



IDAHO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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February 5, 2010

Representative Bob Nonini, Chair House Education Committee
Senator John Goedde, Chair Senate Education Committee
Idaho State Legislature
PO Box 83720
Boise ID 83720

Dear Representative Nonini and Senator Goedde,

On behalf of the more than 12,000 members of the Idaho Education Association, we are pleased to offer our organizational support for the Idaho Digital Learning Academy.

IDLA was created by Idaho educators, developed for Idaho students, and is recognized as a leader across the nation in online virtual education. By creating an online state school, the Idaho Legislature, school administrators, and school boards created a consolidation of 115 school districts with highly qualified teachers, online courses, virtual services, and e-learning expert for states in online virtual education policy, procedure, and implementation.

The IEA has long believed that distance learning can create or extend learning opportunities not otherwise available to all students. Because IDLA offers dual credit courses that are available for a total of 75 college credits through four different higher education institutions, IDLA is able to provide online courses which would otherwise be cost prohibitive to Idaho schools. In addition, schools have access to 20 Advanced Placement courses. These advanced courses extend college credit opportunities to rural districts where they are often not available.

The IEA believes that courses offered by public schools utilizing live interactive distance learning should be developed and must be instructed by a licensed teacher. It is also essential to train instructors in interactive distance learning. IDLA brings over 200 highly qualified, Idaho-certified teachers to local districts. In preparation for teaching IDLA students, these Idaho-certified educators receive extensive training and experience in online learning. Additionally, over a period of seven years, IDLA trained over 415 Idaho paraprofessionals and counselors to support online learning best practices.

Most importantly, especially during difficult financial circumstances such as the one we face today, it is especially gratifying that IDLA is Idaho owned and grows Idaho expertise in online learning. Idaho's economic framework benefits from IDLA as a state entity which keeps dollars in Idaho for needed services. IDLA provides virtual courses, jobs and support for our state.

Sincerely,

Sherri Wood
President