



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

Another Alternative!

As we get closer to the November election and the 2011 legislative session, most of the politicians are calling education spending the fundamental issue. Yes, education spending, not education improvement. The Democratic candidate for Governor, Keith Allred has criticized the Republican-controlled Legislature and Governor Otter for cutting government education funding. Even some of the Republican legislators are taking the "bait" and calling for a tax increase to restore k-12 education funding to pre FY 2011 levels. So, politically, it is all about education spending. What else is new?

The 2010 Legislature apparently had only a couple of options: Cut spending or raise taxes. Raising taxes in a recession is the worst thing the state government could do. It is unfortunate that some school districts would rather raise taxes than find ways to be more efficient. Some school districts are doing their part to cut the fat. Kudos to them. That's good for schools, good for students and good for taxpayers.

However, there is another alternative to deal with the financial crisis: Let's consider a myriad measures that will not only cost tax payers less but improve our schools in the process. Yes, you read that correctly: Cost less AND improve schools. It can be done. The naysayers, primarily the education establishment, will jeer and say, "all school improvement measures will require more money." Not so! Private schools, charter schools and the state of Utah all educate children for less money than traditional Idaho public schools.

So what can Idaho do? As an example, let's look at our high schools, as they are the most expensive and the most in need of improvement. Today, most of our high schools look alike. They consist of the typical set of classrooms with a teacher and about 20-30 kids each. But did you know that technology and the online classes are now available that could allow one teacher to supervise a very large number of students, in essence creating a hybrid school that saves money and boosts education achievement?

What about administrative costs? The natural tendency of any bureaucracy is to expand. School administration at the building or the district level is no exception. The number and costs to support this expansion has been significant. To rein in the costs of the ever expanding education administrative hierarchy, adjustments need to be made to the school funding formula whereby more stringent limits are placed on administrative costs. It might help eliminate the assorted superintendents, deputy superintendents, public information officers and other non-teaching positions scattered throughout Idaho's 115 school districts.

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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Directors

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Julie Yamamoto,
Leslie Mauldin,
Ann Rydalch
Ralph Smeed
Jack Barraclough

Past Directors

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The last thing that our political leaders should be considering is how to restore education funding to the historic high levels of the past. Doing so will only institutionalize the inefficiencies that have been allowed to develop over the last many decades. Lawmakers should say NO to any proposed tax increase, but at the same time they should be saying YES to school improvement, because it can be done.

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