



# Ensuring a World Class Education for Every Idaho Child

January 14, 2013



**Recommendations for State and Local Policymakers  
January 2013**

***“Unlike lawyers or doctors or CPAs, teachers have never had significant authority over the processes and systems that govern the teaching profession.... If we want to create an education system for the students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must transform that system, including the teaching profession. Since teachers know best about what we do, teachers should take responsibility for leading the transformation of our profession”***

--NEA, *Leading the Profession*.

In the decades since the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the debate over education reform has swept the country. There are those who believe our public schools are in crisis. There are others who believe any “crisis” is manufactured by those who would prefer to privatize our public education system. Others are asking that before we rush headlong into “reforming” our schools that we first identify the problems that exist. Almost everyone agrees that while our schools are not crumbling around our children’s heads, it is always important to be sure our public schools have the policy mechanisms and resources necessary to ensure we can provide students the skills they need to compete with their peers at home and around the globe.

The IEA has existed since 1892; just two years after Idaho became our nation’s 43<sup>rd</sup> state. In the 120 years since then, the IEA has consistently been in the forefront of the debate over issues related to the education of our students and the teaching profession. We know America’s public schools are the cornerstone of our country’s democracy. Our schools are the promise at the American Dream we offer every child. The existence of our country and the continuation of our way of life requires that we do all we can to ensure an educated electorate.

Idahoans must identify and agree upon world-class outcomes for our students, and we must be willing to invest the resources necessary to make sure the outcomes are achieved. To that end, the IEA has identified the following outcomes for students.

By no later than 2025, Idaho’s education system should ensure the following:

- All students will be taught in a safe learning environment.
- Idaho will be one of the five top-performing states on national standardized assessments, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Idaho students will be among the top fifteen performers compared to other nations/jurisdictions on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) exam.
- All Idaho students will be reading by the end of third grade, or be receiving intensive help.
- Ninety-five percent of all students will graduate from high school.
- Eighty percent of students will demonstrate college and career readiness on a college entrance assessment. 60% of Idaho high school graduates will successfully complete a post-secondary degree or certificate.

Idaho Education Association members believe it is our moral imperative, as a union of professional educators, to be the voice for our students and for our profession. We fully expect the debate over education to continue into the future. We know there is no silver bullet solution to “fixing” our public schools. We are committed to improving educational opportunities for every child. We offer the following set of recommendations to the continuing debate.

## Increase Student Learning

Parents entrust schools and teachers with their most precious treasures—their children. Teaching is an awesome responsibility.

Policymakers, educators, and parents share a common concern regarding Idaho's schools. New programs and ideas are regularly proposed at the state and local school district level to improve our schools. Yet not all of these programs and ideas are based on strong research about students and teachers or about learning and teaching. At the state level, even when a proposal is based on solid knowledge, the task of importing it into hundreds of Idaho classrooms is daunting.

Our students live in a complex world where influences outside the school setting compete for their time and attention. Effective teachers acknowledge that in addition to students' individual aptitudes and abilities, students bring a variety of racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, religious, cultural, socioeconomic, and other unique characteristics to the classroom. Effective teachers use a variety of formal and informal opportunities to learn that include students' out-of-school experiences.

To strengthen our focus on student learning, we must transform schooling from a time-oriented system where students move from grade to grade based on credits they've earned to a performance-based system aligned to national learning standards. Some students require more time to learn than others do. Individual students vary in the amount of time they need to reach their academic potential.

Many students may benefit from year-round schooling, while others may need extra time for learning pursuits beyond the classroom. Some students need time for academic assistance, and some need opportunities for enrichment. In rare instances, there will be students enrolled in public schools who, because of cognitive or other challenges, may find it difficult, if not impossible, to reach their potential.

Teacher involvement in instructional decision-making must be significantly increased. Teachers must be involved wherever and whenever decisions are being made. Teachers need to do more than simply implement others' policies and visions.

**The Idaho Education Association believes student learning and well-being need to be at the center of decisions involving instructional models, scheduling, school structure, and flexibility to support learning both inside and outside of the classroom. The following policy recommendations will maximize opportunities for student learning:**

- Transform the “factory” educational model: restructure the public school system (Darling-Hammond, *Right to Learn*, p. 148-188) into a new system, with the involvement of key education groups and leaders from across the state that embraces accountability and puts student achievement at its center. This system should:
  - Use assessments that are truly aligned with Idaho’s and the Common Core standards.
  - Participate in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to stay current with the ongoing research on performance assessment.
  - Utilize multiple measures of student achievement, such as formative classroom assessments, exhibitions, demonstrations, performances, portfolios, and self-assessments along with standardized tests (Darling-Hammond, *Right to Learn*).

- Establish a goal of an effective teacher evaluation system that supports and improves teaching in order to improve student achievement (Danielson, p. 33-34).
- Use multiple measures to inform teacher evaluations. Appropriately applied, multiple measures of teacher effectiveness can include student test scores, classroom observation, analysis of classroom artifacts, portfolios, self-reports, student evaluations, and parent surveys (Darling-Hammond, *Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness*).
- Make sure schools and school employees have the supports they need to succeed.
- Utilize key indicators, such as graduation rates and attendance rates, as a measure of student success (Allensworth, E.M. & Easton, J.Q., p. 7-11).
- Measure parent satisfaction through surveys designed to solicit input that comes from direct parental involvement (Lunenburg, F.C., p. 5-6).
- Implement the Common Core Standards through support of high-quality, ongoing, and teacher driven professional development and resources (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, p. 11-12.).
- Create equally high standards for critically important areas such as art, music, physical education and world languages. These subjects help foster creativity and communication, among other key concepts so vital to our children in this 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy (Bogden, J. F., Brizius, M, & Walker, E.M, p. 10 & 16).
- Allow teachers sufficient time to plan and collaborate with colleagues, shape curriculum, develop and deliver online courses, create and measure in-depth assessment, meaningful grading, professional development and practice (Berry, B., Daughtery, A., & Weider, A., pgs. 6 & 10).
- Give teachers the professional autonomy to choose and modify curriculum to meet individual student learning goals. One-size fits all and scripted curriculum does not meet the individual needs of students (NEA, *Leading the Profession*).
- Fully-funded full-day kindergarten provided by licensed preschool teachers which research has shown is essential for college and career readiness (WestEd, p.1).
- End social promotion. Provide all students who are retained the chance to demonstrate learning and move into the succeeding grade by providing them the opportunity to attend supplemental classes staffed by highly qualified teachers (U.S. Department of Education, *Taking Responsibility for Ending Social Promotion*, p. 53-54).
- Ensure opportunities for high school students to learn through increased community career/technical internships and provide additional higher education options that connect students with their dreams as soon as students are ready (NCSL, *A Path to Graduation for Every Child*, p. 11 and NCSL, *Making a Difference*, p. 10).
- Use a school schedule that keeps students in school more days throughout the year, but which also reduces the length of the learning day, to allow for mastery of content (Salberg, p. 62-64).
- Hold charter school students and home school students to the same high level of accountability as all of Idaho's public school children.
- Provide additional funding support and resources to districts and schools that consistently struggle.

## Ensure College and Career-Readiness

The proportion of American adults with postsecondary credentials is not keeping pace with that of other industrialized nations. Several years ago, the Idaho Legislature commissioned a report from its research arm, the Office of Performance Evaluation, which outlined the barriers to postsecondary education and further offered recommendations to reduce those barriers.

Last year, the National Conference of State Legislatures released a comprehensive state policy guide outlining ten recommendations policymakers are urged to use as a road map to increase the number of Americans who attain a postsecondary degree.

Policymakers have been aware of this postsecondary completion gap for some time. Several years ago, Idaho's State Board of Education set a goal that 60% of Idahoans ages 25-34 will have a degree or certificate by 2020. Their goal includes four specific pieces of rationale:

- Idaho must grow talent within the state to fuel innovation and economic competitiveness.
- Increased education attainment improves the quality of life for Idahoans and drives a vibrant, diverse economy.
- Idaho's increased education attainment must be responsive to businesses that will employ the workforce of the future.
- It is imperative we commit to efficiently and effectively increase postsecondary degrees and certificates.

**The road to assuring our schools create college and career-ready students requires careful thought and preparation. The IEA offers the following recommendations to help achieve this goal:**

- Provide a program of voluntary high-quality, preschool education, that is universally available to 3- and 4-year-old children from families at or below 200 percent of the poverty line (NCSL, *College Completion Agenda*, Recommendation 1).
- Implement the best research-based dropout preventions and interventions, beginning in elementary and middle schools, focused on early warning signs of students in danger of dropping out, to identify such students and put an educational safety net under them (NCSL, *CCA*, Recommendation, 4).
- Improve middle school and high school counseling (NCSL, *CCA*, Recommendation 2) by (a) providing a state-level counselor coordinator for all K-12 counselors per Recommendation 2.1, and (b) lowering the student-to-counselor ratio, particularly for those positions that provide education and career counseling, per Recommendation 2.2 (OPE, *Reducing Barriers*, p. 16).
- Urge K-12 and colleges and universities to collaborate to provide college information and planning services to all students, with a special focus on low-income students (OPE, *Reducing Barriers*, p. 7 and NCSL, *CCA*, Recommendation 3).
- Clarify and simplify the college admissions process making it more transparent and less complex (NCSL, *CCA*, Recommendation 5).
- Encourage increased access to higher education opportunities by providing more need-based grant aid, making the process of applying for financial assistance more transparent and predictable, and finding ways to inform families, as early as the middle school years, of aid amounts likely to be available to individual students (OPE, *Reducing Barriers*, p. 28 and NCSL, *CCA*, Recommendation 5).
- Make college more affordable by restraining growth in college costs, using available aid and resources wisely, and insisting that Idaho meets its obligations for funding higher education (OPE, *Reducing Barriers*, p. 28 and NCSL, *CCA*, Recommendation 6).
- Dramatically increase college completion rates by improving retention, easing transfer among institutions and implementing data-based strategies to identify retention and dropout challenges (NCSL, *CCA*, Recommendation 7).

## Provide Technology and Online Learning Options

Virtual delivery of instruction is growing as both a supplement to and a replacement for face-to-face classes. According to the International Association for K–12 Online Learning, enrollment in online classes has surged in the past 10 years, and the numbers of online schools and state online initiatives show similar growth (International Association for K-12 Online Learning).

It's no surprise that many students and their families like the opportunities that online learning offers: scheduling flexibility, access to classes not offered by the local school, self-paced learning, and—in some cases—avoidance of particular teachers. For students too shy to participate in face-to-face classes, online learning can provide a safe forum for participation.

Online learning has its shortcomings as well: often-dismal completion rates, costs to school districts paying for commercial classes, teacher training needs, questions about course quality, potential misuse of these new tools, and suspicions about the whole concept.

**The IEA offers the following recommendations for policymakers and local school districts to consider when introducing online learning options:**

- Ensure school districts determine the types of online options that are most appropriate for their students and whether to make these courses available (USDOE, *Transforming American Education*, p. 8).
- Create a state clearinghouse of high-quality online courses developed and taught by Idaho public school teachers which are available to any Idaho public school student (USDOE, *TAE*, p. 16).
- Create a system to track successful implementation and uses of technology in all public schools (USDOE, *TAE*, p. 16).
- Balance the use of media and technology with the use of other educational tools (NREL, p. 16).
- Explore how the state may incentivize Idaho districts to use already-available consortiums or yet-to-be-developed consortium agreements for the delivery of high-quality online courses and learning options (Office of Performance Evaluations, *Feasibility of School District Services Consolidation*, p. 5-12).

## Build Community Partnerships

Students, parents, and teachers are critical partners in helping students to reach their maximum educational potential. The entire community has a role to play in the education of our children. Business leaders, policymakers, and even patrons who may not have children enrolled in our public schools are vital to the success of Idaho's children.

Community partnerships, "...enable educators, social workers, and other school professionals to form sustainable, strategic partnerships with families, community agencies, neighborhood organizations, and the private sector. Absent these partnerships, too many students do not come to school ready and able to learn, and too many schools are not ready for diverse students with formidable needs and risk factors" (Anderson-Butcher, et.al, p. 160).

**The IEA believes adoption of the following recommendations will result in better academic results for students:**

- Establish a statewide effort to increase parent and community engagement in every school by fully funding a facilitated community engagement program in every school district (NEA, *Family-School-Community Partnerships 2.0*, Strategy 5).
- Provide opportunities for collaborative workshops-and shared learning experiences through the creation of Professional Learning Communities (CCSRI, *Professional Learning Communities*).
- Develop collaborations with community partners and businesses (NEA, *Family-School-Community Partnerships 2.0*, Strategy 10).
- Ensure on-going support for established programs such as Parents as Teachers (Parents as Teachers, pg. 2).

## **Improve Teacher Preparation**

In their groundbreaking report, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) reminded us all that what teachers know and do is the most important influence on what students learn (*What Matters Most*, p. 6).

More than 1.6 million new teachers are expected to enter the profession over the next decade (NEA *Leading the Profession*, p. 3). It is imperative that we ensure these new professionals have the skills they need to be effective teachers before they enter the schoolhouse door and are assigned a classroom of students.

In their two-year study, NCTAF identified a number of barriers that must be addressed if we hope to ensure, "all communities in our state have teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to teach so that all children can learn, and all schools systems are organized to support teachers in this work" (*What Matters Most*, p. 10).

**The IEA offers the following policy recommendations for improving teacher preparation:**

- Raise the bar on entry into the teaching profession (NEA, *Leading the Profession*, p. 6-8).
- Create a teacher scholarship and incentive program so more of the brightest students choose education as a career in hard-to-staff areas (Hines, D. & Mathis, K., p. 4-6).
- Provide instruction to pre-service teachers on a variety of aspects for how to use a wide variety of technological tools in their classroom (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, p. 22 and *Our Responsibility, Our Promise*, p. 11).
- Provide aspiring teachers early, substantive, and prolonged supervised field experiences in a variety of settings and grade levels and with diverse populations (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, p. 19).
- Provide student teaching opportunities in every school in the state by creating a Cooperating Teacher program in every school district where master teachers serve as adjunct college and university faculty in supervising student-teaching.
- Provide every teacher candidate with one full year of residency in a paid, co-teaching capacity with a trained Cooperating Teacher before earning full certification (NEA, *Leading the Profession*).
- Require every teacher candidate to pass both a content knowledge assessment and a rigorous classroom-based performance assessment at the end of his or her candidacy (Elliott, E.J., p. vi and *Our Responsibility, Our Promise*, p. 9-11).

- Encourage teacher-trainees to make a commitment to teach in Idaho for at least 3 years by fully funding their training from the time they enter the teacher education program through graduation (Alliance for Excellent Education, *Improving the Distribution of Teachers*, p. 7).

## Transform Teacher Certification

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) was founded in 1994 to ensure that every child has access to quality teaching in schools organized for success. Their first report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, called for competent, caring, qualified teaching in schools organized for success and sparked a national dialogue about the importance of high quality teaching (1996).

This document became the catalyst for the recommendations from Idaho's MOST (Maximizing Opportunities for Students and Teachers). The mission of this State Board of Education-directed group, which operated in the early 2000's, was "to maximize opportunities for student learning by putting a competent, caring, qualified teacher in every Idaho classroom." Many of the recommendations made in that report have been implemented over the past decade.

However, even as policymakers have introduced new standards, increased accountability for students and teachers, and innovative teaching strategies, they have largely ignored the MOST recommendations on teacher certification. In 2007, the IEA introduced its weTEACH teacher pay plan, modeled after the Idaho's MOST recommendations. In late December of 2012, the Council of Chief State School Officers addressed the issue in *Our Responsibility, Our Promise – CCSSO's Task Force Report on Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession*; many of these recommendations are nearly parallel to those offered by Idaho's MOST and outlined in the IEA's weTEACH plan.

There are no policies that can improve schools if the people in them do not possess the knowledge and skills they need or are unable to access high-quality continuous professional development opportunities to build their knowledge and skill sets.

**The Idaho Education Association believes the development of a transformational teacher certification system, as outlined below, which recognizes and encourages progression throughout one's career, will help maximize opportunities for student learning:**

- **Novice:** The first few years of one's career are intended to be a time of development and growth. At a minimum, these new-to-the-profession educators will be required to:
  - Take part in a comprehensive mentoring program;
  - Complete, reflect upon, review and revise, on an annual basis, a professional development plan that includes information on:
    - How the teacher will improve his/her practice through use of the Danielson Framework (Danielson, p. 3-4);
    - How the teacher will assess his/her positive impact on students; and
    - How the teacher will address his/her role in the implementation of the school continuous improvement plan
  - Participate in observation and evaluation, as outlined in Idaho Code 33-514 and State Board rule.

In order for the new-to-the profession teacher to transition from Novice status to Professional status, s/he must present a portfolio of his/her work over the time spent as a novice and take part

in an exit interview conducted by his/her respective supervisor and members of a local professional development committee.

- **Professional:** A professional educator is one who has demonstrated competence in the field and who is committed to continued demonstration and maintenance of competency through a variety of professional accomplishments. At a minimum, the professional educator will be required to:
  - Complete, reflect upon, review and revise, on an bi-annual basis, a professional development plan that includes information on:
    - How the teacher will improve his/her practice through use of the Danielson Framework (Danielson, p. 3-4);
    - How the teacher will assess his/her positive impact on students;
    - How the teacher will address his/her role in the implementation of the school continuous improvement plan; and
    - How the teacher will lead or be actively involved in curriculum development, building and/or district committees, or other activities determined at the local school district level
  - Develop and implement a continuing education plan that is connected to the educator's content area or professional growth
  - Participate in observation and evaluation, as outlined in Idaho Code 33-514 and State Board rule

In order to transition from Professional status to Master status, the teacher must successfully complete one of the following:

1. Earn or possess National Board Certification, or
  2. Complete a multi-year, research-based professional portfolio, approved by the local professional development committee. This portfolio is designed to develop the skills, knowledge, and expertise essential for a master teacher, or
  3. Earn or possess a Master's or other advanced degree in an area relevant to one's classroom or content area or an area of greatest need as determined by the local district.
- **Master:** A master teacher is one who sets high standards and goals for himself/herself and others. The master educator is reflective, consistently demonstrates a high degree of competence, and strives to encourage and inspire others toward excellence. At a minimum, the master teacher will be required to:
    - Complete, reflect upon, review and revise a three-year professional development plan\* that includes information on:
      - How the teacher will improve his/her practice through use of the Danielson Framework (Danielson, p. 3-4);
      - How the teacher will assess his/her positive impact on students;
      - How the teacher will address his/her role in the implementation of the school continuous improvement plan; and
      - How the teacher will lead or be actively involved in curriculum development, building and/or district committees, or other activities determined at the local school district level
    - Develop and implement a continuing education plan that is connected to the educator's content area or professional growth
    - Create a summary of the teacher's work as a peer instructor, mentor, coach, or expert in the demonstration of specific skills

- Develop a report detailing the teacher's plan for studying and implementing research on a topic vital to his/her continued professional development or for the achievement of school goals
- Develop and implement a locally-approved plan to further develop, maintain, share, and expand upon his/her expertise as a master teacher
- Participate in observation and evaluation, as outlined in Idaho Code 33-514 and State Board rule

\*Failure to complete the professional development plan may result in reclassification to Professional status.

## Strengthen Teacher Recruitment & Retention

According to research conducted by the Alliance for Excellent Education, "Every school day, nearly a thousand teachers leave the field of teaching. Another thousand teachers change schools, many in pursuit of better working conditions (2005)." The departure of teachers from the profession is a costly endeavor for hiring districts who must recruit and train their replacements and for the students, who lose the teachers' experience.

Why is teacher turnover so high? The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future examined this question and found that teacher retirements are not the main reason (2003). These results were confirmed in an analysis by the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy. They found, "in an analysis of teacher turnover, teachers reported retirement as a reason for leaving less often than because of job dissatisfaction or to pursue another job" (Ingersoll, 2003).

In Idaho, the State Department of Education reported the number of teachers who left the profession for "personal reasons" during the 2010-11 school year more than doubled from 314 to 697 over the previous year. That number continued to climb to 957 in the 2011-12 school year. Like other states, Idaho spends millions of dollars each year to replace teachers who leave the classroom instead of investing that money in new programs and professional development to help all teachers become more effective (AFEE, *Teacher Attrition*, 2005). These statistics illustrate our need to improve our recruitment and retention policies.

**Research confirms when teachers are given adequate time to prepare, are respected as professionals, and are properly supported; they are more likely to remain in the profession (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, *Improving teacher retention* June 2007). The Idaho Education Association believes the following actions and policies would ensure higher rates of teacher recruitment and retention:**

- Place a high priority on collaboration between teachers (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran).
- Establish a definition and observation-based measurement of effective teaching, using a collaborative approach that includes the impact of teaching on student growth and achievement (Hinchey).
- Provide rigorous, targeted, teacher-driven professional development to ensure that all professional development is relevant and useful to the challenges educators face in the classroom (Whitehurst, G.J., p.6).
- Create a dismissal process for underperforming teachers that is streamlined without stripping teachers of due process rights (Bireda, S. p. 20).
- Encourage school districts to create a system for layoffs that takes into consideration individual performance, certifications, student needs, and school needs in addition to seniority (Leana, p. 8-10).

- Create more hiring options by improving reciprocity agreements for teaching certifications between Idaho and other states (NASDTEC).

## Build Educator Leadership

Learning how to teach does not end when a teacher earns his or her degree. Each new student, each new school year, and every new change in standards and curriculum bring new challenges for teachers. Teachers must refine their strategies and techniques to be sure that their students learn.

The teaching profession should focus on supporting teachers, providing them with career options that will keep them in the classroom, and helping them improve throughout their teaching careers.

Every local school district faces unique leadership challenges. Locally-developed policies and practices that provide time to collaborate with colleagues, as well as the feedback and guidance from expert mentors and coaches are essential.

“The current education system treats all teachers alike. But, teachers are not all the same. They have different interests, knowledge, skills, weaknesses and strengths. They need more than a one-size-fits-all career” (NEA *Leading the Profession*, p. 5).

**The IEA believes that providing more opportunities for teacher leadership will allow teachers to pursue interests and higher professional levels while remaining in the classroom. We offer the following recommendations:**

- Establish peer assistance and review structures as a system where teachers help teachers grow and hold each other accountable, while keeping a keen focus on what helps students learn (Johnson, S.M. & Fiarman, S.E.)
- Use peer assistance and review structures and ensure all teachers meet periodically, as determined at the local level, to plan and collaborate exclusively on teaching, student learning, and student results (Johnson, S.M. & Fiarman, S.E.).
- Establish and train Master Teachers in every building in the state to coach new teachers and veteran teachers toward improvement, to help in peer-to-peer assistance and review programs, and serve, with building principals, as instructional leaders (Kowal, J. & Steiner, L.).
- Create a system where Master Teachers work both as classroom teachers and as mentors, peer reviewers and teacher leaders (NEA, *Leading the Profession*, p. 6).
- Require training for all administrators that includes extensive training in evaluating and supporting educators (Davis, S.H. & Darling-Hammond, L., p. 33-34).
- Ensure that colleges and universities develop successful administrative leadership/education leadership preparation programs with clear expectations about what administrators/education leaders need to know and do to improve instruction and learning (Educational Leadership Policy Standards, p. 10).
- Establish statewide performance indicators for administrators, based on the model used for teacher evaluations; require local districts to implement an evaluation process based on these indicators (Williams, J., Cameron, G., & Davis, T.).
- Establish and train Master Principals (NASBE Policy Update).
- Require that principal trainees (apprentice principals) complete a successful year of residency working in collaboration with a Master Principal, trained in educational leadership, prior to receiving their administrator credentials (NASBE Policy Update and Wallace Perspective, p. 6-7).

- Provide all administrators with the benefit of peer-coaching and collaboration from more experienced administrators (Wallace Perspective, p. 4-7).

## Improve Teacher Salary Structures

The single-salary schedule emerged in the 20th century as a result of overt discrimination that favored male and secondary teachers over female and elementary school teachers. The new system assured that teachers with equal qualifications received the same salary, regardless of grade level taught, gender or race.

The single-salary schedule did not, however, pay every teacher the same amount. Years of experience and skill sets, based on the number of educational units and educational degrees earned, were considered in setting pay rates. Additionally, teachers were paid supplements for coaching sports, advising clubs, and coordinating activities. The basis for paying differential salary amounts were objective, measurable and not subject to administrative whim.

But this salary structure is not adequate for schools of today. Teachers are being required to continuously expand their professional instructional skills, take on management and leadership roles within schools, and focus on results produced as much as services provided.

Alternate teacher compensation structures could help to address these new and more complex system needs.

The IEA is committed to encouraging, recognizing, and rewarding excellence in teaching because it leads to increased student achievement. Changing the way school employees are paid is complex and affects thousands of people. If done well, it can drive positive change. If done poorly, it can create dissention and dysfunction throughout the state. We believe the best alternative structures can be created at the local level and be created in cooperation with those who will be affected by the changes.

**The IEA offers the following recommendations for the state and for local school districts to consider as they determine whether to implement alternative compensation structures, in addition to base salaries set in the single-salary structure.**

- Encourage local school districts to collaborate with employees to determine whether to implement alternative compensation programs at the local school district level.
- Eliminate the “false base” from the salary-based apportionment and shrink the number of experience steps to 10 years.
- Provide for annual “cost of living” adjustments for all education employees to keep salaries competitive (Auguste, B., Kihn, P., & Miller, M., p. 24).
- Provide professional salaries that are comparable to neighboring states to retain highly qualified professionals (Center for Educator Compensation Reform).

## CONCLUSION

Throughout our research that resulted in these policy recommendations, we were impressed by the many thoughtful and innovative reforms already in place in schools and school districts throughout the nation and abroad. We were equally impressed by how many of these research-based reforms were already taking place in Idaho schools without fanfare and in many cases without any mechanism to share the successes these programs are achieving.

We offer these recommendations with the knowledge that even as we have committed these proposals to paper, the landscape is changing. New education concepts are being developed and considered every year. We realize that this proposal does not include recommendations for every possible aspect of the education process.

However, we strongly believe that to improve student achievement, we must stop focusing on outcomes only and pay more attention to the inputs. The recommendations in this policy paper do that.

As the book *Finnish Lessons* reminds us, “There is no single reason why any educational system succeeds or fails. Instead, there is a network of interrelated factors –educational, political and cultural – that function differently in different situations” (Salberg, p 4).

“The transformation of educational systems is possible but takes time, patience, and determination. It does not take tougher competition, more data, abolishing teacher unions, opening more charter schools or employing corporate world management models in education system. There is another way to improve education systems. This includes improving the teaching force, limiting student testing to a necessary minimum, placing responsibility before accountability and handing over school and district level leadership to education professionals” (Salberg, p. 3).

EMBARGOED until 8:00 AM Monday, January 14, 2013

## **Idaho Education Association Mission Statement:**

The Idaho Education Association advocates the professional and personal well-being of its members and the vision of excellence in public education, the foundation of the future.

## **Idaho Education Association Core Values:**

***Public Education:*** Preserving the foundation of democracy

***Justice:*** Upholding fair and equitable treatment for all

***Unity:*** Standing together for our common cause

***Integrity:*** Stating what we believe and living up to it

EMBARGOED until 8:00 AM Monday, January 14, 2013

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