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Guest Opinion: Idaho Teacher Appreciation Week, May 6-10

By Sherri Ybarra

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

As Superintendent, I have the opportunity to visit many classrooms and talk to many Idaho teachers across our great state. What I always see are caring, dedicated, innovative professionals who spend countless hours making sure our kids are learning, growing and achieving. I see rooms, hallways, libraries and playgrounds full of busy, engaged and happy kids.

I was a teacher, so I know that educators choose the career because they know education is the path to lifelong learning and success for our kids who are the future for us all. Teachers love what they do, and they know how important it is to help students succeed. I know firsthand, though, how tough the job can be, how much patience it requires, how challenging some days are, and the emotional investment teachers have to make every day.

At the State Department of Education, we know teachers are the heart of our mission: Supporting schools and students to achieve. We are committed to finding ways to provide more learning opportunities for our kids, improve assessments to maximize teaching effectiveness, honor achievement and make it easier for schools, particularly in Idaho's many rural and remote areas, to attract and keep skilled, dedicated teachers.

The hard work of Idaho educators is paying off, and recent rankings and indicators of student achievement are testaments to their efforts. Idaho students outperform their peers in math and reading, according to the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). *U.S. News and World Report* ranked Idaho No. 5 among all states for its percentage of college-ready students. Only two states have a higher percentage of high school students in dual enrollment (college) courses, and Idaho high school students earned nearly 185,000 college credits in 2017-18. Those are tremendous results, and Idaho educators should be proud of these accomplishments. You can see even more Idaho education achievements [on our website](#).

That's why Teacher Appreciation Week is so important. Idaho teachers need to know how much they are appreciated and valued – not just with words, but with actions. So, please take the time to let a teacher know how much you appreciate the work they do. We even have a [teacher appreciation toolkit online](#) if you need some ideas.

I am proud to be Superintendent of Public Instruction and to represent and advocate for Idaho's nearly 20,000 teachers. I have tremendous respect for those who continue this hard and deeply rewarding work, and I know Idahoans share that respect and appreciation. Let's make sure to show and tell them how much we value them, this week and every week.

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