



January 23, 2019

Greg Wilson
Senior Policy Advisor- Education
Governor Brad Little
Capitol Building, Room E219
700 W. Jefferson St.
Boise, ID 83720-0034

Dear Greg,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Charter School Administrator bill being advocated by the Idaho Charter School Network. Bluum supports the effort to provide additional flexibilities to public charter schools. Charter schools by legislative intent are supposed to “operate independently from the existing traditional school district structures.” A key flexibility for charter schools is who they can hire to run their buildings.

According to the National Alliance for Public Charter schools “28 state charter school laws do not require certification of any kind.” This means that public charter schools in most states are able to hire and pay administrators who have been successful in the military, law, business or government to operate and manage schools. In fact, in Idaho we have some outstanding public charter schools that are already being run by non-traditional school leaders, but under current statute these individuals are not funded as school administrators.

Thus, charter schools have to hire a certificated administrator to carry out “legally required” activities. This drives up the cost of doing business for some of our best public charter schools as they hire a certificated administrator purely for compliance purposes. What’s more, it is an additional cost of entry for some outstanding leadership talent that might otherwise work in our schools and serve our students.

Research tells us that, “effective principals are key to strengthening teaching and schools, but there has been an insufficient investment in recruiting, preparing and supporting great principals, particularly in high-poverty schools.” In the \$17 million Federal Charter Schools Program grant Bluum received in 2018 on behalf of the state of Idaho we committed ourselves to serving “economically disadvantaged and minority students.”

According to the Federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* one of the keys to delivering on this commitment is creating charter schools that are “exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.” Flexibility in who can lead and be paid to administer a public charter school is one of the most important flexibilities available to a public charter school governing board.

To be clear, no one wants to open up the charter school leadership ranks to just anyone who thinks they can run a school. That would be a mistake. What the Idaho Charter School Network is proposing is a streamlined, but highly rigorous alternative certification process that would allow a public charter school board of directors to hire the administrator they think can best serve their school and children. So long as that person:

1. Has at least a bachelor's degree;
2. Passes a criminal background check;
3. Completes three credit hours in statewide framework for teacher evaluations; and
4. Submits a letter from the board of directors stating that the board has carefully considered the administrator, has chosen to hire them, and is committed to overseeing their performance in compliance with an approved charter authorizer performance certificate.

In addition to the four points above, to be eligible for the certificate, an individual must have one or more of the following experience criteria:

1. Five or more years of experience administering a public school;
2. A post-baccalaureate degree and a minimum of five years of experience in school administration, public administration, business administration or military administration;
3. Successful competition of a nationally recognized charter school leaders fellowship; or
4. Five or more years of teaching experience.

We all want the very best leaders we can attract to all of our public schools. Our children deserve nothing less. However, by design and in state statute, public charter schools are supposed to be different and the proposed legislation for an alternative pathway for strong charter school administrators is not only good public policy but a smart way to help get great leaders with nontraditional backgrounds into some of our public charter schools. It is just another tool, tried and tested in other states, to try and better serve Idaho families and students. In a state as rapidly growing as ours it makes sense to seek additional flexibilities for our schools, and charters are the perfect place to test such flexibilities.

Thanks very much to you and Governor Little for considering this option for Idaho's public charter schools. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you would like to discuss. I would be very happy to bring to you some of the current and prospective school leaders this bill would benefit if it were to become law.

Sincerely,



Terry Ryan
CEO
Bluum

Cc: Emily McClure and Blake Youde



**Advancing
Quality
Improving
Achievement**

PRESIDENT

Bill Russell

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joe Bruno

Building Hope

Marta Reyes-Newberry

Reyes-Newberry &
Associates

Terry Ryan

Bluum

Renita Thukral

National Alliance for Public
Charter Schools

Chris Yorgason

Yorgason Law Offices

February 13, 2019

Idaho Senate Education Committee

Dean Mortimer, Chairman

Idaho State Capitol

700 W. Jefferson St.

Room WW54

Boise, ID 83720

RE: Support for SB 1058

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee:

The Idaho Charter School Network fully supports SB 1058 regarding flexibility in charter school choices for Administrator. While some charter schools are best served by traditionally-certified Administrators with attendant University training, some face other issues or needs that are not best served by traditional administrator certification. Charter schools are designed to be places for experimentation and differentiation, and this bill will allow charter schools to employ administrators who will best serve the needs of the school.

Note that unlike district schools, charter schools are regulated on an annual basis by the Idaho Public Charter School Commission. Each charter school is evaluated pursuant to Performance Certificates that ensure the optimal education of students. Given the supervision and outside evaluation, which does not occur in other public schools, it is reasonable to allow flexibility with regard to hiring non-traditional administrators. Further, the bill provides solid protections that will ensure the safety of the children's education.

We urge the passage of SB 1058.

Sincerely,

Bill Russell

Dr. Bill Russell

President



ALTURAS
INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

151 N Ridge Avenue, Idaho Falls, ID 83402 | Office: 208-522-5145 | Fax: 208-522-5147
Office@AlturasAcademy.org | AlturasAcademy.org

February 12, 2019

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I hope you will join me in supporting SB 1058, which creates a new charter school administrator certificate.

My name is Michelle Ball and I am the co-founder and Executive Director of Alturas International Academy in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Our first year was affected by the limited pool of applicants to choose from who held the proper certification to fill our administrator position. The individual we hired did not understand our vision or share our philosophy of education. His traditional approach made our first year very difficult to adhere to our charter, the commitments we made to the Charter Commission, our students and parents, as well as our grant from Albertsons. His focus was solely on the skeleton of our institution. While our structure is important, he lacked the skills to support school philosophy and vision, which is the heart of the school and what makes our student body successful. In the end, we parted ways before the year was over and had to find an interim principal to support us. This was a very trying time and without the dedication of our board, business manager, office staff, and myself this situation would have impaired our ability to succeed in achieving a solid foundation for our charter.

If we had the flexibility of SB 1058, there would have been more candidates who could have filled this position, one of them being myself. We would have found an administrator who would have better fulfilled the vision and mission of our charter. Unfortunately, given the situation, we felt our charter was being compromised and it is only because of the board's and my deep commitment that we were able to stay on track. We spent a tremendous amount of time trying to help our former administrator understand our educational philosophy, unfortunately, his mindset would not change.

I am the most qualified in our school to be the administrator to fulfill the commitments of our charter. I hold a bachelor's degree, have a wealth of experience and founded Alturas International Academy, yet my position is not funded by the state. This is unfair to the school and students that we serve as my qualifications are way beyond those who have the needed state requirements. Fortunately, our new principal and I have a great partnership, but it took a lot of effort to find someone who believed in our mission.

SB 1058 will allow my school and other charter schools to find an administrator that best suits their mission and reach their highest potential. The criteria ensure that the individual is qualified and completes the teacher evaluation training, while also requiring our charter school board to take responsibility for the hire.

Again, I hope you will join me in supporting SB 1058.

Sincerely,

Michelle Ball
Executive Director
Alturas International Academy



February 13, 2019

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Dean Mortimer
dmortimer@senate.idaho.gov

Re: Support for Senate Bill 1058 concerning Charter Administrators

Dear Senator Mortimer:

I strongly support Senate Bill 1058, which creates a new charter school administrator certificate, and encourage your vote in support. I support this legislation for several reasons.

First, this bill applies to me. I am a co-founder of two charter schools, former Board member, and now current charter school employee. Yet, I am not a traditional educator. I have a juris doctorate degree and am a licensed attorney. I have worked for one of the largest law firms in the world, clerked for a judge on the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of appeals, and served in the U.S. Attorney's office as a federal prosecutor. I also spent six years as general counsel and general business manager to a group of companies based in Idaho, overseeing more than 100 employees and managing a large portfolio of assets and operating companies. I have more than 12 years of legal and business management experience, in addition to several years' experience working in the Idaho Governor's office during the administration of Dirk Kempthorne.

The American Heritage Charter school board hired me, because I have a deep understanding and commitment to its mission and vision, and because they believed I could help them better administer and manage its affairs. Although I have a doctoral degree and years of legal and management experience in highly regulated industries, because I don't have traditional educator credentials, the school isn't reimbursed for my wages and I am instead paid out of the school's maintenance and operations budget. Further, the school must employ additional certificated administrators, regardless of need. This is a hardship on the school.

For me to obtain the traditional administrator certificate, I will have to spend a significant amount of money and time to first obtain teacher credentials, work as a teacher for 3 or more years, and then spend tens of thousands more to take additional college courses to get the right certificate to be an administrator. That piece of paper ignores my actual experience and track record in management, and it will shed very little light on my actual ability to lead any organization. This legislation will allow charter boards to consider a broader range of potential administrators (including experienced teachers) and acknowledges that there are capable managers in fields other than education.

Second, charter schools are incubators for educational innovation, and Charter Boards must be empowered to make innovative hiring decisions. Finding a traditional educator who shares the

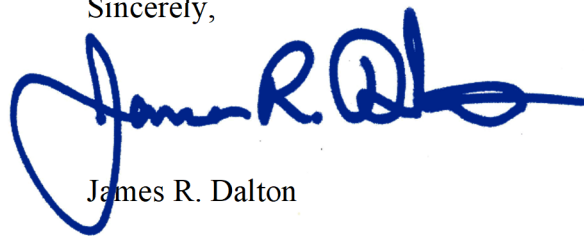
charter vision and is willing to both lead and carry the burden of change is tough. In many instances, the innovative leadership needed for change may come from experienced professionals in other industries, who can bring new ideas and a different perspective to school improvement. If we want more of the same, then we should stick with the traditional structures and mindsets of public education. But, if we want innovation, we need to do things differently. This often requires leadership with unconventional backgrounds.

Third, as a former board member, I have seen, first-hand, how difficult it is to find, hire, and retain good administrators. Traditional administrators (and teachers) perceive great risk in leaving an established school district to work in a school they see as untested or different. They may not accept the innovative vision of a Charter's mission, and they frequently fear burning bridges in a local district if they leave to join a Charter venture. Giving charters the ability to expand their hiring pool will empower Charter boards to find competent professionals of their choice, who both share their vision and who have the aptitude to administer a charter organization.

Finally, I note that the job of a charter school administrator carries with it additional burdens that may deter many traditional administrators from applying. For example, in a traditional school district, an administrator oversees facilities, including managing a maintenance or a custodial department. In a Charter School, the administrator not only *oversees* facilities, he or she may be knee deep in facilities maintenance: shoveling snow, taking out the garbage, and plunging clogged toilets, in between building budgets, meeting with parents, handling student discipline, and supervising the afterschool activities. The risk and the requirements of Charter start-up and maintenance may not appeal to traditional educators who have advanced in their career enough to have met the requirements for a traditional administrative certificate.

Charter boards need the ability to assess their own needs, to be innovative, and to hire the administrator of their choosing. We need to attract new and innovative leaders who are willing to take on the additional burden of disruptive leadership. I am also very supportive of giving Charter boards the ability to hire experienced teachers as Charter Administrators. I encourage your support of Senate Bill 1058 and the creation of the new Charter Administrator certificate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James R. Dalton", with a large, stylized initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

James R. Dalton



An Idaho public charter school creating patriotic & educated leaders

Located in the Historic New Sweden Building
1736 S. 35th W.
Idaho Falls, Idaho
Office Tel: (208) 529-6570
Fax: (208) 529-3344

February 14, 2019

Dear Senator Mortimer,

First of all, I would like to thank you for your service to our great state and your support of public education. There are few areas of more importance than the protection and education of our rising generation. As a charter school founder and board member, I have seen you put your money where your mouth is and appreciate the fact that you aren't afraid to champion public education wherever it successfully occurs.

After several years of trying to gain legislative support for an alternate path to certification for Idaho Public Charter school Administrators, it looks like a compromise that has enough support to pass both houses and survive a governor's veto may be ready! I would like to voice my support of Senate Bill 1058.

American Heritage Charter School, currently employs a highly competent attorney as the Executive Director to the Board. He is capable of running the entire school but we are not able to hire him as an administrator because his doctorate degree and many years of managerial experience don't fit the traditional approved model for a certified school administrator. We currently pay him out of our discretionary funds which is a strain on our budget.

Like all compromises, there are parts of Senate Bill 1058 that I like and parts that I don't like. I would prefer that all references to requiring years of public school teaching experience be deleted. Innovative leaders in public charter schools often come from business backgrounds, not the traditional classroom teacher path. Public charter schools at the administrative level are highly complex small businesses. The finance and budgeting component is well beyond the experience of most classrooms teachers, even though they are experts in their field of endeavor.

A public charter school has all of the requirements for reporting and management and much less money to get the job done! We don't have experts in the "District Office" to help us navigate these areas! We are the "District Office"! Thank you for recognizing the difference between us and our counterparts in the traditional public schools and providing us a bit of flexibility in hiring an administrator.

Senate Bill 1058 is a step in the right direction and we hope you will support this effort and all worthy public charter school legislation that comes before you this year and in the future. I do not consider myself an expert, but I have a good working knowledge of our challenges and would be available to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

/s/ Deby

Deby Infanger
Board Chair, American Heritage Charter School
208-539-7271 debyinfanger@yahoo.com

Idaho Senate Education Committee
Dean Mortimer, Chairman
Meeting Room WW54
Idaho State Capitol
700 W. Jefferson
Boise, ID 8372

Dear Senator Mortimer & Committee members,

I'm writing to share my insights and my opinion of the Charter School Administration bill being advocated by the Idaho Charter School Network. When first approached with this bill my initial reaction was not favorable. In fact it was frustrating for me to hear that this would ever become an option for people. After all, I have spent countless hours attending classes and a countless amount of money paying for advanced degrees to do the work that I'm currently doing. However, I can tell you that this view is not only myopic and ego driven, but it is selfish and it is not what is best for kids.

A pathway into leadership is exactly that. A pathway. When we define one pathway to create a system, we create systems that lack diversity in thinking, lack diversity in the delivery of product, and essentially end up meeting the needs of only part of the population. When we differentiate pathways, we create a system of equity across our schools and our state that ultimately allow for a broader range of individuals to lead school. The more I grappled with this alternate route for certifications for administrators the more I came to understand that degrees are important, and they are one pathway to gain experience. However, they are not the only way and in fact when looking at national data it does not appear that they are proven to be the best way.

In recent months I have worked closely with local charter school leaders that are not certified as charter school administrators. They have a deep-rooted understanding of the interworking of operating and running a school. They have the capacity to lead groups of people, with high standards and a focus on excellence. They understand the tenants of pedagogy and or have surrounded themselves with leaders that do and most importantly they are committed to the success of Idaho students and families.

I encourage you to look at what is best for the students in the state of Idaho. Look beyond the politics, and the 'way we've always done it'. There are great leaders that are capable of running great schools in our midst. Just because their pathway to education was different that what we have all grown accustomed to, does not mean that they will not be effective. I believe that the Charter School Administration bill, in conjunction with a local charter school board of directors, will be rigorous in selecting leaders that will successfully lead Idaho charter schools.

Sincerely,



Monica White
Co-Founder Elevate Academy



February 13, 2019

RE: Support for S1058 – Administrator Certification Bill

I write to express my support for Senate Bill S1058. I believe this bill provides a necessary layer of flexibility for public charter schools and the students they serve. Many states across the nation already provide a similar level of hiring flexibility. In these competitive times of attracting top educational talent, our state should make it possible for talented individuals with diverse experience to enter the hiring process. I appreciate the trust in Boards of Directors to make important hiring decisions, and I appreciate the structure of the bill to ensure only the highest caliber individuals will be able to lead schools.

As a co-founder and co-director of a new public charter school in Garden City, I believe we are experiencing a time when educational needs of students are staying the same in some ways and shifting in others. Various public schools can be educational options for our children and students, and it is important that those various public schools provide different choices. If we can allow a Board of Directors for a charter school the flexibility, as outlined in this bill, to select the appropriate leader for its model, we will see an increased level of student success and choice across our state.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brad Petersen'.

Brad Petersen
Co-Director

PO BOX 86
600 SOUTH AVENUE
DEARY, IDAHO 83823



FAX : 208.877.1713
OFFICE : 208.877.1513
GEMINNOVATION.ORG

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for your continued service to the great state of Idaho. Today, I write in support of S 1058. As a leader of 4 charter schools in Idaho, I have experienced the need to attract and develop the very best talent available in school leadership.

In a succinct statement on the impact of leadership, Robert Birnbaum has said: “Leadership constitutes one of the most critical determinants of ultimate success or failure of a school. The difference between excellence and mediocrity is often a direct reflection of the leadership within an organization”.

There is little doubt that school leader training programs are often helpful in preparing teachers to become school administrators. However, few argue that principalship programs are the only path to becoming an effective school leader. In fact, with some 28 states across the nation already allowing charter schools the flexibility to attract and hire school administrators from other pathways, Idaho creates barriers to attracting charter school administrators from other states with ample relevant experiences. In some instances, these candidates have worked with students from diverse racial backgrounds and low income neighborhoods and have been able to close the achievement gap in innovative ways. These are the kind of leaders we need in our state as we seek to create highly successful learning environments for all students.

The accountability layers the charter school have in place create a high stakes environment where getting the right person in the driver seat is critical to



GEM
INNOVATION SCHOOLS



PO BOX 86
600 SOUTH AVENUE
DEARY, IDAHO 83823



FAX : 208.877.1713
OFFICE : 208.877.1513
GEMINNOVATION.ORG

the survival of the school. Charter school need the flexibility to select that person from a broad field of candidates- including those from private school backgrounds, from other states without similar credentialing requirements, and those with specialized experiences in fields outside of education. I support the flexibility that this bill creates for charter schools and the potential talent pool that it creates for such a critical role.


Jason Bransford

jasonbransford@geminnovation.org

208-339-3735



GEM
INNOVATION SCHOOLS





TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1058

Keith Donahue

February 14, 2019

Senate Education Committee Members:

As a 'non-traditional' school leader, I am writing in support of SB 1058. I am the Executive Director of Sage International School in Boise - a K-12 school of choice serving 1,000 students. From my perspective, SB 1058 is directly in line with the intent and education goals the legislature articulated when it established a charter school system in Idaho:

"It is the intent of the legislature to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, students and community members to establish and maintain public charter schools which **operate independently from the existing traditional school district structure** but within the existing public school system." Idaho Public Charter School Act, Legislative Intent, Idaho Code 33-5202, emphasis added.

In the Idaho Public Charter School Act, the legislature states that charter schools are intended to operate independently to allow them to expand learning opportunities and develop innovative teaching methods and school models. See Idaho Code 33-502. In return for this 'increased autonomy' to create, innovate and operate outside traditional structures, charters are held to a high level of accountability. Charters have a governing board directly overseeing our schools, we have an authorizer that audits our performance (academic, operational, budget) annually, and we are subject to the same academic testing standards as traditional schools. The ultimate accountability charters face is that if we are not providing an exceptional school choice, families and students choose not attend our school, and we close. This 'increased autonomy -- increased accountability' is at the heart of Idaho's Charter School Act and encourages creative, passionate innovators to get involved in charter schools, to take risks, and to push education forward, while also assuring kids are being well cared for.

By subjecting public charter schools to the same 'certificated administrator' requirements as traditional public schools, current law falls short on the 'increased autonomy' side of this balancing act, throwing charter schools square into the 'traditional school district structure' the legislature intended charters to operate outside. HB 1028 restores this balance by creating a 'charter administrator certificate' this certificate increases local autonomy with respect to finding and hiring innovative, non-traditional school leaders while also retaining important qualifying criteria - bachelor's degree, evaluation training, work experience, etc. HB1058 empowers charter school boards to make the right choice for their school; the board and school leader are then responsible for delivering strong academic, operational and financial results.

It is my understanding that most states already do what SB 1058 proposes, they do not subject charter leaders to the traditional school system's 'certified administrator' requirement. What this means for Idaho is that a non-traditional charter administrator who may have successfully run a charter school in another state would not be able to come to Idaho and be a 'charter administrator.' Current law makes it unnecessarily difficult to attract this talent.

To close, I'd like to share my 'non-traditional' path to becoming a school leader. I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Economics. I also earned my Juris Doctor and worked as an Idaho Deputy Attorney General for several years. My client then hired me in a non-attorney capacity to manage multiple state programs. Through these two positions, I gained 10+ years of experience interpreting Idaho law and policy, overseeing state and federal budgets, drafting legislation, complying with rules and policy, and managing personnel - all transferable to school leadership. I left this role to be a stay-at-home dad for five years and, as a new parent, became more focused on and passionate about education. In late 2009, I accepted a founding board member positions with a soon-to-open charter school, Sage International. After serving on the board, I transitioned into employment with Sage International as our Development Director for four years and ultimately, three years ago, into the role of Executive Director.

Due to my non-traditional path into school leadership, I bring a different perspective to my role that I believe pushes our school to innovate and helps my entire team think 'outside the box'. I see and approach our challenges and opportunities differently. I am also well-suited to mitigate many of the risks that can topple a charter, such as navigating the lease/purchase of facilities. Given my non-traditional path, I am not a certificated administrator. I am fortunate that, given the scale of Sage International, I have multiple certificated administrators on my leadership team that lead our Boise campus. As our board launches the a second school, Forge International, we are also fortunate to have a certificated administrator as Head of School for this campus. Other smaller charters (or traditional public schools that are small or in rural districts) may not be as fortunate; the best leader for their school may be a non-non-traditional school leader. HB 1058 allows charter boards to make this 'best choice' for their schools.

Our situation at Sage International is just one example of how current law complicates, rather than fosters, an innovative, non-traditional approach to education in Idaho - undermining legislative intent. I support SB 1058 - and I look forward to serving students, innovating, empowering educators, and expanding educational opportunities in Idaho for many years to come.

Thank you for your time and for your service.

Keith Donahue
Sage International School of Boise
Executive Director
keith.donahue@sageinternationalschool.org



TREASURE VALLEY

CLASSICAL ACADEMY

February 12, 2019

Idaho Senate Education Committee
Dean Mortimer, Chairman
Meeting Room WW54
Idaho State Capitol
700 W. Jefferson
Boise, ID 83720

Dear Chairman Mortimer,

I am writing this letter in support of SB1058. I am not a lobbyist—rather, this bill is of particular importance to me personally because I have committed my second career and the rest of my life to helping Idaho's K-12 students develop into citizens of virtue and intellect.

I am a 24-year Air Force veteran. During my active duty career, I was appointed to lead at a variety of levels, and managed units from 25 up to 9,392 service members; I mentored, rated, and evaluated literally hundreds of men and women; served as an assistant professor at the United States Air Force Academy; was awarded two different research fellowships (one at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University); and oversaw publicly funded annual budgets from \$2.8M with \$42.8M worth of assets up to \$1.3B with \$7.3B in assets and infrastructure.

After retiring from active duty, I was hired by Northside Education, Inc., an Atlanta-based 501-c-3 educational corporation, to help stand up a new K-12 charter school. First serving as assistant principal, I was then promoted to principal, where in my final year I led a school with 630 students, 67 faculty and staff, and an annual operating budget of \$6.3M. While serving as principal, the school maintained a 97% faculty retention rate, a 95% student retention rate, and an approximate 1,200 student wait list.

Significantly, while serving as principal, the school successfully underwent AdvancEd/SACS accreditation as an independent K-12 charter school—and was awarded 3 powerful practices to be benchmarked by other schools. Equally significantly, the school just recently successfully re-chartered after its inaugural 5-year charter.

The state of Georgia does not require charter school teachers or administrators to be certified, and so I launched my K-12 educational career without certification. Incidentally, we used a teacher evaluation framework very similar to the Danielson framework we use here in Idaho.

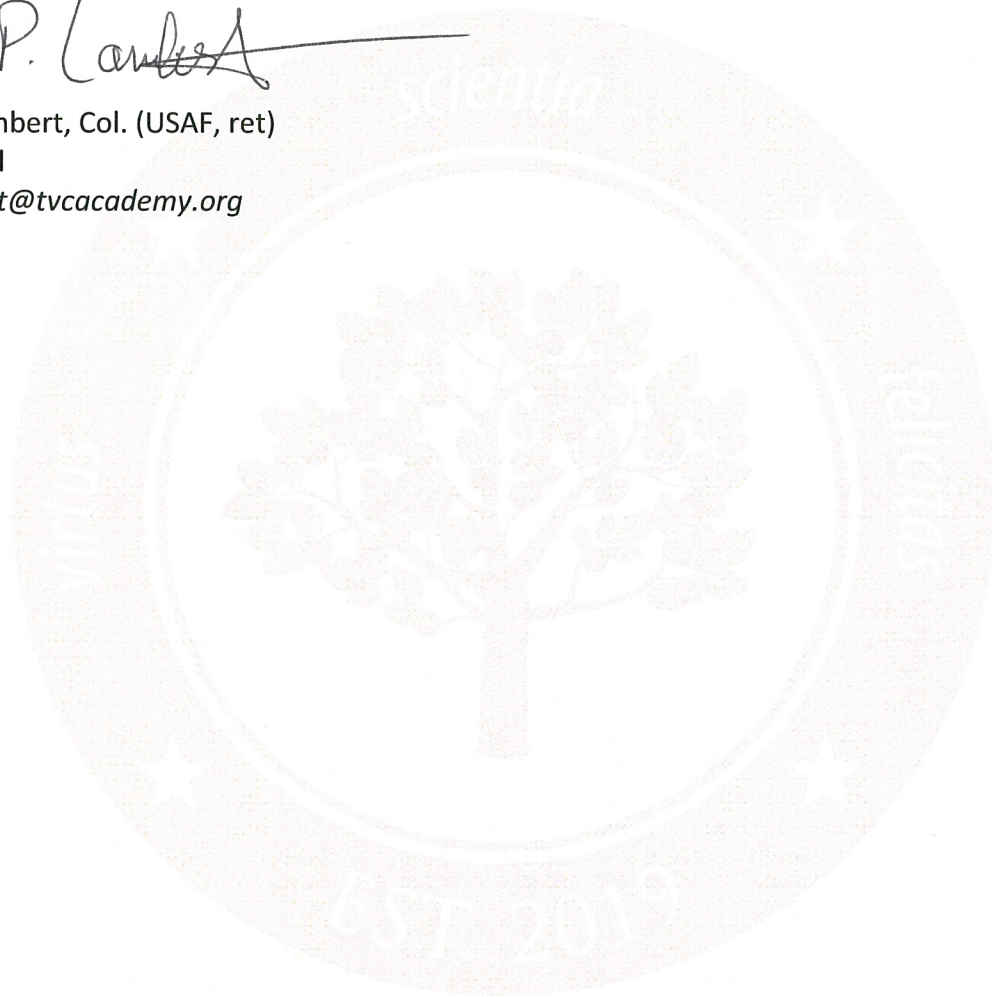
I humbly and respectfully submit to you that the passage of SB1058 will allow me to continue to invest my life's experience into our children—and the future of our state and our nation. Equally importantly, such legislation will make it possible for the state of Idaho to attract more innovative and experienced career professionals to the vital work of K-12 public education.

I respectfully request that you support and pass this very important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. P. Lambert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

S. P. Lambert, Col. (USAF, ret)
Principal
slambert@tvcacademy.org



Upper Carmen Public Charter School, Inc.

12 Ethel's Way ~ PO Box 33 ~ Carmen, ID 83462

Phone: (208) 756 ~ 4590



Governor Brad Little
Capitol Building
700 W. Jefferson St. #228
Boise, Idaho 83720 – 0034

Governor Little:

Just a quick note to encourage your support of the Charter School administrator's certificate being sponsored by the Charter School Network.

We are a small charter school serving the Salmon area, and have been in existence for the past 14 years. During this time we have been recognized nationally and state wide—including Superintendent Luna's 5 star school status, and a pending visit by Superintendent Ybarra to see how our mastery learning programs work.

What has made our program so successful and beneficial to students is the individual and specialized program including the "culture" put in place at our inception. Basic to this is staff. Staff who have been trained to our specific program, staff who buy into this program and staff who are above all dedicated to student learning.

Over the years we have hired highly educated and intelligent people as teaching assistants, trained, mentored and observed their performance, then those true educators are financially supported in obtaining teaching certificates. We have found that the "grow your own" teachers are significantly better adapted to our program than those trained by the colleges of education.

We definitely believe the same is true for our choice of administrator. Again taking a trained teacher with a proven record of meeting our culture and standards. Taking the time and expense to meet the existing principal certifications standards will not, in our opinion make a better administrator for our school. We also are beyond extremely hesitant to hire an administrator who had not gone through our mentoring system for several years. In fact we would likely close the school as opposed to going that route. Currently we have two teachers we will gladly turn our school over to if the proposal presented by the ICSN is passed.

As a point of reference, our son is Jay Smith and we have met on the Governor's trail ride two years ago and at political functions in Salmon.

Sue Smith, Administrator and Founder
Jim Smith, Superintendent



Upper Carmen Public Charter School's mission is to develop each student to their greatest potential, academically, socially, and emotionally. Successful students emulate ethics of confidence, productivity, and responsibility. A foundation of success in the primary grades sets the course for continued growth.