



 Idaho Business Coalition
for Education Excellence

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IBCEE Position Statement on *Students Come First* Education Reform Plan

IBCEE has encouraged all stakeholders to look at meaningful reform of Idaho's education system. Pursuing the status quo in providing education to Idaho's students is an unsustainable approach, both financially and for the future economic success of our state. In the climate of increased demands on Idaho's budget, the only way to improve and strengthen our education system is to innovate and eliminate inefficiencies. To do nothing at this juncture would ensure Idaho's education system would deteriorate and weaken, at the very point in history that it needs to be strengthened and enhanced.

We believe the package of education reform proposals outlined by Governor Otter and State Superintendent Luna in the *Students Come First* plan is a bold and innovative step toward such reform. At the same time, we recognize that some specifics of the plan may need to be adjusted and that other good ideas may emerge that would improve it.

We also recognize that several elements of the plan are controversial. Specific proposals have attracted both strong adherents and opponents, with compelling arguments on both sides. As we debate specific issues, we strongly encourage all sides to keep the end in sight: the most effective, efficient education system for Idaho, given the resources available.

We wholeheartedly support the notion that the most important entity in the education equation is the teacher. We recognize and salute the many dedicated, talented, and highly effective teachers who provide an enormously important service to our students. This *Students Come First* plan ensures that Idaho students will spend the vast majority of their time in the classroom with a classroom teacher. In the short run, elements of this plan that require change will make more demands on students, teachers, parents, and administrators.

As with any bold plan, reforming our education system will take strong leadership from all stakeholders. It will require a clear, open and efficient process that solicits input from all key stakeholders and drives necessary change. It will also require that all sides focus the debate on factual information and real details, and steer clear of historical bias and misinformation.

We must come together to make these changes happen. By working together, Idaho will have a system that will be better for all, and make our common objectives more attainable.

We support systemic change in Idaho education now. We strongly support the *Students Come First* education reform plan. And we are prepared to sit with all stakeholders and to facilitate and assist in any way possible in the continued development and implementation of details of the plan.

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