



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 13, 2016

www.sde.idaho.gov

Media Contacts:

Jeff Church

Chief Communications Officer

(208) 332-6934

jchurch@sde.idaho.gov

SHERRI YBARRA
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

**OPINION: IDAHO NEEDS AN ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM THAT
REFLECTS STATE VALUES AND ENABLES MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY**

650 W. STATE STREET
P.O. BOX 83720
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

OFFICE: 208-332-6800
FAX: 208-334-2228
SPEECH/HEARING
IMPAIRED: 1-800-377-3529
WWW.SDE.IDAHO.GOV

by Superintendent Sherri Ybarra

The State Department of Education (SDE), under my direction and in partnership with the Accountability Oversight Committee of the State Board of Education (AOC), is hard at work designing a new accountability system for public education in Idaho. We have an opportunity to be better able to measure how ready our students are to engage with society – economically, intellectually, and civically. We need an accountability system that enables mutual responsibility for student success among educators at every level, from the classroom to SDE, which is one of the goals of my administration. I want to share some principles that, if adhered to, will lead to such a system.

An accountability system reflects state values. We believe that defining success requires going beyond statewide test scores, and should illustrate student growth. Taking advantage of the Every Student Succeeds Act, a new federal education law that provides increased flexibility, Idaho has the opportunity to publicly report indicators that will further empower families to make decisions about their children, and educators to make decisions about instruction.

An accountability system is a tool for equity. It will allow all people in Idaho to easily view and understand progress in schools, including for disadvantaged student groups. It will help us reveal how students are being served beyond their test scores, and whether there are gaps that need to be addressed.

An accountability system helps the SDE and districts work together. It allows schools and districts to be praised for high achievement or fast improvement. Accountability facilitates transparent communication about performance between schools, districts, and the state, allowing effective allocation of resources to ensure that we meet the needs of students. We seek to do less dictating and more collaborating.

An accountability system is not punitive or complicated. It enables teachers, administrators, and parents to understand exactly how their school is doing in the interest of making progress. The SDE is not interested infringing upon local control with bureaucratic rules and regulations, or in using accountability to pit schools and districts against one another. We are interested in supporting teaching and learning by showing a motion picture of student growth over time.

As we continue to make progress on our accountability system, the State Board of Education website is the place to go for current information. The SDE is committed to transparency. As the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, I will use my vote on the State Board of Education to represent the schools and districts of Idaho.

###