statistics, and cooperation between the State Board of Education and the Idaho Department of Labor. Several themes raised by the report are being addressed by my administration's strategic state priorities – including those you have documented at the State Board of Education – and our college completion agenda.

While I am optimistic that we are moving toward more college attendance and completion, the challenges before us remain significant. Programs such as the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship program, started in FY 2008 as a financial need-based State assistance initiative, have been hampered by the national recession. Recent economic difficulties also have required reducing State budget support for postsecondary education. Idaho's general revenue trend appears to be turning the corner, and future prospects – while guarded – are somewhat more optimistic.

In fulfilling my commitment to aid higher education as Idaho's fiscal conditions improve, I am recommending increased FY 2013 General Fund budget allocations for community colleges and our four-year public institutions. These FY 2012-FY 2013 changes amount to \$4.4 million (19.0 percent) for our three community colleges, as well as \$16.9 million (8.1 percent) for Idaho's three universities and one college. If approved by the Legislature, those enhanced budget levels should reduce pressure on future tuition/fee increases and address the affordability barrier cited in your report.

An educated workforce is vital for creating more career opportunities for the people of Idaho. Along with increased focus on higher education budgets, my FY 2013 budget recommendation designates \$5 million for an initiative known as the Idaho Global Entrepreneurial Mission or IGEM. This effort is intended to foster strategic investment, collaboration of expertise, product and process development, and services to stimulate long-term economic growth for Idaho. With this additional level of support – leveraged by partnership with the private sector – I expect our public universities and the Idaho Department of Commerce will collaborate to make this effort a long-term success.

Thank you for an opportunity to review your report on this critical education policy issue.

As Always – Idaho, "Esto Perpetua"

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C.L. Butch Otter". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "O" at the end.

C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor of Idaho

CLO/rmb



IDAHO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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January 12, 2012

Rakesh Mohan, Director
Office of Performance Evaluation
954 W. Jefferson St.
Boise, ID 83720

Dear Mr. Mohan:

On behalf of the Idaho State Board of Education, I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to formally respond to your office's findings, conclusions, and recommendations reported in the Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education report.

Recommendation 2.1: The Board supports establishing a Statewide Counselor Coordination position within the Department of Education. Obviously, this would have to be balanced with other critical priorities within the Department and the funding available. Additionally, board personnel are in the process of implementing a statewide counselor training program funded by the College Access Challenge Grant. The goal is to provide training to all secondary counselors in the state over the next two years at no cost to school districts.

Access to financial aid is a significant barrier to postsecondary education. Secondary school counselors play a pivotal role in informing students and families regarding the financial aid that is available, as well as assisting students with the processes required to receive various types of financial aid. Another related project funded by the College Access Challenge Grant is the statewide "FAFSA Event." This event has made a positive impact in student and parental understanding of accessing postsecondary education financial aid options. Idaho can boast a marked increase in FAFSA completion over the past three years, from approximately 80,000 in 2008 to 110,000 in 2010. Feedback gathered during this time suggests that the event has evolved from helping students get started on their financial aid application process to addressing complex application issues requiring help from a financial aid professional.

Recommendation 2.2: The Board supports the reduction in the student to counselor ratio. Additional funding and guidance to the school districts will be necessary to facilitate this change. A tight budget environment often results in the reduction of personnel within the school districts. Districts will often first cut those positions considered administrative or which do not have direct student contact within the classroom. Secondary school counselors often fall into this category.

Recommendation 3.1: The Board supports the increase of funding for need based scholarships. Board staff is currently evaluating all scholarship programs managed by the Office of the State Board of Education. This includes evaluating the intent of each scholarship, whether the scholarship is successfully meeting that intent, and whether the original intent is relevant to today's needs, such as providing greater access and increasing retention and completion rates. As part of this process, staff has already identified additional data needed to fully analyze the effectiveness of each scholarship. This evaluation process includes determining how to gather the necessary data.

A state's scholarship portfolio should include a need and merit based scholarships. Those resources must also be targeted to those who are likely to be successful. Prior to establishing additional scholarship programs or shifting funds from the limited merit based statewide programs to need based programs, this analysis will need to be completed. Consideration of those scholarships provided directly by our public institutions will also need to be taken into consideration.

Recommendation 3.2: The State Board of Education recognizes the value of partnerships within the community, as well as statewide to further its postsecondary education goals. One barrier to postsecondary education is that of culture and the need of various population groups to recognize the importance of postsecondary education. This can most effectively be done through efforts established by and within the local community. To that end, the Board and Board staff continue to work to establish sustainable partnerships. Due to the rural nature of the state, these partnerships can be most effectively accomplished by our public postsecondary institutions within their communities.

Recommendation 4.1: The Board is very committed to using data about the programs, degrees, and graduates of all Idaho postsecondary institutions, particularly those under its purview. Simply capturing those data will not efficiently allow the Board to track Idaho's progress toward the 60% goal, because the approach proposed in recommendation 4.1 will not capture Idahoans educated out of state, nor will Idaho's public P-20 statewide longitudinal data system. Thus, Board staff is developing a survey to identify the education level of Idahoans, regardless of where they received their postsecondary education. The Board's goal that 60% of Idaho's 25 to 34 year olds will have at least a one-year certificate or higher credential by 2020 was approved by the Board in August 2010 and included as a performance measure in its 2012-2016 Strategic Plan. The purpose of this goal is to improve each Idaho citizen's quality of life and enhance Idaho's global competitiveness. Improving the number of Idaho citizens with postsecondary credentials is one step in that direction. A more qualified workforce will result in

additional businesses coming into the state, increase the state's economic outlook, and results in a better quality of life for all Idaho citizens.

Currently, the Board does not collect graduation data from private degree granting institutions. All institutions, private and public who accept federal financial aid are required to report data, including graduation rates, to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Through IPEDS, Board staff has access to graduation data for many of the private and proprietary institutions within the state. The Board will continue to use this additional data to inform decision making. Additionally, as part of the required state registration process for private schools, board staff collects enrollment and completion rate data, and for postsecondary institutions. Staff will take into consideration the collection of additional data from these institutions in the development of the statewide educational attainment survey.

Recommendation 4.2: The Board of Education currently establishes performance measures and benchmarks through the strategic planning process. This includes not only the establishment of performance measures and benchmarks in the Board's statewide plan, but also performance measures and benchmarks for each individual institution under the Board's governance. The Board approved the framework for the Complete College Idaho Plan at the December State Board of Education meeting with instructions to obtain stakeholder feedback and buy-in. Upon further development, the plan will be brought back to the Board for final approval in June 2012. Recommendation 4.3: Board of Education staff will continue to collect and use data on scholarship award applicants as available. (see Recommendation 3.1). This information will be used in determining the effectiveness of our statewide programs in the future.

Recommendation 5.1: The alignment of postsecondary programs and their graduates with workforce needs is important to the Board. The Board wants education in Idaho to meet future workforce needs, but recognizes that maintaining the status quo is not enough. It wants public education to proactively inject the future employment and business environment with individuals that can meet the needs for jobs of today and tomorrow. The Board's 60% goal is only one measure the Board will be using going forward to meet its mission: "To provide leadership, set policy, and advocate for transforming Idaho's educational system to improve each Idaho citizen's quality of life and enhance global competitiveness." To that end, additional work will continue to be done to align postsecondary attainment to projected workforce needs. The Board Office has partnered in the past with the Department of Labor and the Workforce Development Council and will continue to do so in the future.

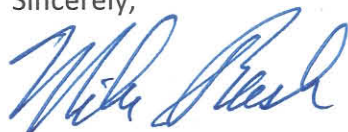
The Board is in the process of developing a statewide longitudinal data system. When completed, this system will track postsecondary students beyond graduation and into the workforce. The Board staff and the institutions under the governance of the Board are currently working on both data sharing agreements, as well as the IT architecture to facilitate electronic data file transfers.

Recommendation 5.2: The Board and Idaho's public postsecondary institutions are currently working with the Department of Labor to develop data sharing agreements beyond those that

are already in place (e.g., nursing school graduate tracking into the workforce). The Gates Foundation funded the WICHE Multi-State Data Exchange pilot, which is working to identify inter-agency agreements within states (to include K-12, postsecondary, and workforce), and among agencies in Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and Hawaii.

In conclusion the Board office would like to recognize the work done by the Office of Performance Evaluation Staff, particularly Amy Lorenzo and Bryon Welch. Their efforts to share the results of their research as well as maintain an open dialog regarding the issues has been productive and helpful for the Board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Rush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Rush" clearly distinguishable.

Mike Rush
Executive Director



STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

TOM LUNA
STATE SUPERINTENDENT
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

January 12, 2012

Rakesh Mohan, Director
Office of Performance Evaluations
Idaho State Legislature
Statehouse

Dear Mr. Mohan,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Office of Performance Evaluation's Study on Barriers to Post Secondary Completion. Your report is of utmost importance to the economy of our state and the state's viability in the future. Our State Board of Education has an ambitious goal of 60 percent of adults between 25 and 34 years attaining a college degree or certificate by 2020. Currently, only 34 percent of adults have an associate's degree or more. If we are to attain this goal as a state, we must understand the barriers.

The Department of Education is committed to Idaho's students being career and college ready when they graduate from an Idaho high school. The programs passed by the Legislature, as outlined in Students Come First, will enhance students' opportunities for the future including, but not limited to: student engagement, access and greater equity to classroom technology, greater self-motivation to take advantage of advanced opportunities such as dual credit courses paid for by the state, and more course offerings. In addition, the Legislature passed higher standards in math and English Language Arts and funded the requirement for all high school juniors to take a college entrance exam before graduation.

While barriers to higher education are often as varied as students themselves, more opportunities for students will help create a culture where it is expected to go on after high school. While I favor many of OPE's recommendations, including better student data systems, I do not believe all the recommendations in the OPE report are necessary or will decrease barriers.

The following are the Department's responses to the recommendations given in the executive section of the report concerning the Department.

Recommendation 2.1: The Department of Education should have a dedicated position to serve as a statewide k-12 counselor coordinator. This person would spearhead communications efforts at the state level and coordinate training for all school counselors across the state.

Just as the responsibility of creating a college attending culture is not simply the counselor's job in the high school, we believe the same is true at the State Department of Education. All coordinators who work to improve student achievement have the responsibility of communicating with counselors on relevant topics whether it is the Department's assessment director or communications director. When we isolate the college culture to one person, it often leaves others feeling it is only that person's responsibility. If the state were to add an additional FTE, I would suggest a coordinator who works on helping students become postsecondary-ready through advanced opportunities including dual credit,



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TOM LUNA
STATE SUPERINTENDENT
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Advanced Placement, or college entrance exams. It would seem to me that a position focused on expanding opportunities for students, rather than focused only on communications for adults, would be a more prudent and effective use of state dollars.

Recommendation 2.2: The Department should take steps to decrease the student to counselor ratio, particularly for those positions that provide education and career counselor.

The responsibility for a college-going culture should be all educators in a school, not focused on one person. While counselors provide excellent service, it would be difficult to add enough employees to make this recommendation meaningful at this time. Given the limited resources of the state, the Superintendent's priority is raising salaries for current employees to ensure retention and recruitment of the best and the brightest, rather than diluting a limited pool of salary dollars. In addition, more strategies should be incorporated to help schools create a climate where high school graduation, career counseling, and matriculation to postsecondary education are part of every certified staff's responsibility, not just career counselors.

Thank you for all of you and your staff's work in preparing this report and for the opportunity to provide input on the final recommendations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Luna", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

TOM LUNA
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

cc: State Board of Education

January 12, 2012

Rakesh Mohan, Director
Office of Performance Evaluations
Idaho Legislature
954 W. Jefferson St.
Boise, ID 83720-0055

Dear Director Mohan,

Thank you for including the Idaho Department of Labor in your study on reducing barriers to postsecondary education. Our department is committed to advancing the state's goal to provide Idahoans with the best career and training information possible and Idaho businesses with a skilled and talented workforce. To that end allow me to highlight the importance of the following issues noted in your study:

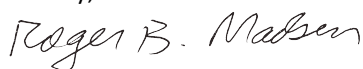
1. Since becoming part of the Department of Labor, the number of sites and users accessing Idaho's Career Information System has doubled. This unique system delivers a high level of customized data that the department currently gathers on Idaho occupations, wages, and education choices to Idaho students and job seekers throughout the state. As this report points out, the system plays a critical role in reducing barriers to postsecondary education and should be supported and maintained within the Idaho Department of Labor to ensure Idaho schools – and the public – continue to easily access it at no cost.
2. Continued partnerships between the Idaho Department of Labor, the Idaho Workforce Development Council, the State Board of Education and other stakeholders to develop education and workforce research studies will result in data-driven policy recommendations that allow Idahoans and the state's businesses to thrive in today's global economy. Producing and sharing longitudinal data on what classes postsecondary students take and where their careers lead them will allow all of us to better assess occupational skills gaps in Idaho's existing and emerging industries and measure the effectiveness of our education and workforce system investments. A statewide longitudinal database must be developed to do this and using Social Security numbers to match the necessary education and wage records will achieve the greatest accuracy at minimal cost.

As I write this letter, Labor Department and State Board of Education staff are finalizing a grant application that will allow the two agencies to enter into a formal agreement to exchange confidential information. If this grant is funded, the two agencies will be better positioned to collaboratively develop the infrastructure necessary for exchanging data and making stronger data-driven decisions when investing the state's education and workforce development program funds.

Thank you again for the excellent services you provide to Idaho and for the opportunity to provide feedback. The successful pursuit of education and training in growing and emerging occupations and industries contributes heavily to Idaho's economic wellbeing, and more importantly, improves the opportunities for gainful employment for all Idahoans.

Please consider sharing your findings during a presentation to the Idaho Workforce Development Council this spring.

Sincerely,



Roger B. Madsen
Director



Legislative Services Office

Idaho State Legislature

Serving Idaho's Citizen Legislature

Jeff Youtz
Director

January 11, 2012

Rakesh Mohan, Director
Office of Performance Evaluations
Idaho Legislature
PO Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0055

Rakesh,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft report *Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education*. The report includes several recommendations that, if implemented, will provide a more coordinated approach to improving access and affordability to prospective postsecondary students in Idaho.

Recommendation 3.1, in particular, calls for the State Board of Education to work with the Legislature to review current appropriations. Our office supports this recommendation, especially in light of the Office of the State Board of Education's (OSBE) recent trend of allowing state scholarship funds to go unspent. Specifically, \$355,500 of General Funds was reverted in FY 2010 and \$947,300 was reverted in FY 2012. Additionally, OSBE did not load into their accounting system the FY 2011 supplemental appropriation of \$30,000 for the Public Safety Officer Scholarship program and these funds were not disbursed.

While these scholarship moneys, in excess of \$1.3 million, were reverted to back to the General Fund and were not lost, per se, they were not used for their intended scholarship purposes. Therefore, our office will work the JFAC Co-Chairs and the State Board of Education to reassess appropriation levels by scholarship type and recommend necessary adjustments to the appropriation process.

Sincerely,



Cathy Holland-Smith, Manager
Budget & Policy Analysis

Mike Nugent, Manager
Research & Legislation

Cathy Holland-Smith, Manager
Budget & Policy Analysis

Don Berg, Manager
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Wednesday, January 11, 2012

Director Rakesh Mohan
Office of Performance Evaluation
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0055

Dear Mr. Mohan,

Thank you for allowing us to comment on the *Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education Report*. As you know, the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation's vision is to develop a world-class education system that prepares Idahoans for the 21st century and beyond. To achieve this vision requires us to focus our efforts in areas we believe have the highest amount of leverage with results that are measurable.

We selected postsecondary degree and credential attainment because of the potential to leverage this issue and because we felt comfortable with the existing or proposed systems that collect data to measure progress. Once we embarked on this initiative we quickly found the existing systems to measure progress, ISEE, SLDS, National Student Clearinghouse, Census Bureaus' American Community Survey, IPEDS and others were not sufficient to the task. As this report repeatedly points out the need to establish a baseline and common indicators from which to measure efforts is critical and foundational. We couldn't agree more.

There were many recommendations in this report we support and promote due to the research.

- When state funds are limited then reallocate toward need- rather than merit-based scholarships and track those recipients to completion of their credential.
- All higher education institutions (public and private) should report on common performance measures and benchmarks.
- Ensure better transferability (portable/stackable credits) between all institutions (public and private) for the benefit of students.
- Support a coordinator and/or coordinating network and task them with the responsibility to resource and equip key stakeholders, specifically counselors, parents and students so the information needed to help students prepare for and complete a credential is readily available.

We also wanted to comment specifically on Chapter 5 of the report because it paints a picture of what this great state will probably look like in 5-10 years. We have a serious concern about the current trajectory of projected job growth in Idaho. Every chance we get we advocate for an increase in efforts to align systems (business, education, government) from cradle to career, that result in a more efficient and effective education pipeline that best serves student needs and provides us with a skilled workforce. Without the correct use of data, accountability, leadership, and alignment, we are concerned that Idaho will not be able to continue to provide the quality of life we are so very fortunate to have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jamie MacMillan".

Jamie MacMillan
Executive Director

Office of Performance Evaluations Reports, 2008–Present

Publication numbers ending with “F” are follow-up reports of previous evaluations. Publication numbers ending with three letters are federal mandate reviews—the letters indicate the legislative committee that requested the report.

Pub. #	Report Title	Date Released
08-01	Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications	March 2008
08-02F	State Substance Abuse Treatment Efforts	March 2008
08-03F	Virtual School Operations	March 2008
09-01	Public Education Funding in Idaho	January 2009
09-02F	Higher Education Residency Requirements	January 2009
09-03	Idaho Transportation Department Performance Audit	January 2009
09-04	Feasibility of School District Services Consolidation	February 2009
09-05F	School District Administration and Oversight	February 2009
09-06F	Use of Average Daily Attendance in Public Education Funding	February 2009
09-07F	Child Welfare Caseload Management	February 2009
09-08F	Public Education Technology Initiatives	February 2009
09-09F	Management in the Department of Health and Welfare	March 2009
09-10F	Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications	April 2009
10-01	Operational Efficiencies in Idaho’s Prison System	January 2010
10-02	Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho's Parole Process	February 2010
10-03F	Use of Average Daily Attendance in Public Education	March 2010
10-04	Governance of EMS Agencies in Idaho	November 2010
10-05F	Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications	November 2010
11-01	Distribution and Sale of Liquor in Idaho	January 2011
11-02	Coordination and Delivery of Senior Services in Idaho	February 2011
11-03F	Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho’s Parole Process	February 2011
11-04F	Idaho Transportation Department Performance Audit	March 2011
11-05	Delays in Medicaid Claims Processing	March 2011
11-06	Higher Education Funding Equity	November 2011
11-07	End-Stage Renal Disease Program	November 2011
11-08F	Distribution and Sale of Liquor in Idaho	November 2011
12-01	Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education	January 2012

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