ISDB Committee Meeting
November 10, 2005
ISDB Campus, Gooding, Idaho

CART (Communication Access Real Time Translation) transcript

5:00 p.m. Laird Stone called the meeting to order.

Laird: Can you hear me in the back of the room? If any of you want to speak and you haven't signed up, if you would do so right now. We have about fifty people that have signed up to speak. As you can see, the interpreter is standing on the white box. If you want to speak from up there you can do that. If you need the services in terms of voicing, she will do that also. You just need to let her know what type of services you need. If, when you sit down, you decide you have something else to say, the e-mail address is out on the table. We will make sure that everybody has that address. Also, we have the mailing address for the State Board and you can get in additional comments if you didn't get the opportunity to speak or think of something else. Our next meeting will be on the 28th of November in Boise and those comments will be reviewed at that time. Comments that we get prior to that will be sent to a Committee member so we will know about those.

A little more on the purpose. For those of you who didn't get a chance to see the news stories on the TV, one of the speakers last night had the wrong name but that was all right. We've straightened that out. As we tried to make clear in that interview, there are no set recommendations. There have been no decisions made in terms of any of the things that the Committee was directed to look at. We were directed to look at several different items. This came about last year from JFAC after ISDB's budget presentation. They asked the State Board of Education to appoint a committee to take a look at the service delivery of the state school. That is not unusual. About ten or eleven years ago, the same thing was done and a written report was prepared at that time. The State Board on a regular basis takes a look at the other agencies that it oversees as well as the colleges and universities needing service deliveries. It was not an unusual request.

What we were directed to do is make sure that the proper statutory authority existed to make sure that the systems that the state school is using to reach the students is correct and if they weren't we were to suggest recommendations as to how to change that statutory authority. We were to review the roles and responsibilities of the local school districts dealing with outreach programs and the service delivery to both the vision and hearing impaired students in the state of Idaho; look at the structure of the residential program, the outreach program; and identify funding issues, technology issues, curriculum issues, regional versus other issues. All of those items are looked at here or whether it should exist in another place. It is to look at the whole structure and system and then prepare a report to the State Board. The report will be given to the State Board at the December board meeting which is December 1st in Boise. *(Correction note: this meeting will be held in Pocatello.)*

Then the Board passes that on to the legislature. The Board may agree with the recommendations, they may not agree with the recommendations, they may add some and then pass it on to the legislature. The legislature will then review the report and if they deem necessary they will take the steps to carry out the steps or any others that they deem appropriate after they have gone through it. I can assure that you will see some legislation to cleanup the statutory authority dealing with the service delivery plans for the state school. The statutes that governed the state school in the past were passed in about 1920 or 30 and they are completely outdated in the authority they give the state school and this agency to use the outreach programs. So at a minimum that type of statutory cleanup will occur. It will be from one the legislators that will propose that legislation with the assistance of the State Board.

A little more on the format. We will try and keep it to comments; however, one of the Committee members may have a comment and we will not turn it into a question and answer session, but the Committee members may interrupt you and clarify something. We will keep in the three minute format. To get started the first sheet I have, I have Mary Dunne, Gail and Sherry.

Audience: Could you introduce the Committee?

Laird: I was born and raised in Gooding and I am a little prejudiced on some of the issues. We have Senator Hal Bunderson, Representative Wendy Jaquet, Mert Burns, Michael Graham, Mary Whitaker, Cyndi Hippler, and Mike Sturmak. Does that take care of it. Any other preliminary comments from anybody on the Committee? All right. If we could have Mary up first and then Gail and Shirley.

Mary: I will try and take less than three minutes. I am Mary and I have worked at ISDB for many years. I have had many different jobs. I have worked in the classroom and in outreach. I have worked in outreach with a number of families who have moved to the Magic Valley to be near this school; many families who received early intervention; families who after that have gone into public schools. A variety of choices and options that parents have decided upon. I wanted to speak primarily because reading the minutes and attending a couple of meetings I know that you have recommendations made to you that may not consider or know the current service delivery model entirely and I wanted to put a face to my position so that you could call me, contact me for any more information that you might need. I want you to know that in outreach we work with birth to three year olds with the infant toddler program. I talked to their manager just earlier today, Mary Jones, and certainly they wanted you folks to know that they rely heavily on ISDB services for helping educate parents, offer communication options, help build family relationships, prepare children and their families for the transitions in their lives, and support the communications at home. I'd like you to know that we have an inner agency agreement with the Health and Welfare infant toddler program. I have copies of that if you would like. I will provide them after the meeting which would probably be best. I also have an overview of how the outreach program interacts from birth to graduation with infant toddler and public schools and ISDB residential programs. Thank you. Any questions?

Laird: When you step up there please give your name.

Gail: I am the audiologist here at ISDB. I am a pediatric audiologist and an educational audiologist and one of the first in the state to get a doctorate. I specialize in children and I have worked most of my career with deaf schools. I am someone who has tested hearing and someone who works with children and knows about deafness. When I used to travel with the school here and in my previous job I never felt that I gave a complete test as I give here. That is due to the fact that I have excellent equipment and I have kept up with the latest techniques and technology. I have very good equipment here. I am able to see to all of the students here at the school's needs. If that is replacing the hearing aids, ear molds, checking and fixing the auditory trainers and if they have a medical problem. Sorry, I am a little nervous. I also keep current because I take a lot of continuing education classes and I am also the president of the Idaho Speech and Hearing Association. All the audiologists in this area are very good friends. We get together once a month and we talk and collaborate together. This has created harmony among the audiologists in this area and it also cuts down on territorialism. In this profession and many other professions it is evidence based practice. It is backed by impartial research and without making any decision I hope that we have unbiased research to back our decisions. I chose to move here thirteen and a half years ago because I wanted my sons to grow up in a small town. I felt that a smaller town would give them more opportunities to participate in sports and other curricular activities. The students here at ISDB have the same educational and extracurricular activities that other students do. They have all had students that are successful in life. Bigger schools and bigger towns don't always mean better. I also teach a sound science class for the sign language program at CSI. I am able a bring a prospective to deafness that no other program in this state has. I run the Lion's Club loner hearing bank and along with this foundation and the hearing aid company I was able to get a grant and provide 34 students in the state of Idaho with hearing aids and they would not otherwise have had the chance to of hearing aids. I could go on and on. What I am trying to point out is there are quality people that work here at the school. It is not necessarily an advantage to our students to be in a bigger city and in a bigger school. This school has an outstanding facility that would be hard to get any where else. I hope that any decisions you make are well researched, unbiased and reliable. Thank you.

Shirley: I am the director of media services here at the school. I am also on the Idaho State Library Advisory Board and on the CSI Board. I believe I go back a little bit too. I have worked here for ten years. I was in public education as a district librarian. I went back to school and got my master's degree in deaf education when I came here and I think a lot of the staff at this school have their master's degrees in their various fields. Our media center I feel is the top in the state for the budget that we have. We provide a variety of services for the

visually impaired, hard-of-hearing students and individuals in the state. We loan materials not only to children, but to adults. And they can have access to our materials through our web page, which some parts of it are still in the works, but it is a very good web page and you will find useful information there. We are automatized. We have a consortium with OCLC where we get our full records and we do inner library loans for all staff. People can find the card catalog through the Internet and they can e-mail us if there are materials they want to borrow from us. We have a variety of services available on that. I try to encourage everyone to use the Lili database which we pay for in our taxes. We have tumble books which are available to all the students throughout the state not just on campus. The outreach teachers have access to that. We have world book encyclopedia that is available throughout the state. We have a wonderful program reading A to Z and we provide it to our outreach teachers. Each regional teacher and teacher on the campus we have given them a license and it is a fabulous resource. Parents can go and look at a tutorial and then review the program and they can buy it for their own homes. It is very economical. We loan things out to the local school districts, interpreters and parents. We have a lot of students that are home schooled and we provide services for them also. Then to talk about qualified staff. I have fantastic people working for me and right now two of them are working on their certifications to become certified brailists. There are not very many in the state or in the nation and I am very proud of them. One other staff member that is coming to work in our department, Jan, she is an outreach teacher and she is working in our department also. She is almost through or finished with her certification for brailist. Another program that I think is really important to the state is the APH and this is the American Printing House for the blind. We provide services and materials and do the ordering and everything for the state even schools that are independent schools. Caption media program. A big program. There are only 29 of those in the whole United States and we are one of them. We provide four thousand videos, Internet, and CDs. Free loan. This is from the United States Department of Education that provides those funds. As taxpayers, we pay for these things. They are wonderful products for parents and families. They help the children increase their reading skills greatly. Through the funds that we received through the Idaho Grange and Gallaudet University which is a program for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, four of our staff members trained and then those staff members will come back and work with the care givers and parents of young children. One of the big things that is happened in this school is brailling. We made a partnership with the Idaho Correction's Center and they brail our textbooks and some other materials for us and this saved us thousands and thousands of dollars by doing this cooperation. Now we are able to brail direct math assessments throughout the state not just on campus. This is for everyone. I am very excited about the capabilities of that. I have brought some packets to give you so you can look at examples of those things. I will stop, but I have hand outs for you so you can read. I did have a vision for this school and I do have some additional comments. Thank you very much for your time.

Laird: Are those your packets? Make sure that Caryl over here has them.

Vicki: I've worked at the School for the Deaf and the Blind for sixteen years and it is still very dear to my heart. I was a special ed teacher before I came here. I was the teacher of the year in 1984. I thought I knew enough to help the children with hearing loss or vision loss in the public schools and I couldn't have been more wrong. We don't know what we don't know and I had to come to this campus and learn and be humble and learn about these two populations. The scope and knowledge of the people here and all the programs that we have can't be replicated in each public school. I started as a teacher and then I was the director of education for a year. My favorite job is probably being the counselor for four years and offering support groups and then I came back as a director of outreach for both the deaf and the blind. So I got to see the residential and what we do in the state with the families across the state. What I want to say is our fear is of there not being a campus or a residential campus for the students. There is something magical that happens when students can access to being here together. We offer a lot as the staff, but in the support groups that I had an honor of meeting there is something that happens about being in middle school and knowing that we are different and some of the parents acknowledge that we are different and some are in denial and they don't understand the difference. You see self esteem dive in the isolation in a very rural state. By having the youth come together and having it here, there is a magical confidence, self esteem, and confidence not just in the deaf world, and that I have other blind and deaf friends, but a confidence that I watch as the graduates go out and become productive adults in the community. I get e-mails from them and they are like Andy. They are productive adults who know how to be comfortable under their own skin. I can think of one girl who was in a support group and it was the first time she put her hair back and showed off her hearing aids because it was okay. We don't know the long term research with cochlear implants; apparently they are wonderful. We see it happen with the newborns, but there is a message that is sent

when we get to see our parents work with the families. The parent really wants the child to be like them and they want it to be hearing. When a child wears a cochlear implant they are going to hear, but they are not going to hear like everyone else. And they will get a message that it is not okay to be who they are. They can not necessarily do it with the parent, but they can do it at ISDB. I think of one child that is now an adult and she has given birth and they served her wherever she was in the state. She knew through this broad umbrella of ISDB that she could always reach out and get the help and services that she needs. Parents, who push for a certain kind of service or mode of communication, have different needs. It doesn't stay the same. We have a staff that understands it and can take the heat and the hits and they can be here for the families and children across the state. They don't always come in as newborns . . . *(Portions of this transcript have been redacted to protect student privacy.)* You can always change your mind but this choice has to be here. We my choose public school. The vision loss is so small that we don't think brail will be necessary, but the vision loss becomes more severe and needs the intensive training of coming on to the campus and doing things here. I know for the visually impaired and blind there are a lot of things that can happen here that can't in Boise. I wanted to bring up the importance of a social group and the support that we give for students. Thank you for your time and if I can answer any questions beyond this meeting tonight, I would love to. Thank you.

Joann: Hello, everyone. My name is Joann, I wear several different hats. I am a retired educator from the College of Southern Idaho in the intern trainer program. I am a nationally certified interpreter and I am a part time employee at ISDB. When I came to Idaho in 1978, circumstances led me to become a sign language interpreter. In 1978 I was horrified at the lack of qualified interpreters in Idaho. In 2004 I am still horrified. Over 85 percent of the deaf and hard-of-hearing students in Idaho are mainstreamed in the public schools. From a grant by the State Board of Education, I was able to assess the skills of 69 out of 85 sign language interpreters throughout the state. There are a lot of factors that influence student's success, but there is a definite correlation between academic achievements and the competency of their interpreters. Several have mentioned that Idaho is a small state and many small school districts will take for an interpreter someone who took only one sign language class, someone who watched Sesame Street. The list goes on. An assessment was developed called the Educational Interpreter Assessment Program (EIPA). They are located at Boy's Town National Research Hospital. The EIPA evaluates skills using a zero to five scale with five being the most advanced. Twenty states use the EIPA for evaluation and another ten states are adopting it for similar purposes. We were fortunate to use it as a pretest assessment. Over sixty percent of the Idaho interpreters are unable to interpret sixty percent of the classroom information. Not one of you would accept that for your hearing child. Over forty percent are only able to interpret up to thirty percent of the information presented in the classroom environment. As parents of deaf and hard of hearing students become aware of these figures they will require answers as to why their children are not receiving equal access to education. In fairness, I will say that twenty five percent scored above what is considered to be the minimum score of 3.5. The Educational Interpreter Inner Agency Consortium of which I am a board member has drafted legislation to mandate a minimum of 3.5 of any interpreter in the public schools. We were in crisis in 1978. There were not enough interpreters. We are in greater crisis if one the options that the community chooses is to mainstream the remaining number of students here at ISDB's campus. Somewhere we will have to find over fifty more interpreters. Providing interpreting service in a mainstream setting is not the only service that is deaf or hard of hearing child needs. It is the bare minimum. You've heard people before me talk about the services that are offered here at this school. That's what every deaf child has a right to. It certainly cannot be in a mainstream environment unless a tremendous amount of expertise and money is expended. So I ask you to think about the ramifications of your decisions and to assist us in propelling our plan for legislation that mandates a minimum standard for educational interpreters. Thank you.

Shirley: I taught here, I taught in public school ten years before I came here and I taught twenty four years at this school before retirement. I filled many positions in this school, but mostly in my first years, and I feel like my important years, I taught language and reading to deaf children. So tonight mine is a little bit bent towards the language. When a child is born he or she has an empty language reservoir in the brain. It starts to fill with the language as he or she is bombarded with spoken language from many sources all day every day. When the reservoir is full it spills over and they began to express. A hearing impaired child is no different except he or she does not hear the language and it has to be modified with a method appropriate to the child. It would be great if everyone the child comes in contact with would be able or willing to communicate in the mode most useful to the child but this is really unrealistic. The family has to be trained to communicate with their child very well but in a lot of families, Mom may be the only communicator. As the child becomes older he or she

faces reading and writing. The success of transferring the language to reading and writing depends on the language acquired and the order of it. Many of them are fitted with hearing aids and they are put into the classroom assuming that everything is fine if they have an interpreter. A child with a low language base will not do well with the interpreter. For these children, the public school classroom is the most restrictive environment. The child needs to be immersed in language and build self esteem. I hope the State Board of Education and the legislature will look long and hard at the teaching the children including the social and emotional impact on the student. If they have little self worth what else matters. I say that the success rate in the public schools be investigated and followed for a time before making any decision to closing the ISDB campus or change its mission. Yes, it is costly to educate the sensory impaired children. The cost will be there even if it is transferred to the public schools. The combined cost of personnel and materials to ensure the rights and education of these sensory impaired children in every small school district will be more expensive than the state is spending now. A campus moved to Boise would not be without great expense and the waste of a present campus; a campus that most public schools would die for. The campus is here; why not work on this place and make it a place that parents will want their children attend. And yes, I do believe that good things happen outside of Boise. I came here to Gooding in 1956 as a teacher and a house father or parent in the boy's dormitory. My day started at 6 in the morning and I went until 10 at night. So I had a long day with my boys. And wonderful things happened. In the fall when the kids came to school a lot of tears were shed. Most of them were by the parents. The kids were fine once the parents left. The social aspect of the school is as important as the education part. When the children stay home, they do not have that experience. Maybe Mom can sign a little bit, but usually the father and brothers and sisters do not know how to sign. My own experiences: I became hard-of-hearing when I was about three or four years old. I did fine the first five years in school. I couldn't hear out of my left ear, but there were only three of us in my class. I went to a one room country school and the teacher had lots of time to pay attention to me. There were only maybe fifty kids in the whole school. Then when I went to the public school in sixth grade, my life got completely changed. I was hard-of-hearing and I didn't fit in with the hearing kids as well as I could have. Then when I was about fourteen years old, I had my first attack of spinal meningitis. After three attacks in three years, I still could hear with a hearing aid and tried to go to a public school, but I was a misfit. The deaf do not really fit in the public schools. I do not like to see that happen in Idaho. This school is a wonderful school. It has many wonderful achievements. I married one. My wife has more brains than any woman I have ever seen or known. She is a wonderful woman. One of the finest things about my wife is her mother and father moved to Gooding to be near the school. What did she do? She stayed in the girl's dormitory; she didn't go home because the social aspect of the school is as important as the educational aspect. I would say that the school should remain in Gooding. Things should probably change back to when I was a teacher. We did have a wonderful vocational program. One thing that is said is that it should be eliminated. But the students would never be college students. They need to learn a vocational trade and the best place is in the classroom right here in Gooding. I hope when you consider the changes please remember the things that they have. Thank you.

Ron: Try and keep an educator down to three minutes or a past educator. I wish that somebody would have invited me sooner to give a speech. I would get off the subject if I had more than three minutes because I have a lot to say. As a superintendent and interim superintendent, I will stand here and comment on what I had the chance to read in the OPE report. In education you cannot stay stagnant and without constant changes. It becomes necessary to make changes for the deaf and hearing impaired and the blind children in school. Some of the recommendations put forth by the subcommittee are good and others are questionable. Four of the vocational schools in the United States were closed. Were they deaf schools, deaf and blind schools or were they swallowed up? Were there teachers teaching the students there. What has happened to the speech pathologists. Is each child receiving the best education. The cost will look good on paper but the money will flow in a different way and be eaten up by other programs. Tell me where we will find teachers with the education they need. Where are you going to find speech pathologists that work especially with deafness and blindness if you can't find enough now? Support for a state laid out like the state of Idaho, I do not see Montana, Utah, New Mexico closing their doors. What happens to the eastern part of the state. You will have to look here or Twin Falls. What would be the cost of moving it to Twin. This was after the earthquake in Challis and perhaps at others they have already done that. The bottom line for deaf education is communication. If all falls in place, hearing aids, cochlear implants, or total communication as we call it. For the blind it is living skills, brail, technology, social skills, but I would ramble on in this subject. If it is to change the oral program, we could have both systems in place, oral and communication. Cost, there is no doubt that the cost is expensive.

Was the cost both regional and residential or just for the children attending ISDB? It takes in not only teachers for the home educated and for the brail and low vision aids running in the thousands of dollars. There are probably ways to cut the costs on campus and that needs to be looked at. When it began it was for Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Boise, and as the regional people went out we began to see that the school districts thought they could maintain the program for the deaf and the blind and the hearing impaired. Mr. Stone mentioned the fact that the statutes need to be changed and ISDB has no right to go in and say that this child is not receiving the education that they serve. The children are dying on the vine in the public schools at this time. I am going to go down so I can get it in my three minutes. This school needs to exist and for the small communities that cannot afford to set up a school for the little programs. You are still talking about filling the consortiums with teachers. Not like now where they are trying to teach both the deaf and the blind children. With the university system we have why have we not set up a program for training people with the deaf and the blind. We have interpreter programs and audiologist programs why not a B A in deafness or blindness. Most teachers will go for the state that pays the best. Move the school, I don't feel this would be a good choice right now. Maybe change some direction of service. We still need to serve the small communities and Boise can have its own program. They can work with the philosophies of their own. Boise can afford to have their own school. Geographical services serve all students. You go through the process. Do not kill a program just for political agendas. Thank you.

Carl: Currently I am retired. I have worked four years as a teacher in Las Vegas teaching the deaf. I was hired as a principal and I retired last summer after serving thirty five years here at ISDB. I support the notion that because of these wonderful facilities that ISDB has, the way they are constructed, every part of this school shows some well thought out special adaptations for these students. I think it would be a total waste of money to try to move a facility of this stature to another community. Having said that, I would like to speak a little bit about the community of Gooding and Magic Valley and some the services that are afforded to some the students at the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind. These young men that are standing against the window right now appear to be on a basketball team. There are seven schools that are the smallest schools in the state of Idaho that have for thirty years since I was here to bend over backwards to include both the boys and girls in competitive sports. It took quite a while to gain support from these public schools, but they have. The students have made great friendships and have grown from that experience. There's a work program that has three phases. One is the work base learning program that goes on during the school day that affords a student a practical application of their academics and a first hand experience with work. Most of these students go to businesses throughout the city of Gooding and for all purposes are welcome in whatever endeavor different businesses can afford students. Another part of the school is the summer work experience program. As was said earlier in the community of ISDB is the state of Idaho. This was one the programs that I was part of supervisor of. We took our program to students' home town communities. We knew from experience that if the students didn't have a successful work experience while they were in high school, the likelihood of them spring boarding in self efficiency was a risk. For the last six or eight years I am happy to report that the high school students saw 75% or higher success in jobs in their home town communities. Another great supporter of this is the College of Southern Idaho. There has been a program that helps students take that next step after graduation, but having experience at work and a better understanding of job availability and learning to apply the practical skills to work in the program and in summer jobs. Students, upon graduation and based upon their skills and abilities, are able to get help in going directly to an on job work situation. CSI has bent over backwards to help the student. Let's say we have a student that wants to be a welder but the reading and language skills are low enough to not get a degree. The College of Southern Idaho will work with the student and help them get a specific skill. Let's say it is welding. If they can demonstrate what the employer wants, they will work with them. The other part is of those degree-seeking students. Gooding public school is a strong supporter of students and staff here. It has become an effort in realizing success. I'm sure my time is probably gone and Laird is saying, yes, I can see it in his eyes. I strongly encourage this group to consider many things, consider what people are saying tonight. I recommend that this school remain open. Thank you.

Duke: Laird said he would cut me to one minute if I even went close to three minutes so I will go as fast as I can. Tonight I am coming wearing three hats. I am a consumer of people with disabilities. I spent two and a half years in a residential facility when I was a child being prepared to transition out into the community as a result of polio. I come to you as a service provider because I am the service provider for the infant toddler program. Now in this program we have a long standing relationship with ISDB. Our philosophy has always been to go out in the community and provide services in the home. We have been incredibly successful in that

and we would not have been able to do it in this area as well as in all the other ones that we partner with. The key question that we face is what are best practices. This issue has been raised by the study. The study says there are good things going on in cochlear implants. There are. Change is not only good, but it is mandatory. It is going to happen whether you want it or not. But the issue is will that be best practice. How do we go about getting the information for it. And the new technology comes on board and we need to realign and move into a new direction. I welcome the new technology and it is what put me together, and I tell you that I am wired differently than any of you here. I spent my time in the bathroom at breaks in school because I was afraid to go out. When you go about looking at these decisions and you do have to address the decisions at ISDB. Focus on what is best practice. If you go out and say you must do this and this and this and one year later something new may come up and you are not ready or able to do that. It was what was left out of the statutes that they went ahead and did it any way. So don't lock us in with legislation, give us best practices; because we can live and work as a team with that. I want to say one thing about the OPE study. It spends a lot of time talking about things that are wrong, but I want to congratulate everybody here and anybody who gets 98 percent satisfaction rate should stand up and cheer. I would like to point out that the major complaints from that there were not enough services and people were not trained enough. When has the state provided the services that parents want and how do we keep up and keep our staff trained and that is on going every day and we struggle with it every day. My third hat is as a city councilman and we say we want the school to stay. We have a long 96 year relationship with ISDB and we do work together on maintaining the facilities here. The problem that I had with OPE and while they put it out on the table, and it is hard, Mr. Chairman, is there is no financial decisions made and you don't know the financial impact and you can't discuss it and do a cost analysis. If you don't have the data how can you make a decision. I feel in the end that what you've got is a best practice that needs to be broken out and decided on. How are we going to do this. There seems to be a conflict about what practices you should use. We ought to be a unified front on that. The same thing with the finances. The finances aren't there and the fiscal impact is not there. I don't know what the fiscal impact is going to show. I know about 2.6 million dollars are spent in this area and Wal-mart might complain if this money is taken away. It is about 24 million when it trickles out over the area. It needs to be considered when you look at the options. Going back to my experiences as a consumer, what I learned in that is we need both residential and outreach. Not everyone is going to fit mainstream. Some people need to be able to go to get the services that they need. I was lucky, I went to the residential facility and I stayed there for two and a half years and I got rewired. Now with all the help from outreach here I am and I have gotten a waiver. I don't believe that things happen outside of Boise, I know they happen outside of Boise and that's why I live here.

My name is **Salka Sharma**, and I am a pastor of three churches here. I am a graduate of Gallaudet and I am deaf and hard-of-hearing. My experience from my education has been that my involvement with deaf schools and organizations and culture has helped me succeed and get where I am today. If my only experiences in life had been the public mainstreamed school system, then I might have gotten some small job in the middle of nowhere and never become a specialist in the field of deaf education. It was the deaf institutions that I was fortunate enough to interact in that gave me the incentive to aim for something more. I have had the opportunity to meet and work with many young people who are educated without the exposure to this. Most of them ended up supported by their families for their whole lives or in trouble with the law and in prison. The mainstreamed schools are not equipped to deal with the educational needs that there are. I have been fortunate to be a survivor of this system, but it was only because of deaf support groups, organizations, institutions and Gallaudet University that I was able to make it in the hearing world and in hearing schools. Another glaring example of what happens when somebody is mainstreamed is my husband's life story but I will abbreviate it for you. He was deafened in his teens and born in a country that didn't have deaf schools. He basically had to study in mainstream schools. He was not allowed to participate in sports. He was ridiculed and he was not accepted by other students. He was extremely isolated, even though he was at the top of all of his subjects; even though he made A’s in his classes by studying very hard. He was ready to drop out of the school system. Then his parents introduced him to deaf culture and deaf organizations in that country. They immediately nurtured his talents and skills and he went on to be an Olympian. He has gone on to graduate with honors and he was accepted by Gallaudet for a master's program. He has made it a point to focus and help set up schools and training centers all over Asia for others like himself. He has been invited to be a guest speaker and lecturer and to share his experiences in many places. None of this would have been possible if he had only attended mainstream schools. Even the poorest third world countries have understood the importance of a deaf school, deaf institutions. It will be disappointing if our country continues to close schools and if the state of Idaho decides that it doesn't need a

deaf school. It will be extremely shameful if a wonderful state in your wonderful country, one of the super powers of the world or the richest countries in the world decides that it doesn't need deaf education. Yes, deaf education comes at a price, but it is an investment which this community will never regret because it will result in better prepared deaf people who are more able to be self sufficient and better paid professionals. It will result in people who are not a burden to their families or communities. It will result in happy year people and services that can be provided to them at a future time. I want to urge those who are in the decision-making position to think about the kids' futures in the state; to think about the future of deaf education and to make decisions that won't mean throwing kids lives away. Thank you.

Mary: I am a retired teacher, I taught for four years in the public school systems and twenty plus years here at the School for the Deaf and the Blind in my career. I just want to say that every decision that you make, please make it the academic and social education that you make the decision on. Think about this: English is an auditory for hearing and seeing people. We see things and for the blind it is an auditory language not visual. How do you explain colors, ugly, pretty, if you have never seen them? For the deaf it is an auditory language. From birth on we hear the proper order of speaking and eventually writing. For the deaf student he must be taught how to put them in order. If I say flower, pretty, red. You would probably understand that but you would not hear it as a pretty red flower. Parents and teachers must give them a sign, or label things, to start and give them the words for the things that they see. Straight English needs to be signed to the children early in life so they see the proper word order even though they do not fully understand it. For deaf and hard-of-hearing children the teacher starts with the proper word and then teach them put it in order. Can you explain the words, the, am, are, of, to, as, or and. We call these the glue words. Words that make the sentence sound right but do not add to the sentence. They have to understand where to place the words in the proper places. By correct we mean how they sound to a hearing person. Language is the crux of all the communication and reading. Whether for the deaf, the blind, or the hearing impaired. Another area that I wrote down is the area of mainstreaming with an interpreter. In the report on page 39 it says that 67 of the 89 interpreters in the state of Idaho could convey only 60 percent or less to the students. This was reported by the interpreter consortium to the Committee. A little more than half of what a child gets is not good enough for me. Would you want your child to come away from the classroom knowing that they only got fifty percent or less from your classroom. Most of them do not have the language to make it in the public classroom if they are mainstreamed. I could go on for a long time. Please take time to research and get a lot more input from a lot more people. Please don't make the decision on dollars and numbers. Thank you.

Debra: I am from Pocatello. It is wonderful to see the community spirit in this community. I do have some other thoughts because we don't have this community in Pocatello. I just want to talk a little bit about community and I mentioned that I can sense a wonderful sense of community. I think that is very good for the students. I have a blind multi-handicapped daughter, and we even considered at one point to find a job out here. For most of us in the state, it is not an option to move here. We worked long and hard and we got a teacher hired. Unfortunately, it is a teacher from here that we got hired in Pocatello. We need teachers so bad that I want to emphasize how much we need to keep money and funding in the program for the blind. Listening to comments is very interesting. When my daughter was in kindergarten she got a piece of paper and a pencil even though she was blind and she was expected to sit there because the teacher was busy with the other students. She lost her pencil on the floor and then couldn't find it. We need to take the blind in consideration. She had three years with a wonderful aide that was taught from ISDB and we are very grateful for that. I went in the classroom and she had the brail cell in front of her and my daughter was being scolded because she was reading it incorrect and it was because the brail cell was moving and she was sitting off on the side of it. She was being punished for her behavior. We talked about the training and I want to give you an example and how the child is trying to learn like that. I also mentioned that to the aide and after three years she was way behind because of this. These are well meaning and a two week training is not enough. In a community spirit and it needs to be spread throughout the state that we care about all the blind kids and that the aides can get some follow up work and so the people can watch and see what they might be missing. As it is, her teacher is there five to twenty minutes a week. She is twelve years old now. At that point she is pretty well behind. It was wonderful to come here and learn about the tumble books accessed through the state and the other services. When we come we really enjoy the parent weekend and we soak it up. They do a wonderful job. Meeting with other parents of the blind is so worth any money and effort. That is wonderful. I had not heard of some of the other things that I learned about tonight. This communication we really need to spread throughout the state. That's all I have to

say, I just wanted to remind everyone there are more blind kids and I wish we had this spiritual sense that is here throughout the state. Keep in mind all the students in the state. Thank you.

Elsie: I know there are parents here in Boise and others that traveled to attend this meeting. I wonder what it would be like if you held a town hall meeting like this in northern and eastern Idaho. I love to say that Idaho has three capitals. One in Boise, one in Spokane, Washington, and one in Salt Lake city, Utah. In a lot of ways that is very true because it is closer for people from eastern Idaho to go down to Salt Lake City to receive services of different kinds than it is to go to Boise. One of the things that makes the decision that you guys are going to make an offer to the legislature is that it is going to effect the students all over the state not just here in the Magic Valley. I know that as a personal experience because I grew up mainstreamed in the school system that is lot of the issues that I felt and that I dealt with as a blind student are still being experienced by the students that are in the classrooms today. As I talk with some of them in eastern Idaho and around the state I hear the same things. They are embarrassed to tell people that they have a visual impairment or another kind of disability. They try to mask it and hide it and what happens is that when they become associated with groups of their peers that often times they become less likely to be so embarrassed about their physical disability. I know for myself that a few years back I came in contact with the national federation for the blind which is blind group. Through that I was able to gain confidence and I am not scared to say that I am blind anymore. I also know because of other organizations that have been mentioned here tonight that students find a lot of self confidence and self esteem and it helps them grow and become more productive citizens of the United States. I know that for myself I do a lot of advocacy with people with disabilities and in particular people who are blind. The things that they ask for and the problems that they are having maybe should have been done back in the education process and it is really sad when they do not happen. I know there are a lot of good things happening and I hope that the decisions and things that you recommended to the legislature will help make that happen. Thank you very much.

Dean Gooding: I am proud to give you a history lesson. In Idaho history is taught in the fourth grade so I am not surprised that none of you know any Idaho history. The reason for this school being here is because the school in Boise burnt to the ground in 1906. Frank Gooding after he stepped down from being governor donated twenty acres of land here. He land claimed it. I have a copy of the deed and I think all of you are familiar with the deed. The reason he did this is because he had a nephew who was deaf and dumb, my great grandfather Neil. He knew and associated with the deaf people. In the deed it specifically states that this land shall be used for a school for the state's deaf, dumb and blind children. The terminology is 1909, I am sorry about the dumb business. There is a secondhand written paragraph in the deed that specifically states the land will go back to the Gooding family if it is not a school anymore. The fact of the matter is that the land did not need to come back to him, but he was a very good politician and he knew full well that the great state of Ada, Boise, would grab back to get the school back to Boise. I am extremely vested in this school as a family member. I have no claim to the land I am not a direct descendant. I also agree with some other people here today. My first wife was mainstreamed in Boise and she was deaf. And because of her being mainstreamed she always thought of herself as a freak. She knew no other deaf people. She was different and ashamed of it. This school offers the state more than it can ever pay for. Money should never be concerned with what is done here. These children get so much from this school and the dedicated staff that work here that I had to come and speak. If you want to know and all get copies of that deed, it is in Lincoln County, registered under the number 14414, deed of warranty, August 20th, 1909. Thank you.

Laird: If you are looking for another source it is on page 69 of the O P E report. The sentence actually reads "the acreage tract above are deeded to the state of Idaho for the purpose of building and establishing a school for the deaf, dumb, and blind. If the ground is not used for this purpose or some other institution this deed shall become null and void and the land will go to the parties of the signed."

Hello, my name is **Joan Brown**. Growing up I attended school here from 1956 until 1971. I graduated here and you know what, I am thankful to everybody who taught me here and provided me with a good education. After I graduated what did I do? I decided I better go to college. Where did I go to college? CSI. It was great. After college I got a job working at CSI. I have been there for thirty one years. Still. You look at me and think how can I communicate with people. I am really good at that. First of all when I first arrived there I taught people sign language. Just the basics. You don't have to be an expert, but just learn how to communicate. This school

was the best education for me. In addition to that, now CSI is working with ISDB. I just hope that all of the deaf or whatever hearing impaired or visually repaired. I hope they recruit more people to come here because the best thing here is communication. You know, growing up and going to school here with teachers teaching me and learning everything and then going to the dorm, you know that was the best. We could sign to each other and understand each other and we learned how to communicate through a friend and say oh, that's what that is. We didn't learn that stuff from the teachers. They taught us the basics, but in the dorms that's where we learned. When I went out into the world, I thought, you know, what am I going to do. Sports, baseball, softball, basketball, you know I had never done that out in the world. I was very shy. I started interacting with other people. It was called the northwest athletic association for the deaf. Now I see these people and we sign together and I say where are you from? She says from a residential school and someone will come and be awkward in signing and they say easy mainstreamed. And they say don't worry I understand. Every since 1999, I am a secretary, treasurer of the deaf MWADE. I want you to know that ISDB is a great place for communication and I hope that you will listen to my plea to please not close this campus. Thank you very much and for your consideration. She is right it is very different up here.

Amanda: I am a child of a deaf adult and I am also hard-of-hearing. As my aunt says we have grown up here. ISDB has been a part of my life. I've had deaf people in my life who are above and beyond anything, helping with children, people who are deaf and blind that have been, I'm not sure and I don't know a lot about blind individuals, however with deaf people and seeing people who are mainstreamed or people who go to school at ISDB. Seeing the memories that people have with friends and family, their life, their friendships, people who move from all over Idaho to one place. One place that is special for the kids, not for themselves, but for the kids. That should say something and tell you something about the families and the love and how much people care about the kids, the children, and their families. Grandparents who live here and who have lived here forever it seems like, and just having a wonderful life or wonderful education. This school has just been forever for me too. And seeing my father, my aunt play softball, basketball, everything. It has just been wonderful to join people and groups of different people that don't really interact outside of here. But once you get out of here you can have friends all over. Develop friendships here that are everlasting. To meet new people here and to visit other places, to watch this school, the uniqueness of this school is absolutely unique. It is very important because we need to be like other states. We don't want to be like other states, excuse me. We are Idaho, we are not Washington, Montana, we are not Mexico. This Gooding is the center for deaf people. People move here from all over America and attend the school. We need to get to give them what they want. Please don't close the school.

Beth: When it comes to deaf education, one size does not fit all. I have two sons at ISDB. They are both deaf. My ten year old deaf son does pretty good with the signing. He has a lot of skills. I have a teen age son who has significant delays. He has become a 190 pound toddler in a man's body. Both of my sons need a safe place to learn. The programs are very, very different. Parents these days have a lot of choices in deaf education. Whether I am trying to teach me deaf boys how to talk or how to communicate with sign language it is going to cost a lot of money. It is my responsibility to choose what best suits their needs and then to make sure that they get the best that they need. I accept that responsibility. I have rights to choose what is best. If it is moved to Boise are they going to be the best. We chose to move here to that both of our deaf boys could have what they need. Full access to a signing environment. We have built our lives in Gooding for our boys. Choices that you make would turn our lives upside down. We have a third boy who is not deaf. He is in the public school. He said we can't move back to California because the deaf school there was mean to Jacob because he is not very smart. I didn't correct him because it was the truth. It is hard to find a school that is willing to serve the deaf boy. It is hard to know that by the decision of others the school could be taken away. We have worked hard to support our sons by moving to a school that met our boy's needs. We are running a marathon that will last the rest of our lives. Please let us stay in Gooding.

Kathy: My son Jacob is sixteen and is a sophomore here at ISDB. He is one the basketball players that was standing over there earlier. We moved here to enroll our son here. We needed to change his education and we did not like the schools in California. We came to Gooding because it is a small town. It offered ISDB for Jacob and other schools for our son Tyler. When I read about how ISDB spends 82 thousand for each residential student and 59 thousand for each day student. I think good for them. A government body is putting their money where it belongs - on our children's education. If money is number one reason the state is a looking at

remodeling ISDB, how can building in Boise save money. I can't even imagine how much the land and the school would cost to build in the first place. What would happen for this land? If it is not used for a state facility it goes back to the family. If it does get used it will come out the state's budget. If you go in an urban area you may have more kids enrolled, but if there are more students, wouldn't the end result be the same. If you spend more money for the student would they get the same opportunity that they get here, for example the teacher to student ratio. They have recently introduced the deaf-O. I totally support this. If you turn this into a day school only how many local students are there that will be staying. If you enroll the 75 kids in the local schools, they will be spread out all over the state and either put in classrooms with the hearing peers with an interpreter who may or may not be qualified or they will be put together in a classroom with some sort of a label. We've done this in California and it did not work. If you move ISDB away you are effecting those 75 students and their families. Each staff member and their families and the community of Gooding. Please don't take ISDB away from us, we like it where it is.

Bill: I have a problem. Am I supposed to stand down here and speak or get up here and sign. I will do both. Can you hear me? I will sign the best I can. First of all my name is Bill Andrews and this is my 26th year at ISDB. I have other jobs with the deaf. I moved here because my family history goes back to shoe shown. I want to say that I do support Dean and the school history. Governor Gooding had a political debate between Boise and Weiser, Idaho. There was a deadlock between the two cities and the governor decided to end it. That is when he gave his land to the site for the intention of building the school with the addition of one mile sidewalk to the railroad depot. That is why it moved. He settled a political debate and I am hoping that we don't get into a political debate this time. I served under five superintendents. Each one said that we are here for the benefit of the students. Now, I wonder is that lip service, talk, or do they really each one mean we are here for the students. Forget the economical element. Boise likewise and Twin Falls all likewise. What would benefit the students over all. When you retire I am sure you will want people that are in the highest paying job possible. I don't have many years left before I retire, what benefits the students and how can they help us. Americans, keep that in mind, whether we keep it here or move it to Boise. At first twenty years ago I supported moving the school to Boise, I didn't get much support because I did my homework. Unfortunately, the vote was here, but times have changed. Newer technology and right now focusing on students only. My first thought again is Boise, now I continue to do my analysis. Job opportunities and shadowing, and relating classrooms to the real world, where can we do it best? If we can not do it here in Gooding the best would probably be Boise, but I have questions about Boise too and any other community. I would like to say also, this report, the OPE report basically, points fingers at different people. The legislators, the school, the community, different groups, we are not working together, to help our students benefit as we could and should. My fear is that the students are the pawn in the political game and I pray that you don't use them to support the philosophies or whatever, but what would the student benefit because after all they will become adults and get married and have children and have jobs and all of these things. If anything for the school, maybe we need to change the mission, but we can not be one size fits all. What I do propose is some kind of an advisory board some of them through Washington state, whether it would work the same way, I am not sure how Washington works. But I know the State Board has difficulty in knowing the ins and out of how the school works. I ask and I pray that you take time to come into the classroom, see what we do before you make the final decision. We're here for the benefit of the students, I pray you keep that in mind. Thank you.

(no name given) My grandson was in the Weiser school for three years. They did nothing to help him. They had a blind teacher there, but she had another student that was brighter and every time I went to see my grandson, the teachers would scatter and try and find him. One day he was not far from being on the main highway. I went to the board of education and I told them this is not right. He didn't get lost anymore. But any way, I moved here just so my grandson could have a chance in life. His dad, his mother are not responsible people. I had to go to court and a judge says this is where Kyle goes to school. I'm here and I hope I live long enough to see him graduate, that is my plan. I'm 72 years old, but I am going to make it. Last year was his first year here and he does not talk and he does not see very well. He learned 65 signs and if you don't think that isn't hard to keep up with a seven year old. I have to come here at least twice a week to check on what he has learned. It is amazing. He can even count now. He knows his numbers. He's learned his name. His name is Kyle and he showed me the other night this was Kyle and that was just, I'm sorry, but it means so much for me to be here and help Kyle. I even bought a house here so I'm not leaving. This school can't leave here because the judge says he stays here.

Walt: I am a retired staff member from the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind. I served here on the staff for 33 years as an educational audiologist and a teacher of the deaf and technology specialist. The education of hard-of-hearing, deaf, visually impaired and when I came here I had a full head of hair. I have always been very proud of the unique places and ISDB. Some places may say that we had lip service in the best interest of the children, but the people that I work with both on the teaching staff and on the support staff whether they were an interpreter or a worker in the school. We are here for one reason to provide support and service for our students. That is what I am concerned. I really want to see a fair balance decision made that has the interest of the students, the staff, the community here in the state of Idaho as their foremost concern. We spent a lot of money on our students. We have our successes and our failures, but we need to be focused on what is best for our students and for the visually impaired and hearing impaired students in Idaho. I am proud to have been a staff member here and I am very proud of the current staff and the things that they provide for our students.

Dan: I worked here as a dorm parent. I took care of the babies to the 12 year olds for 28 years - absolutely enjoyed my job very much. I remember when I was born in Nevada and I became deaf and I was in an oral school in Utah and was very unhappy. I went into the boy's dorm and we learned signing in the dorm. It was very secret. Then my father bought a farm in Idaho and I had to come to the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind. I thought wow, these people are signing. The teachers sign here. In public school I would get a big headache trying to understand what an interpreter was trying to say. I am totally deaf so I think that a deaf school is best for people who are deaf. Legislature needs to make a wise decision and thank you for allowing me to come and speak. Thank you.

Todd: I had a whole list of things that I was going to talk about but Duke stole that list and now I have nothing to talk about. I have never been at a public meeting where I have had such positive things said. Obviously there is great support for this facility and this community. I will give the briefest speech. Make the decision that you will feel good about reading on the front page of the paper. Make the decision that will look good to the people in their eyes. Make the right decision.

Clara: I am an administrator here in the school district. We share students here and we have an excellent working relationship with ISDB. While we welcome the students in our public schools our special ed teachers are not properly trained for this education. We rely on ISDB for their expertise and training. We rely on them for their interpreters because they are difficult to find and very costly. With local resources low, we rely on ISDB for audiologists, consultation, orientation, visual consultation, brailling machines and assistive technology and many or services without putting a financial burden on other school districts. Rather than that keep ISDB open to continue to provide these crucially important services to the other school districts.

Laird: We have been at it for two hours and as I get older I need to take a break about every two hours. We will take about a ten minute break. If any of you want to change your mind about speaking, the sheet will be up here. We have gone through twenty five and we have about twenty five more that desire to speak. So we'll be very brief with the next few. We'll take ten minutes. So be back at a quarter after by the clock on the wall.

BREAK

7:15 – **Laird**: Thank you, we'll get started back up. While we were on break, the Committee did step in the back room. It wasn't because we didn't want to visit with you, but what we did was actually hold our Committee meeting and part of the Committee discussion that was listed for 7:15 and we talked about the comments that had be made so far. We really appreciated those and we look forward to the rest for the evening. We are down to about twenty five or so to go. So watch your time when you go up there and look over at me and I will give you a signal when it was time to get off.

Amanda: I'm going to break it. This is my third year at ISDB. I grew up in a public school and sorry I am a little bit nervous. I'm also the president for the Idaho chapter of Gooding ISDB. I have the motivation to do only the best. I have the determination to succeed. And the possibilities, as well as the motivation and the desire to be only the best. They know that students are capable of being successful in the deaf society. Other schools are telling me that I don't belong here and if I don't belong in a mainstreamed school does it means that I

don't belong any where. This is where I have been for the last three years and this is where I want to stay. Thank you.

John: I was coordinator of programs for the deaf and the blind for seventeen years. As I come here today I want to ask a couple of quick questions. Do you know what the worth and value of a human body is? 17 dollars and 33 cents. That is the value of a human body when you take all the water out, you put it in a pot and you boil it all down. That is how much it would cost for what makes up the human body. 80 thousand dollars, that goes a little further. That goes to the soul. That goes to the heart of an individual. That goes to the worth of a person not just a body. When I stand before you today I stand before you asking a very simple question. Is 80 thousand enough? We have students at this institution who need deaf role models. Hard of hearing role models. Who need desperately to of a community filled with their peers. Have you ever gone to a high school football game and have you sat in the stand on a home team side? Oh, boy, everybody sits together, they jump up together, they cry together, they laugh together, but what happens when you're the only person at that football game who is deaf? No interpreter or an interpreter who can't keep up. The numbers that have been given for interpreters tonight are low. I come from Atlanta, Georgia where we have almost five million people now. I came up in the 1970s interpreting, learning to interpret. I have held the highest education, the certifying body that these interpreters have to come from has held. I was one of only 26 people in this country who ever held that certification and I don't stand here proud, I have separated myself because of political reasons. I can stand before you today to tell you that the federal law supersedes anything that any other state can put together. Ladies and gentlemen, this is about least restrictive environment. This is about what is best for the kids. Not what is best for the political agenda. I have seen political agendas and I have lived with it for seventeen years in a university setting. I have worked from the earliest in elementary students all the way up to the doctorates and who learned how to become the superintendents of places like this. I have gone from the beginning to the end. I can tell you that even the doctorate students under me only got 80 percent. I come before you saying thank you for the turnout and thank you for showing this support and I come before this Committee saying please understand the cost of a body is trivial. The cost of a soul and learning and education can't be measured. It is priceless. Please, keep this school open and add four more. We need it, statewide in all of our capitals and in all of our locations. Forget the fiscal challenge and do the moral thing. Right. Thank you.

Kent: I am the president of the Gooding recreation district. I hope to bring a little different prospective. The last few years ISDB has been gracious enough to lease the indoor pool and the gym and own the old track. In that amount of time we have increased our programs and our budget has tripled and in fact what has set us apart from other parts of Idaho is that we have an infrastructure and a place to congregate and that we can accommodate some 650 kids just this year alone that will make the trek over here including students from ISDB. This does not count the walkers and the after school programs and Christian school programs that come over during the day. This is more than just a learning center, it is a partnership within the whole community of Gooding. Our community is nothing more than some of our parks and residents. We have an airport and we have some fair grounds. We have an outdoor pool and a Basque Center. I would venture to guess that if we lost this school, all of these together would not affect us more than that. I hope that you have taken all of these folks to heart and it is also my hope that one hundred years ago that we would be up here talking about the history of ISDB. Thank you.

Jean: I would like to talk to people about, I have a real interest in working here. I have worked here for 29 years. I have worked with handicapped students and with the deaf and the blind and I am also working in programs in special needs programs under the deaf and blind. I would like to talk a little bit about the future of ISDB and the impact that it has on our students that are attending here. ISDB provides these students with many things that the public schools and satellite schools would not be able to provide. Here the students can come together with their peers and socialize and be accepted and where we get our self-confidence. It is by being able to interact with other people and feel successful. May it be sports or talks that other people have interest in like your peers and society and schools. They have a better chance to just compete at the level of other students in public schools here because they are a group. They have an opportunity to participate in student government, participate and have fun with dances with their peers and activities and dramas. Different things that they might not get the opportunity if other classrooms of kids or just a couple of deaf students in a large school when there were just a few of them. There is a history for them here, as well. Many of their parents and brothers and sisters have gone to school here. It is very enjoyable for the families to come back here when they are participating in

sports and to be able to see others that they have known. We have a great staff here. We really do. We have teachers, most of our teachers are master's degrees. We have people who work and support staffs that are here when those kids get off the buses or they come in the mornings. They are accepted as a family. We are a family to these kids. We have seen generations that have grown up here. Some of these kids are come as little kids and grown up. With a lot of the same staff that are very dedicated to their education and to their success. Another thing that we have here are people that really care about these kids. You know, they want them to be safe. They care about the kids at every level of their lives and try to encourage them to be the best people they can be. We have some of the people here that are new to this community and new to the school. But we also have people that have been here as you have seen twenty to thirty some odd years. That is staff, teachers, administrators, we have had as you can see by some the wonderful people that have stood up here and told you how they feel about this school, some wonderful administrative staff and teachers and wonderful people that make this community their life and make these kids still a part of their life. These kids can go out in the community. We are doing different things or like we said working in different areas of the community and see some of these people that still live here and that care about them and visit with them and make them feel like they are part of the community. We have a lot of success stories here, by the way, because as you have seen we've had teachers, administrative staff, teachers and people in other support areas that have come back to our school and these are our success stories that are deaf and work in this school. We have a community here that is amazing, really, we have a small community but we are strong and they care about our kids. When our kids go out in this community whether it be for mobility and they are out on the sidewalks or in public, our community watches out for those kids. They know the kids in our community. We are a small enough community that they know the kids in the public school and also the kids here at ISDB. We have a lot of people like you have seen, some of the parents that have come up here and expressed their feelings about this school. They have moved into this area and they have bought homes in this area. They have kids in public school in this area and have jobs. How sad would it be for us to say okay, now you are going to have to disrupt your lives and move to Boise where the cost of living is twice at high. Is that fair? I don't think so. We have a school that was built for our kids and for the needs of our students and we have everything here that we need whether it be for recreation or whether it be for the needs like they talked about using some of the facilities that we have here, the track, the fields, we are a community school. It is just not ISDB by itself. Well we're really proud of our students and I just hope with all my heart that we can keep our school here, you know, the cost of literacy maybe for your children is high, but how much would the alternative of failure cost us. Thank you very much.

Jill: My son Danny has been attending ISDB for a few years. He is in the cottage program. I don't know how I can express the importance of this school to Danny and our family. Sometimes it seems like the legislators can only see what is expedient to those who live in the capital city. But what about those that live in the heart and soul of our state. Danny attended Arco elementary only half days while we attempted to help him half days at home. He was to sit there without an interpreter with a language that was spoken and he couldn't hear. There was no opening for communication with students, aides. The only people that helped him were a couple of high school students that had learned some signs from a textbook. I was even told to cover my mouth when I spoke so that he would learn to listen. He is severely to profoundly deaf so you can picture that communication. The teachers at Arco gave me a choice. I could cancel the new football uniforms or I could go to court but there was no help for Danny. Where would an interpreter be found who can travel daily to Arco, Idaho throughout the winter. And where could qualifying help be found throughout Idaho that currently attend ISDB. We first learned of this wonderful school through the outreach consultant. When they brought us to visit the school our family was completely overwhelmed. Through this school it would be possible for our deaf and silent child to learn. He had neither a spoken language or a language for his thoughts. The recreational facilities and athletics and shop classes and the infirmary and work training programs and on and on. It is a total language for Danny. Each teacher is trained and qualified and every staff speaks the same language as the children who attend here. Each one has a personal passion to see these kids succeed as independent citizens. Could this level of dedication and specially qualified services be relocated or replaced? What about all the families in rural Idaho. Could it be possible to relocate all of the families? All of them are here in one location and they will help all of them grow into adults. Danny will become an active member of society because of this school. I wondered if Danny would stand up.

Gretchen: I am going to speak from two different hats. One I am a parent of a profoundly deaf child who graduated from this school. Two, I also work here. I was a teacher for two years and it has been a great place to

work. As a parent, I belong in the group of families that made a move across the state and live close to the school because we were convinced in rural Idaho that we would not be able to find the services our child needed no matter how hard the district tried. Found that when we got here we had a wonderful signing environment for our daughter. We had chosen sign language as a communication mode in our family and my daughter has extremely good family support. Everybody in the family signs, but there are still things that we as a family alone isolated in the state could not provide. We could not provide deaf role models. A language that she had total access to, we could not provide. Because of her time here I truly believe it is a big reason for her success. She is now in college. She is at a hearing college and it is a private college and she is the only signing deaf person there and she would not be the confident person she is had she not had that experience and upbringing here at school. She had peer groups, deaf adults and total access to the communication around here. So, on my school side hat. That gives me cause for concern if we are thinking about doing regional programs because I am very concerned about critical mass of students to peer groups. You may look at the Idaho Falls area, oh, we've got twenty students there and they are going to range in age from three up to 18 and five and six year olds will not be a peer group for teenagers. I am not convinced looking at cost figures that it would be anymore fiscally less money. I'm very concerned about critical mass of students for all of our students here and so I strongly support keeping a residential component and there are some students who definitely don't fit well in mainstream no matter how much a district goes overboard to provide services because they can't provide what my daughter needed which was role models and a good sized peer group. Thanks.

(no name given): I have a son who goes here. I do have a master's degree in special ed and one thing I have never understood is that least restrictive environment is a hierarchy. Starting with public school and going down. Everything in special ed is based on the individual needs and yet the one part is ironclad hierarchy. My stepson had a chance to go to a large public school and he had some successes but it did not work out. When I brought him back here I could not believe the feelings that I got when he came in here on the first day of school. He was around everybody that signed and talked to him. That is one of the rules and everybody has to sign to the best of their abilities in the hallway. He was just included in a way and that made me feel that I can't imagine what it was like for him to walk down a hallway in the school and he showed me where his shop was and walking and having all the activity going on around you if you couldn't hear anything that anybody was saying. I just couldn't even imagine that and just not having the fear come in. That would be fearful. That would not be the least restrictive environment. That is all I had to say and I will let somebody else talk now. Have a good day.

Richy: I am a teacher here in the middle school at ISDB. I am also a former student. As a deaf person I would like to speak for other deaf people. The school for the deaf has a long history of having lack of sign language. Oralism occurred between the 1880s and 1960s. People were not allowed to use sign language. Because of that, other people felt that it was a benefit for deaf people to learn and to be like hearing people. So, deaf people set up organizations to fight oralism. During that time many deaf adults and many teachers, employees lost their jobs. So there was this big fight against oralism because there was the feeling that deafness or sign language provided full access to communication. Some deaf people can speak very well, but they don't have full access to the spoken language. During the 21st century, I could see that we are going back. Cochlear implants and the technology with that. I am not saying that I am against cochlear implants, I believe everybody has a choice. One thing that bothers me is it is an excuse for the students to read at a fourth grade level and I don't think that is appropriate. ISDB staff has been attending conferences. One conference here in Idaho with the special studies institute, ISSI happens in Pocatello every year, and they have professors there every year who emphasize how important it is to of access to language and communication. ISDB, this is the signing environment. This is really the best place to learn to sign. Also, full access to communication and language. You really can't find any place in Idaho with full access and language other than ISDB. I came from a hearing family and had full access to communication with my family. My family learned to sign, my oldest sister is hard-of-hearing and deaf and then the two youngest brother and sister are hearing and my parent would often joke that they had two deaf hearing and two children that don't listen. So it really didn't make a difference in our family having deafness. And as far as having full access to communication it is something that is very critical to ISDB. ISDB taught my parents sign language and to involve me in my family and what went on in my family. I want to thank them for educating my family. I don't think other schools can provide that. I grew up at ISDB for twelve years and really I would say that it was the best twelve years of my life. My biggest fear is that the decision will be made to get

rid of the signing environment and to use interpreters that is not a signing environment. Whatever changes happen, you must have signing environment. Thank you.

Jeff: This has been a night of television and cameras and radio. I am Jeff, better known as a dad. She is more popular than I am. She has been to this school since second grade and she had a hard time in Kimberley. This school has been great for her and please keep it.

Jerry: I am a former teacher of forty years here at ISDB on their payroll. I retired eight years ago. I am a curator for the ISDB museum and also the president for the Idaho Association for the Deaf. My background is very important in order to provide a prospective about my involvement in these activities. I attended many NAD (National Association of the Deaf) conferences and participated in the deaf Olympics and the Miss Deaf America pageants so my background I feel has given me an opportunity to see what is happening within the deaf adult community and the young people as well. In a way, I have been disappointed for the last couple of years with the city of Gooding. I'm very pleased to see all of you here tonight because I felt you were not responsive to the problems that ISDB was experiencing. How many parents are here that have children here? Not many. It is really sad. I would rather be talking to the parents because they are the ones that make the decisions to enroll their children in the School for the Deaf. Those parents need to know what is going on here. The more they know what is going on they will make that decision. We need to spread the word. The concept of critical mass for deaf children should be eight to twelve. We don't have that now. We have less than that because of our small enrollment. That is sad also. This is a wonderful school and a wonderful environment. Everything that is necessary is here. Concerning critical mass, we need to lack at this here as well. We haven't done a good job of selling this school to the parents. What's the reason that they choose mainstreaming? It appears to me having grown up as a deaf person all of my life. It is the same old story wherever you look we have not been successful in selling the school to parents. The mainstreaming act in the 1980s hurt us terrifically and lots of schools closed. The way people are speaking tonight, this school should not be closed as well. There are two options related to critical mass. Move to the Treasure Valley. For sure the enrollment will increase because there is more of a chance for families to find jobs there. But the second option is for us to tell the parents that this is an option. We need to tell them what we have and explain to them what we have to offer. I have given presentations a number of times in which I compare mainstreaming with residential schooling and parents were not aware of what I talked about. You were the wrong people to be talking to, you don't have deaf children. You don't send your children here. Salary is another important issue. If you are a specialized teacher in deafness you ought to be paid better than a public schoolteacher. It is not happening here. Salaries are lousy. We are the poorest state in the northwest. We can't compete with Washington, California, and Oregon. Idaho is like the Mississippi of the south. So in a way, a move to a larger area would be a good move. If you make the decision to let the school stay here in Gooding, an increase in salary should be at the top of your list. It will probably be cheaper in the long run and prepare better deaf citizens who become taxpayers in Idaho. If we move to the Treasure Valley, that's fine as long as we remain a residential school with a cottage or dormitory environment. I have a book called "The Unwritten Curriculum" where it is explained that deaf people benefit more from after school activities than they do from what happens in the classroom. I think that may even be true of hearing people as well. We need that here. Residential rather than mainstreaming environment. We have no deaf representation on this subcommittee. No one with experience in that field. That is something that is missing. It seems to be a problem for the deaf population in that the numbers are small and spread out so they can't come together easily. I am frankly surprised by the support that came tonight. It is a strange time. All over Idaho is rural. Even Boise with only 210 thousand people is considered small compared with other cities. It is really chicken feed. All in all, I just want to see the school grow. It is my school, I grew up here, I graduated here in 1955 and I've had a long association. I'm 68 now. I have been connected with this school for 59 years. Earlier than that I was home schooled. So really, the majority of my life I have spent here. I have a history of this town and ISDB. As a deaf person, I feel I am speaking for other deaf people. We need to increase the exposure of life experiences through the program so deaf people can be successful in life.

Shelley: I am the transition coordinator at ISDB. I serve all of the students from the age of 14 until they leave the school. I began here as an instructor. When I began here very few of these students were able to site their goals. It is my understanding that independent living programs were before my time and produced productive adults. Now once again they have been instituted. ISDB transition training prepares our students for integration into the hearing, sited world. These must be taught before forcing students to use them. The on-campus

transition program gets them ready for when the skills will be put to use and produce ongoing success. The residential provides them the chance to learn the living skills. The business owners in Gooding in the very receptive to having the students participate in the practice of work skills and habits in their businesses. Students are given various opportunities to learn appropriate communication with sited and hearing individuals. Doors are open for deaf and blind children with an abundance of applicants are provided for support. I'm afraid that the doors will close if they are swallowed up in the mainstream. The residential part of the School for the Deaf stems from the ability to communicate in particular related to the deaf community. In the past twenty years I have witnessed many students enter the school with little language at an older age. He or she was so isolated in their community that they had no one to talk to. The language development improved with only a week or two of attendance at our residential school. The improvement was phenomenal, not to mention the emotional stability. I have had the experience of working in a school setting in Boise. Placing a student in the public school with an interpreter is worlds apart from having them taught with a highly qualified deaf educator. I, too, felt isolated in a school district that knew nothing about educating deaf students. I cannot disagree that the population here has decreased since my first year of teaching. I hope we can think of other ways other than to move or close the school. Keep the school here. I have two children of my own that attend the public school here. They were talking about over crowding and I thought why can't we share our school with the public schools. Thank you.

Paula: I work at the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind. I am the coordinator. Before I was the transition coordinator, I was a teacher here and I taught grade school, middle school and high school, coached various sports and then I was part of the summer work program. Tonight I want to talk about the post secondary transition program and the impact of that program because ISDB is here in Gooding. Our administrators, rehabilitation and the College of Southern Idaho got together years ago and talked about the lack of students who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, visually impaired and blind not being successful in the college. There were some successes but more of the students would leave school because they would reach road blocks or barriers and they had no person to go to. They would fail and go home and get a job where they were under employed. And so they decided to do the transition program and we would take students from all the regions in Idaho any student that is deaf, blind, hard-of-hearing, or visually impaired. We can help them get into courses that are their choice. They are not coming just to be technical. We have students studying to become preschool teachers for the deaf and the visually impaired. We are seeing some really great outcomes. We have students being placed at college and being successful and they fall down, they skin their knees, they get frustrated and mad and they stand back up and try again in a different way and it is amazing. Another parts of our program, we bring students in for on the job training which is another part of training for Voc Rehab and ISDB. Sometimes they are not successful in reading; their reading skills are very low. They may not have come here until they were in the eighth grade and that was their first education. So we look at creative ways to get them job skills where they will be employed. We have had successes in that also. Then we have a group we call the community and that is the students that are not college bound. They are not only deaf, they have a variety of different disabilities and deafness seems to be not one of the biggest ones; definitely the biggest impact. We work with a number of agencies that give them one to one independent living skills. They go into the home and help them live independently. They give them job coaches so they can go to work and maybe their ability is they are going to clean the tables at the restaurant and, you know what, that is great because they are working up to their ability and being successful and independent to that ability and working together with ISDB because it is here. We can do that and give them that opportunity. Before, they may not have had that opportunity going in. I don't know. The students in the community give them developmental skills and independent living skills. It is very hard to find people that sign and the groups in the Magic Valley area are really looking and searching out in the area. They are teaching the people independent living skills to be the best that they can be. ISDB being here is giving some great opportunities to deaf and hard-of-hearing, visually impaired and blind students for their futures. It doesn't stop because they are 18 or 21 and we can't give them more help here. We have to continue to do that and having ISDB here we will see more students over there. Right now at CSI we have 18 deaf students using the ISDB services and we have a few that are hard-of-hearing and not deaf and some visually impaired students. The fall of 2006, I have already been approached by a few interested in going to CSI as college students and then the other seven that approached me are from the Boise area and know that CSI has amazing disabilities services; so, what better place. We need to keep the school open and keep networking and make their futures successful. They're going to be and have students that have come out of the program and how they contribute as

citizens is amazing. Thanks. One of my students came here tonight, I asked a bunch of them to come, but they had class and they said they would skip. And following me is Justin.

Justin: When I first came here I was thinking we need to shut the school down it is costing too much money. The education clearly isn't that well. The isolation in the hearing world is causing problems. But after hearing all of these people I am feeling that the school is necessary for all of the students. It is costing too much and I think that we should cut the ways like other people were saying and only for the benefit of the students. Like Bill Andrews was saying. It is not right to cut the student's education. I am sure you have looked at the scores. All of the different skills that we should have we don't have. Where is it rooted. Is it in high school or in children. We need to fix that. A student told me she didn't have an education in math. She was really low in math. She asked the deaf staff for help and they outright told her no. I don't like it. We need to change and make it a better education. Besides all the bad things that are happening in the school right now that need to be fixed, there is like the outreach and the library program that we heard about earlier. We have an outreach of like seven different people to help deaf students in mainstream schools. What I wanted to elaborate on is the post secondary program. This is a wonderful program. These students are using up to 80 thousand dollars a year, and they are not getting the education that they need. It is too hard and they give up and they live on welfare for the rest of their life. It is awful. My friends have been getting better in English and math and all the required skills to live their life and what happens is they become productive members of society and they can end up working and building our economics and all this great stuff wouldn't happen if they didn't go to college and the post secondary program does just that. So whether you shut down the school, whether you move to a different place, I would truly love to see an outlet for students to keep on getting a better education in college so they can get jobs rather than just sit around all day and live on welfare. That's all I have to say and thank you for the opportunity to talk.

Camey: There are so many things that I could say here tonight and I am trying to think of what is the most important. I agree with a lot of the people who have commented to the hospital and I also disagree with a lot of them too. I am Camey and my dad is Jerry. Both of my parents went to residential schools and they had seven children and all of them deaf and two of us are education teachers for the deaf. It just surprises me that people say they are not getting what they need here. They are. I grew up going to public school. No interpreter, nothing. But because we are here in a small town, I was really fortunate to have classmates who had a deaf parent or a deaf brother or an audiologist or an interpreter and they helped me so much through the system. I was almost always on the honor role, but I wasn't satisfied with my experience at public school. I think mostly because I knew what ISDB had. I knew there was something here that I could never get at a public school. When I was in high school, I started coming to two or three classes here so I could take part in sports and leadership and student council but they would not let me in here because I was normal. I had to beg to come here and I think I begged because I knew that they had wonderful experiences and opportunity for me here. I was very fortunate to have a very good counselor who said hey, social skills matter and being around people like you matter. Just recently I had a leadership weekend here with some students and we were just talking and some of them were in tears when they read the paper. They were so devastated. I can understand their pain. They know what it is like to be in a public school. They know what it is like to be away from a residential school. When you talk about least restrictive environment, most of our students are experiencing things that they do not experience at home. This is like heaven and a safe haven for them. They own this place. To take that away from them it is pretty profound. It may cost the state more because they may be in jail or on health and welfare, social security income. With their experiences here, they are showing other deaf individuals that they can make it. A lot of the deaf kids also have additional disabilities but they have a wonderful environment here, they have wonderful staff here that are wonderful role models to them that they cannot get that any where else because I know that for a fact. Last year I worked in the Meridian school district. Even now I am sick to my stomach because I worked as an interpreter because I am hard-of-hearing. I was responsible for teaching the students and I hadn't graduated yet. I was hired as an interpreter and I was supposed to change a student's diaper. That is not right. These children need to be considered part of the no child left behind campaign that is going on right now. This is their least restrictive environment. If those students out in the mainstream knew what they were missing they would be begging to come here also. The parents do not know. Public relations is very important. I can tell you that residential schools make a difference. I have seen it, I have lived it and I am still here now.

Bart: I just wanted to leave you with a few thoughts this evening. I have listened to a lot of the comments that were made this evening. I tried to put myself in your shoes and I thought what you might be thinking when you were coming down. You were coming to a school and they are going to make some comments and then we have to go home and make a decision. I think you have found that there is a city, a county, a town, a school, an airport, but this is my family here. I have lived here for thirty years. Everybody is a family member and we work together as a whole community. I don't think you will find that if the school is moved to Boise. So in your decision, make it really easy for you. There isn't a decision to move the school. The decision should be to support the school as it stand because if the people here in Gooding can't do it here it can't be done. While you are driving back to Boise and you are thinking about all of the comments made this evening, what I would like you to think about is ways to come up with funds and monies to support this facility. I think we can do it as a whole community and we have a facility. I thank you for letting me speak this evening.

Toby: I have been a student here for five years and I really enjoy it. The School for the Deaf and the Blind has been a very special place for all of us. After I experienced several years in the public school, I was placed at ISDB. Every since arriving here I have improved in academics and leadership skills, athletics and learning has been optimal. My teachers are influencing me greatly through sign language. The school has been designed specifically to meet our needs. ISDB is the least restrictive environment. If the school is moved to Boise, we would definitely need a continued cottage program, a recreation program, an athletic program to continue to improve and have a least restrictive environment for the deaf and hard-of-hearing students; also for the visually impaired students as well. The teachers in the public school system are not highly trained or highly qualified to educate deaf students. Sign language interpreters are not teachers. They cannot always provide the appropriate education. There are not opportunities for sports. Here sports are open for all students. There are organizations that are open for all students at ISDB. And also, generally speaking, mainstream students miss out on all of those opportunities. Gooding is a nice central point between the Treasure Valley and eastern Idaho. Moving the school would mean a loss of highly qualified teachers. Plus, it is easier and cheaper to teach deaf children than to pay for services, assistive items, etc., as adults. That is how I feel in my life. It was not going to work. I had to come to school for four years and I could not understand them when I was in the fifth grade and public school wasn't working for me and now I have a place for me. It is awesome. Deaf teachers are better.

Rose: I have been sitting here for almost four hours and you now know what it is like to be hard-of-hearing. You are sitting here focusing and trying to soak it all in. I have two master's degrees and I have taught here for eighteen years. I want to speak to you on two different levels. One as a hard-of-hearing person and the other as a teacher here at ISDB. As hard-of-hearing person, I grew up in public school. I did not have many friends. I succeeded. Exactly why I'm not really sure, but I could read and I had a family. Speech is what many people misunderstand. Just because I can talk for myself does not mean that I can hear it. To speech read you have to be five feet away and when you are in the classroom with other students, you are not three to five feet away from those people. To be able to hear what this person is saying and that person is saying you are doing well to catch who is talking and it doesn't matter what they are saying. I am advocating for all the students in Idaho, they are not getting what they should have. I am an expert speech reader, I do it well, but I can tell you that I only get thirty three percent of what you are saying. Only thirty three percent of the English is speech reading. The hard-of-hearing student is just getting the same services as a deaf student. We think they are getting the education because they have learned to nod their head, smile, and copy. I am the word's best copy cat. I have learned to watch my peers and do exactly what they are doing. That is not education. We need to think about how those students who are out in the mainstream with a public schoolteacher who is only getting less than sixty percent of what the other students are getting. Here at ISDB I have worked here for eighteen years. I cannot count the number of times when we will see hard-of-hearing students come here because they failed in public school. We are spending too many years trying to catch up everything they missed. I would rather that ISDB become the place with we send almost all of our students here so we can start with the right foot, with all the access to communication. I told you I am an expert speech reader. I have two master's degrees which proves how smart I am. I finally realized how much I was missing in college when I started learning assignment my world went from five feet to 360 degrees round with an interpreter. With a person who signs in front of me I can understand everything. My world opened up. I grew up watching TV. I thought I got everything. I sat five feet right square in front of the TV. When the closed captioning came up, I could not believe how much I missed. I am now 44 years old, and I refuse to watch any TV program or movie that is not captioned. I now know how much I am missing. If I am as good as I am at speech reading, and I am damn good, what is going on

with all those children who are being mainstreamed who are working with teachers who know nothing about how to work with the hard-of-hearing child. They think they got it because that kid learns really fast, I'm sorry I work with a lot of deaf students who learn really fast how to do this. Because they don't want to admit they don't know. We have good teachers here. I cannot imagine what it would be like to work without my coworkers. I know how to teach hard-of-hearing students. I know what they are missing. You have so many well qualified teachers here in this school. Not only are we teaching the students who missed so much in the public school, they have gone through age fourteen with nothing in the same classroom. In the public schools, someone with two masters earns more money than me. I am expected to take a student with no language and a student who cannot read or write and a student who reads nothing, and I teach them all at the same time. How can we do that? We are doing it. We do well with the students we have here. I wish we had more. I remember when I taught seventeen students in one classroom. They learned from each other. They learned from me, they learned from another teacher. We need somehow to get that back here again.

Robert: Hello, thanks for letting me speak tonight. I would like to tell you a little bit about my experience. I have gone to four different schools for the deaf. Before I moved here I went to one school for the deaf that had thirty deaf students and it's still standing. The School for the Deaf is almost like home to me. Comparatively speaking, to me the public school and the school for the deaf, I have noticed deaf students that can't keep up with hearing students. It is not expensive if you compare the cost of public school to here. I am surprised that it costs 33 dollars here to take driver's education and public school costs 2 hundred dollars for driver's education. That is expensive. Seriously. My nephew goes to public school and he's taking driver's education and he says that's how much it costs. I have social friends here and I wondered how can my friends in public school how do they communicate. Have an interpreter, a little shadow, to interpret everything with a hearing person. That doesn't seem right. I want to have more opportunities. More educational opportunities. I would like to see the school move to Boise. Work based learning is very small here and we might be able to of more opportunities in Boise. I think more students might come to the school in Boise. Also we would be able to have more sports opportunities. More opportunities for teachers. In the Treasure Valley there would be more teachers there for the deaf. I am concerned why not there instead of here. Why are they not here? Why? I don't understand why if this school stays here, I think there might be more problems here. If we moved to a different place like Boise it might solve some of our problems. I would also like to try and thank everybody for coming and supporting the school. I enjoyed it.

Janette: My name is Janette. I graduated from ISDB 29 years ago. Presently I'm the chairperson of the 100th anniversary celebration next year. I want to tell everybody about that and invite you all to come if you want to. I also have been involved with the Idaho Association for the Deaf for many years. There is so many things that I wanted to say but everybody took all of my ideas. What is left is this. I want to say that I have three degrees from CSI. My home is in Twin Falls and this is my home too. This is my second home. I want to say, please don't take it away. Please don't take my home away. That's all I want to say.

Holly: Good evening. I am the parent of a child who is deaf. My son attends the Boise ISDB program in the total communications classroom. As a side line I happen to be a nationally certified sign language interpreter. I am not here to discuss location though. I am sad that they are being divided - those who sign and those who use auditory methods. There are many wars going on between the parents of the total communication and the auditory in the Meridian school. My son both speaks very well. He also signs very well. He is developing beautifully. I couldn't be prouder of him. Having incredible resources to access his world through spoken English is necessary. Audiologically, we could all him hard-of-hearing. Having incredible resources to visually access his world through American sign language is equally critical. Dividing our kids into one camp or the other camp does not serve us well. Sign language should not be considered a last language, just as cochlear implants should not mean that they cannot learn to sign. I respect parents who choose auditory verbal methods and I ask those parents to please respect my son for who he is. Because he signs does not mean he is contagious. I ask the State Board to consider education and also to provide learning environments, plural environments where all deaf and hard-of-hearing students will have the opportunity to succeed. Thank you.

Laird: Is there anyone that didn't sign up that wants an opportunity for three minutes. That doesn't mean that Duke can get back up here for three minutes.

Jennifer: I just wanted to give you a little background on myself. When I started college in 1994, there was one thing that I was not going to be and that was a teacher. I have now been teaching at the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind for two years and I love it. I want to tell you a little story about one of my students to help me put things in prospective a little bit . . . *(Portions of this transcript have been redacted to protect student privacy.)* Anyway, I think that this little child, if they were to move to a mainstream environment, would not be successful. She needs reinforcement and encouragement so that she knows she can succeed. Her time at this residential school has been a benefit to her. I don't care if she goes to school here in Gooding or in Boise or Timbuktu for that matter. But I think that all of us -- I think she needs people to love her, understand her, and have patience to communicate with her. Thank you.

Lorna: I didn't really plan to speak tonight, but I guess I will any way. My name is Lorna and my daughter turned twenty five yesterday. We moved here so she could specifically attend school here. We thought we are responsible for the education of our child and what can we find. What request can we make for ISDB, what other things can we do. We decided to come here because they could do something that we couldn't do. That was to give her a home where she could communicate with everybody. And I can't say that ISDB gave her everything even in social aspects because in middle school we learned we were raising a deaf nerd. We went through everybody else is chasing boys and I could care less and the nice thing was that she could figure out I am not weird because I'm deaf, I am weird because I am weird. She chose to go to California State University after she mainstreamed quite a bit here in Gooding. It was wonderful because a lot of them understood and knew sign language, but it was still at times lonely. We did not yank her out to put her in Jerome High School. I have two year's worth of IEPs and she loved the academic challenge of mainstream schools. She loved it. She decided to go to California State University Northridge. That is a mainstream program, but it has a large number of deaf students, so there was a possibility for some social life. She graduated there with a double major in biology and bio medical physics. She is currently working as a lab tech at the University of Utah getting her energies in the right place. Thank you very much.

Jennifer: I just moved here from Texas; just a month ago. So when I heard the rumor that ISDB might be closing or moving, I realized that closing the school would hurt the deaf community. Moving it is better than closing it. You may not understand this, but I want you to remember this. Deaf people like to be with other deaf people. If you close the school everybody scatters and it becomes difficult to get together. So please don't close the school. Move it or leave it here, whichever is best for the state. Thank you.

Jackie: I moved to Gooding about three years ago teaching at the school. I moved here from the state of Nevada that doesn't have a residential school. I worked there for three years and I swore I would never work at a residential school. I thought mainstream classrooms were the best environment for deaf students and I thought they could succeed better than anywhere else. Coming from both positions, I now know that I will not work in the mainstream environment. I know this is the best environment. I have seen so many more successes in this environment. I look back to the resource classroom and I remember having to pull my student out from beneath a desk because he did not want to go out and face the other hearing students. I had the opportunity to go to a California School for the Deaf and they socialized for the first time with other students. I would be very saddened for our students and frustrated that they would not have the opportunity to learn that they do here. Thank you.

Laird: Before I close, do any of the Committee members have any comments?
Wendy: I just wanted to thank everyone for coming tonight and staying for the whole time. I am a politician that is why I am saying this.

Laird: Thank you Wendy, I did not want to mention that.

Wendy: I think everybody spoke from the heart tonight and thank you for making the effort.

(from audience) You're buying dinner right?

Laird: She's not up for election yet.

(from audience): I just want to say that if you have not read the full report, I encourage everyone of you to read the full report. The summary does not do justice to the full report. So get a copy and read the whole report.

Laird: We had 53 speakers tonight and I think we did get through it quite well. I would like to thank everybody that did come and thank the members of the Committee. If you have any additional comments please get them in right away. The Committee does meet in Boise on the 28th. You can come and listen, but there will be no further presentations as we have had over the past several months. We have two three ring binders with materials and notes from all the interested communities - from the deaf, blind, technology, all the subject areas that we were supposed to review. We've had information presented to us. We are going to try and work through that on the 28th and give the recommendations to the Board on the first. Again, thank you all for coming.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.