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Critchfield: New School Year Brings Opportunities for Many

By Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield.

The start of the school year shouldn't mean the end to fun things. The prospect of new teachers, new experiences, and a new year of learning can feel overwhelming, but also exciting. In some ways, the return to the predictable schedule of the school year brings the comfort of routine. We're gearing up to dive back into a world of classes, homework, sports and other activities. I hope you'll find some excitement as we jump into the coming school year!

The start of the school year is about more than lesson plans and school bells. It's truly about the community. After all, our school calendars are often major drivers in what the next nine months will look like for families and towns. Our schools bring life to our communities.

As we reactivate our schools as central hubs throughout Idaho, I'd like us all to think about the many ways they add value to the places we live. Whether it's an art show, student theater production, or parent night, our schools are the hearts of our towns and have an essential role in creating strong connections.

As we look to another year of learning and growth for Idaho's students, I'd like to speak for a moment about the things each of us can do to work towards this goal. Whether you are an educator, a parent or a community member, we each have a role to play in investing in Idaho's future through our children.

For our teachers: You have an opportunity to lean into this year's academic growth with your experience and commitment to students. I can't speak highly enough about the talented, dedicated professionals that we have in our classrooms. Delivering this product – high quality education – takes training and talent. Teaching is an art. I'm grateful for the work that takes place in the classroom and for your focus on seeing your students succeed.

For our parents: we need your help and expertise. Teachers are the experts in the classroom and parents are the experts on their kids. No one knows our students better than parents, and the potential for constructive collaboration between you and your student's teacher can't be measured. Please take advantage of the year's opportunities to make your school a partner in your student's success. We benefit from your presence in your child's education.

For our students: I'm not too old to remember that it's hard ending the summer break! But as you look towards the school year, I hope you'll be positive and be active in your own success. This year can be the one where you join that club you've been thinking about, try out for the school

play or take on a team sport. Add an interest or new friend to your routine. These connections can make a difference in many ways, including academically!

And for our communities and to Idaho as a whole: This year, I invite you to look to our schools and our amazing students to see what's good in our communities. We've got the momentum we need to create important opportunities for our students and for our state.

I'm excited to get to work with *all* of you on making the 2023-2024 school year a meaningful one.

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