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Idaho Core Standards: Right for Idaho students, business and communities

One in every four Idaho high school graduates who attend a four-year college or university will need remedial training in basic skills like math or English. Three-fourths of all Idaho graduates who start their post-secondary work at a two-year community college will need this extra help to get caught up. Those classes — basically repeats of coursework Idaho taxpayers already paid for once — cost public universities and colleges in this state millions of dollars. And they aren't the only ones suffering because of this.

Employers all over Idaho struggle to train and prepare new hires. We're all looking for the same set of skills: problem-solving and critical thinking, written and oral communication abilities and an understanding of math. These abilities are what set apart the best in the workforce — and they're the same sets of skills that ensure academic success at all levels of higher education.

All you have to do is look at the statistics to know that the old set of state standards isn't working for our children, and the quality and rigor of their education may depend heavily on the quality of the standards. However, the new Idaho Core Standards address this problem by providing a common set of expectations that dramatically improve quality and rigor while also providing common benchmarks against which Idaho students can be measured and compared to students across the country.

The standards focus on preparing all students for college and career and set clear targets for students, parents, caregivers, stakeholders, policymakers and educators so we can all work together to assure that our students are fully prepared when they graduate from high school.

The Idaho Core Standards include the rigorous and extensive skills in advanced mathematics that are required for college majors in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and the ever-growing demand for skilled workers in the modern economy.

The Idaho Core Standards in English language arts go well beyond our current standards for reading, writing, speaking and listening. A central focus on writing directly addresses a weakness in current state standards and state testing as well as the need to improve written communication skills that employers and educators recognize at all levels.

Idaho is a small state with limited resources, but we are rich in excellent human capital. By helping develop and then adopting the Idaho Core Standards, we are saving time and taxpayer dollars while creating a set of common, rigorous, and forward-thinking standards designed specifically for Idaho and Idahoans. We are confident that they will result in much-improved educational outcomes for all of our students.

Sincerely,



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