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## **Federal Changes Are an Opportunity to Make Education Better Fit Idaho**

*From Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield*

(BOISE) – The news around educational changes at the federal level is starting to pick up in pace and significance, primarily with the recent executive order to effectively close the U.S. Department of Education and provide states with more control. My message about these changes has been consistent: Idaho, and the people who know our state and communities, should be setting the priorities for educating Idaho students. I have always stood firm on this principle.

The key to a successful future for our students is simple – *get back to basics*. With these federal changes, we now have the opportunity to better align our state and federal dollars to support what truly matters: creating a student-centered system that prioritizes reading, math and real learning. Additional control over how resources are utilized allows us to reclaim Idaho’s education system and set more of the policies that serve our students without the burden of bureaucracy and one-size-fits-all directives that don’t consider the real needs of our local communities.

These federal changes present us with an opportunity – an opportunity to enact change that reflects Idaho, Idahoans and the students we serve. I want to put forward a plan that represents the goals and needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. This is a chance to tailor education to our students and communities. We will not let this opportunity pass us by.

For example: I have advocated for changes to standardized testing for years, but federal restrictions have limited our ability to act. Now, with these shifts in federal policy, we have a real chance to break free from outdated testing requirements and move to what Idaho students need to know for a successful future. I believe assessments need to be less burdensome, and for our older students, matched to what they want to do after high school.

To take full advantage of this shift, I have launched a full-scale review within the Idaho Department of Education. We will scrutinize contracts, analyze unnecessary district and charter school compliance mandates and ensure every dollar—state and federal—is being used to serve

students. Next month, when I travel the state to meet with school leaders in every region as part of our annual post-legislative tour, I will ask questions and listen to concerns.

Most importantly, my team and I will engage with parents, community leaders and legislators to reimagine how we deliver education. Idahoans know best how to educate Idaho children, and we will now have the ability to put that knowledge to work.

We can lead the way in restoring local control, prioritizing student success and ensuring that our education system reflects our values.

Let's get to work.

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