



Idaho Business Coalition
for Education Excellence

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IBCEE Announces Strong Support for *Students Come First* Education Reform Plan

(Boise). The Idaho Business Coalition for Education Excellence (IBCEE) announced today its strong support for the *Students Come First* education reform plan proposed by Governor Butch Otter and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna.

“We have long encouraged meaningful reform of Idaho’s education system,” said Skip Oppenheimer, Chairman and CEO of Oppenheimer Companies, Inc. and IBCEE Chair. “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.”

In IBCEE’s view, 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. 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.

IBCEE also recognizes 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,” Oppenheimer said.

IBCEE wholeheartedly supports 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,” Oppenheimer said. “This 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.”

“We must come together to make these changes happen,” Oppenheimer said. “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,” he said. “We strongly support the *Students Come First* education reform plan. And we are prepared to sit with all stakeholders to facilitate the continued development and implementation of details of the plan.”

IBCEE is a business coalition comprised of more than 80 Idaho CEOs, presidents and managing partners. It was officially organized in 2003 and incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit in 2005. Our purpose is twofold: To facilitate the work of key stakeholders to achieve education improvement, and to advocate on behalf of key education improvement efforts.

The founding members recognized a need for business leaders to provide positive advocacy to enhance the quality of education in Idaho. The group believes in the critical importance of high quality education to students’ ability to be effective citizens and highly competent participants in the international economic environment.

IBCEE embraces a philosophy of working closely with education professionals to support, in a constructive manner, selected education initiatives. We invite the participation of resource partners to help frame direction and generate ongoing input and advice.

To learn more about the Idaho Business Coalition for Education Excellence (IBCEE), please visit www.ibcee.org.

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