



An open letter to teachers from Idahoans for Local Education

As the trusted teachers of our children and grandchildren, we are contacting you today to let you know that we support you, and that we believe in your ability to help our children learn and grow. We understand that you are asked to do more and more with less and less, that classroom supplies are limited, and that more time is taken up for testing and data entry. Teacher evaluations are changing and your administrative burden has increased again with this newest iteration of reform called the *Common Core Initiative*. All of these things have placed teachers in the impossible position of being caught in the middle, between parents and the bureaucracy. It's important for you to know that our opposition to this newest reform package is not directed at you.

We know that more high stakes testing and teacher evaluations based on test scores (VAM) will not improve education. Instead, we believe the way to ensure a great education for children is to free our teachers of the many constraints that now bind them, and to seek their involvement in finding workable and effective local solutions.

Supporting teachers means that we support:

- Classrooms that focus on learning, not on test prep.
- Teachers using their education and experience to design curriculum, lessons, and assessments that meet the needs of their unique students.
- Communities where teachers and parents work together to support curriculum and instruction that promotes academic achievement.
- Reasonable class sizes so teachers can reach every student every day.

What we do not support:

- Annual high-stakes testing that hasn't improved learning, yet we use precious resources to gear up for SBAC.
- Labeling districts and a five-star rating for schools.
- Resurrecting the Luna Laws (Props 1,2,3) by basing teacher evaluations on student scores – and allowing evaluations and certifications to be comingled to influence the professional licensure of Idaho teachers.
- Prescribing curriculum, scripts, and more testing that turns classrooms into test prep centers instead of communities of learners.

As a true grassroots organization of parents, grandparents and former teachers, we know that we share a common objective with teachers in wanting to see our students succeed. Beyond the pride of academic success alone, we wish to help recover for them a satisfying and pleasant learning environment that will help foster a lifelong love of learning. This is something that we feel has been lost in the endless pursuit of standardization and performance.

It is our hope that by reaching out to you and reaffirming our trust in you, that we may find teachers to help us formulate a proposal for meaningful improvements as we fight to regain local control over our neighborhood schools. We look forward to working with you to find workable solutions to the heavy-handed control and ever growing bureaucracy that is being imposed on our schools.

You have our support and best wishes as you begin the 2014-2015 school year and we hope that it will be a successful year for you and your students. Please consider visiting our websites (below) to learn more about what we stand for and feel free to contact us personally, if desired.

Most sincerely,

Stephanie Zimmerman.... wszimmerman@gmail.com

Phone: 208-571-8770

Idahoans for Local Education

Valerie Candelaria..... candevc@gmail.com

Phone: 208-794-1250

www.IdahoansForLocalEducation.com

Facebook.com/IdahoansAgainstCommonCore