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Increasing Choice and Opportunity in Education

BOISE, Idaho – Lt. Governor Brad Little has released his education plan for Idaho students and it shows his commitment to parental choice and opportunity. Little is the only gubernatorial candidate to release a plan that provides a comprehensive strategy and not continuous rhetoric.

“As Governor of Idaho, I will look at every decision through one lens: How do we keep our children and grandchildren in Idaho, and how do we get those who have left our state to return? Education is the most important ingredient for creating these future opportunities. All across Idaho there are many examples of educational success stories. We will look to those successes to continue and eliminate what we know isn’t working for our administrators, teachers and students,” said Little.

Little’s plan calls for **local control and local solutions**. In rural communities he will **incentivize resource sharing** between neighboring districts. He will ensure robust broadband capabilities throughout the state, so **students can have access to online classes** and not be limited to what is being taught inside the school walls. He will increase opportunities beyond graduation including providing school districts more **incentives to produce graduates who earn career-technical education certificates and job-ready skills**. He will **allow colleges and universities to keep the sales tax they generate to help control tuition costs**. He will ensure Idaho retains and produces the best teachers by **committing additional education dollars for increasing teacher pay, including raising teacher starting pay to \$40,000, with a focus on tying these pay increases to improving student outcomes**. And to students, Lt. Governor Little is committed to **creating classrooms for the 21st century**. Alternative learning options will be created to allow students to advance based on competency.

“I understand the differences between urban and rural school districts and as your governor I will be committed to ensuring they are handled individually and locally. **Unfortunately, some DC politicians running for governor have voted to gut rural school district budgets**,” Little said.

As Governor, Little will champion successes. He has watched previous efforts on education reform fail and he has learned that it is critical to have widespread backing from those who work and support education to assist in leading the state in the right direction.



Local Control, Local Solutions

Idaho is a vast and diverse state. Each local community knows what is best for its children. As state leaders, it is our obligation to provide our educators and students with the opportunities and tools that fit the needs of each and every individual community. Just as top-down federal mandates don't work, top-down state mandates don't work either. Solutions should be locally driven. Excellence in education means allowing teachers and parents choices to find the best ways to educate their children.

- In the rural areas of Idaho, resources are limited. The state should be doing all it can to incentivize resource sharing between school districts. Schools should be able to partner with surrounding districts to help offset costs and the state should reward those areas that are able to achieve resource-sharing partnerships.
- School board members, PTAs and teachers are the frontlines of our education system. Raising a family in rural Idaho has shown that the frontlines of education are in the communities. As Governor, Brad will increase their voice in the legislature, and commit to policies driven by those closest to our students.
- As Governor, Brad will ensure that all communities in Idaho have robust broadband capability, essential for education and economic development.

Increasing Opportunities Beyond K-12

In our dynamic and growing economy, workforce needs are becoming more specialized and opportunities for our children to land good paying jobs are better than ever before. Whether we are sending our children to traditional four-year institutions, community colleges or vocational training, Brad will ensure those doors are easy to open while simultaneously giving the institutions the tools they need to succeed.

- Allow all colleges and universities to keep the sales tax that is generated on their campuses. That money would then be designated to control tuition costs for students.
- Provide school districts more incentives to produce graduates who earn career-technical education (CTE) certificates and job-ready skills.
- Increase dual credit opportunities across Idaho - aligned to high demand, high paying careers - in order to lower the cost of college degrees.
- As Governor, Brad will seek to blur the lines between K through 12, career-technical and higher education. Under the authority of the State Board of Education and the work of stakeholders, including Idaho business leaders, we must use existing resources to strengthen the State Board in order to achieve these goals and pursue greater administrative savings across higher education institutions.

The Best Teachers

As Governor, Brad's priority will be to ensure that Idaho retains and produces the best teachers. When we have our best in the classrooms, we get the best students. This is a challenge specifically for Idaho's rural communities, where districts find themselves lacking the necessary teachers for a variety of topics.

- To attract and retain our best teachers, Brad will commit additional education dollars to increasing teacher pay, including raising teacher starting pay to \$40,000, with a focus on tying these pay increases to improving student outcomes, including growth.
- Signing bonuses for teachers who choose to work in Idaho's rural communities. So many times we lose our best teachers to other states. As Governor, Brad wants to incentivize those who graduate and want to teach to remain in Idaho, and for many to return to the communities where they were raised and educated.



- Today's workforce has become more specialized and diverse. Idahoans change careers more frequently than ever before. Brad will provide school districts more flexibility in hiring individuals with industry experience and/or strong content knowledge. This alternative path does not mean we will be easing accreditation. Some of our brightest minds work outside the classroom, and having alternative accreditation methods is key.

Excellent Students

As Governor, Brad will create classrooms for the 21st century. Classrooms of the future will work to keep our children and parents engaged. Often, we find students who would excel in a different learning environment. By creating greater options in the classroom, students will have better opportunities to choose the path that fits them best.

- Create alternative learning options that allow students to advance based on competency. As jobs modernize, so should our classrooms. By choosing to learn in a competency-based environment, we will create more individualized education, so these students can achieve at the highest levels.
- It is imperative that students are reading at grade level. If a student leaves the third grade without being able to read, they are at a disadvantage in reading to learn and can often never catch up. In order to ensure literacy by the third grade, teachers will be asked to identify those students who have trouble reading, and those students will receive specialized attention and additional resources to achieve this important milestone in their education.