

January 24, 2010

Re: IDLA Support Letter

Educational Leaders of Idaho:



I am Dawn Nordine, Director of Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS), the state-led supplemental program in Wisconsin and would like to express Wisconsin's deep concern over the recent developments in the State of Idaho. The Governor's announcement of phasing out Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA), a model program, is disturbing for the future of online education for Idaho students and across the country.

WVS continues to work diligently with our own legislators to improve access and equity to K-12 online opportunities in Wisconsin. WVS references Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA) program as an exemplary program for Wisconsin to model. It is apparent to the rest of the country that if 98% of Idaho's school districts utilize the program it has to do with the high standards and quality provided by IDLA. This quality and assurances cannot occur without strong leadership, vision, and legislative support including funding and statutory rules.

I have had the privilege to work with Donna Hutchison, CEO, on a state-led virtual schools alliance and through several groups in the International Association of K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL). Donna's leadership of IDLA is respected across the country. IDLA is one of the state-led programs many of the other states look to for setting state-level benchmarks. State-led programs are the key to equity of access to quality online experiences for students. State-led program leaders ensure that the course content, highly qualified instructors and system operations meet the highest of our educational standards with cost effective strategies. For example, Wisconsin has looked closely at how IDLA has partnered with a national provider to bring cost saving web conferencing to the entire state of Idaho's education and government organizations. WVS has also examined and will utilize some of IDLA's online teacher professional development strategies. WVS is looking closely at IDLA's model student support and data analysis system that ensures academic success for students. WVS is seeking funding to model the school site coordinator training that IDLA provides to school districts for supporting successful experiences for students.

Seriously consider this letter of support for a program such as IDLA – Idaho's state-led online program. IDLA is a program that leads the country in innovation and quality for ALL students and schools in Idaho. IDLA begins to address the very core of equity of access to opportunities in a very rural state much like Wisconsin.

Yours in Education,

Dawn Nordine

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