



Idahoans for Choice in Education

Creating a Brighter Future for Idaho Families

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

Home School

Harbor School

Traditional School

Charter School

Virtual School



Darrell Deide,
Chairman



Holland Johnson,
Treasurer

Good Times Will Return For Idaho Schools, Will Idaho Schools return To The Same Old Ways?

Volume IV Issue V

We have no doubt that the state and nation will recover from the current economic downturn. The question is, when the financial malaise is replaced by good times, will our schools return to their same old ways? This is a relevant question, and how our policy makers answer it, may well determine the future of our state. For the past two years, our schools across the nation and here in Idaho have had to do with less. Teacher salaries have held static, or in some cases have been reduced. Some programs have been eliminated. Our state appropriation to public schools has been reduced over \$100 million. All schools, in one way or another, have felt the economic downturn. But times will change. When they do, a great opportunity will be present to make some major changes in how schools conduct "business." Our policymakers must take advantage of this opportunity. If we do not take advantage we will continue to mire our schools in a "pool" of mediocrity. When I began teaching in an Idaho high school 50 years ago, our country led the world in the high school graduation rate. Today, we rank 18th out of the 26 industrialized countries. Again, 50 years ago we led the world in math and science, and today we are near the bottom. We simply can't continue to do business as usual. To do so risks the future of our children, our grandchildren and our country as we know it.

What must take place first is for our school leaders and our policy makers at all levels to come to grips with the reality of the situation. No more "padding" of graduation rates. No more pretending to the public that progress is being made when it is not. No more insisting that "if we just had a little more money, everything will be better." It is time to get real!

We can and must do better. Our traditional public school system will continue to be the primary delivery system for k-12 education, but the public school system must change and it will not change if left to its own devices. That change must be forced upon them through a variety of innovations and the addition of a good "dose" of competition.

- Policy makers must consider some fundamental questions:
- Will we continue to fund an improved but still flawed public school transportation system?
- Will we continue to fund the administration of 115 school districts when half that many will do just fine?
- Will we continue to pay teachers based upon time in service and college credits earned when neither of them has any bearing on how well the kids they teach learn?

SCHOOL CHOICE:

Freedom to choose a school that provides the environment that you desire...not someone else's!

Freedom to choose a school that meets your student's needs... not someone else's!

Freedom to choose a school that meets your expectations... not someone else's!

Freedom to choose a school based upon its performance... not where you live!

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Julie Yamamoto,
Leslie Mauldin,
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Please visit our website at: www.ice-pac.net



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- Will we continue with an outdated and flawed funding formula for our public schools that stifles the advancement of charter schools, and that places rural and small districts at a distinct disadvantage when recruiting teachers?
- Will we continue to support the growing bureaucracy of the Idaho Digital Learning Academy?
- Will we continue to stifle education choice in the form of vouchers or tuition tax credits when the majority of Idaho voters support those forms of school choice?
- Will we take advantage of the available technology to link individual student performance with their teachers to evaluate teachers and to improve our schools?
- Will we continue to support the flawed teacher contract laws that are harmful to kids?
- Will we continue to keep PRIVATE union employees (IEA) in the PUBLIC employee retirement system? (PERSI)
- Will we continue to require school districts to pay teachers while they are participating in union meetings?
- Will we continue to conduct "Business As Usual?"
- The opportunity for school improvement will happen. Will we take advantage of it?

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