



IDAHO CORE STANDARDS

The Idaho Core Standards raise the bar for what students learn in math and English and better prepare them for success in post-secondary education and the workplace. The Standards give students life-long learning skills like the ability to think critically, analyze information, draw conclusions about that information and communicate orally and in writing.

We need higher standards because our old ones did not prepare students for the rigors of post-secondary education. We know this because Idaho has the lowest percentage of students going on to college, one of the highest drop-out rates in the country and nearly 50 percent of our college-bound students need remedial math and English.

Business has a huge stake in higher standards. A study of 466 Idaho business leaders conducted by Idaho Business for Education shows that 61 percent of the jobs the employers will have in 2018 require a post-secondary credential. Those credentials can include workforce-ready certificates, two-year degrees, bachelor degrees or higher. The IBE study validates a similar Georgetown University study and reinforces the goal set by the State Board of Education to have 60 percent of 25-34 year olds hold a post-secondary credential by 2020.

The bottom line is this: If Idaho can't get more students to stay in school and successfully obtain their post-secondary credential, it will be nearly impossible to achieve the 60 percent goal. If that happens, Idaho businesses will not have the highly educated and skilled workforce they need to grow and prosper. Instead, existing Idaho businesses could stagnate or leave the state to find a qualified workforce. It will also be more difficult for Idaho to attract new businesses.

As you discuss the importance of the Idaho Core Standards with policymakers, employees, customers and friends, it is important for you to be armed with accurate information about what the standards are and what they are not.

The Core Standards only apply to math and English. They were voluntarily crafted by state school superintendents and adopted by Idaho and 44 other states. The federal government did not develop the standards, nor is Idaho required to have them to receive federal dollars. The Standards are supported by teachers, principals, superintendents and local school boards.

The Core Standards are just that – standards. They are NOT a one-size-fits-all solution. Curriculum and classroom lesson plans are still determined by local school boards and teachers. The Standards are much higher than Idaho's old standards and move us closer to the highest national and international benchmarks for math and language arts.

The Standards were approved by the Idaho Legislature in January 2011. Since then they have been endorsed by teachers, school superintendents, principals, local school boards, the Idaho business community and child advocate groups.

Teachers are already successfully and happily teaching the Core Standards in their classrooms.