

For Immediate Release: July 23, 2013

COALITION FORMS TO SUPPORT THE IDAHO CORE STANDARDS

Idahoans for Excellence in Education, a broad and diverse coalition, has formed to support the successful implementation of the Idaho Core Standards.

“Our coalition represents all the major stakeholders who care about the success of Idaho’s students – parents, teachers, school administrators, child-advocate groups and the business community,” said Skip Oppenheimer, Chairperson of Idaho Business for Education, a non-profit group of 85 Idaho businesses that is working to improve education.

Idahoans for Excellence in Education’s goal is to give parents, policymakers and the general public accurate and credible information about what the Idaho Core Standards will do to help improve the state’s education system and set students up for success in school and in life, Oppenheimer said.

The Idaho Core Standards raise the bar for what students learn in math and English and better prepare them for the rigors of a post-secondary education. The standards were developed with the support of Governor Butch Otter and State School Superintendent Tom Luna. Idaho parents, teachers and other education stakeholders had a chance to review them two years ago. They were approved by the State Board of Education in the fall of 2010 and approved by the Legislature in 2011.

For the past two years local Idaho teaches and school districts have been developing the curriculum to start teaching to the standards during the 2013-2014 school year.

“Idahoans helped shape the standards and they were voluntarily adopted by the State of Idaho,” said Rod Gramer, President of Idaho Business for Education. “The federal government had no role in developing the standards or approving them. No federal money is tied to whether Idaho adopts them or not. The standards actually strengthen local control. How else could you get such a broad coalition to support them?”

“For years, educators have embraced the various patchwork programs that have been introduced into their classrooms,” said Penni Cyr, Idaho Education Association President. “While each program, in isolation, may have had nominal positive impacts on our students’ performance, educators realize that a bigger, more fundamental change is necessary. With the support of teachers, parents, lawmakers and other invested constituencies, the Idaho Core Standards can provide that fundamental change. We are pleased to join the coalition and look forward to working with the other partners to support sensible implementation of the Idaho Core Standards.”

Linda Clark, Superintendent of the Meridian Joint School District No. 2, said: “Our goal is college and career readiness for every student. The Idaho Core Standards provide a framework for curriculum instruction, and assessment that will facilitate this goal.”

Dr. Bert Glandon, President of the College of Western Idaho, said: “Nearly three out of every four students who enroll in Idaho’s community colleges need extra time and instruction to get ready for the courses required to complete a degree. This results in a cost to the student and a cost to the college, and it’s a cost taxpayers have already paid through their support of K-12 education. Clearly the old standards are not working for our children. The new Idaho Core Standards being implemented at the K-12 level are more rigorous and forward-thinking standards that ensure students are prepared for success when they graduate from high school.”

Wayne Rush, superintendent of the Emmett School District, said: “Idaho Core Standards will provide us a mechanism to ensure our students will meet the requirements to be competitive in tomorrow’s economy. They will improve teaching and learning so that students build in-depth knowledge of math and language arts, along with the critical thinking skills needed to be career and college ready when they leave our high schools.”

“As a parent and education activist, and a member of the Governor’s Education Task Force, I think doing anything to slow or stop the implementation of the Idaho Core Standards in public schools statewide would be a big mistake and deal a significant setback to the many efforts underway to better our schools and create a brighter future for our children and economy,” said Mike Lanza, founder of Idaho Parents and Teachers Together and former chair of the Vote No On Props 1, 2, 3 campaign.

“From a business point of view, the Idaho Core Standards are important because they will help ensure that we have the highly educated and skilled workforce needed to compete in the 21st Century,” Oppenheimer said. “The core standards are also good for students because they give them the tools to be successful at work and in life.”

Here is a list of the groups that have formed Idahoans for Excellence in Education:

Idaho Business for Education

Idaho Education Association

Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry

Idaho Association of School Administrators

Idaho Parents and Teachers Together

Treasure Valley Education Partnership

Emmett School District

Meridian Joint School District

Boise School District

Gooding School District

Idaho State Alliance of YMCAs

Micron Technology

Idaho Voices for Children

Meridian Chamber of Commerce

Boise Chamber of Commerce

Idaho Leads

Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children

Idaho State Board of Education

Idaho President's Council (Representing Idaho's College and University Presidents)

Idaho Digital Learning

“So far 18 different Idaho-based groups have joined the coalition and we plan to add more members as we continue to support the successful implementation of the Idaho Core Standards,” Gramer said. “It is important for parents, students and policymakers to know that there is a broad, diverse and deep group of Idahoans who support these standards.”

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