

IDAHO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Responses to Questions from The Common Interest

March 1, 2005

Overall Level of Support

Q: What do you think is the appropriate level of funding for K-12 next year?

A: The IEA supports the K-12 budget proposed by State Superintendent Dr. Marilyn Howard and the Education Coalition. That budget calls for the Legislature to appropriate \$1,049,708,300 from the state's general fund.

Q: Governor Kempthorne's budget trims the increase for the coming year from the 8.8% recommended by Marilyn Howard to a 3.6% increase, citing budget constraints. Some legislators, also citing budget constraints, have suggested that the 3.6% increase needs to be reduced. Is the level proposed in Gov. Kempthorne's budget about right, too low, or too high? Is the level proposed by Marilyn Howard about right, too low, or too high?

A: The major differences between the budgets proposed by the governor and Dr. Howard can be found in the following areas:

	<u>Dr. Howard</u>	<u>Gov. Kempthorne</u>
* General Fund Request	\$1.049 billion	\$999 million
* Flooring	\$1.3 million	0
* Salaries	\$718 million (+3%)	\$702 million (+1%)
* State Paid Benefits	\$134 million	\$127 million
* ISIMS	\$ 7.7 million	0
* Beginning Teacher Support Program	\$ 2 million	0
* College Incentives	\$ 800,000	0
* Remediation	\$ 5 million	0
* School Facilities	\$13.45 million	\$ 8.45 million

The IEA strongly supports Dr. Howard's proposals for increased salaries and benefits, funding for the beginning teacher support program, and state support for remediation efforts targeted to schools that receive no federal Title I money.

Spending Priorities

Q: What are the top spending priorities for K-12?

A: The IEA believes the top spending priorities for FY06 should be increasing salaries, supporting the state's beginning teacher support program, and providing financial assistance for local school district remediation efforts.

Q: Are Gov. Kempthorne's K-12 spending priorities about right? Are there elements in his proposed K-12 budget that should be decreased or increased? Same questions for Dr. Howard's budget recommendations?

A: Please see our answers to the questions posed earlier.

Q: If it became necessary to increase K-12 funding by less than 3.6%, what should be the highest priorities for protection from reduced spending? Where would cuts to the proposed K-12 budget do the least damage?

A: The IEA understands that some legislators are considering a "statutory" budget for FY06 that would provide \$13 million less than that proposed by Gov. Kempthorne. Such a budget would allow only for increases that are required by statute (e.g., transportation, exceptional child contracts, the state's bond levy equalization program, and salary steps for the approximately 45% of Idaho teachers who have yet to reach the top of the schedule). A budget at that level would provide:

- no state support for salary increases for our state's most experienced teachers
- one-third less (\$4 million) for technology purchases and upkeep than proposed by both the governor and state superintendent
- no moneys for continued training of teachers to work with students with disabilities, again as recommended by both Gov. Kempthorne and Dr. Howard
- no moneys for the state-mandated beginning teacher support program (included in Dr. Howard's recommendation)
- no moneys to assist with student remediation efforts (included in Dr. Howard's recommendation).

Q: If the state were able to fund K-12 at a higher level than is proposed in the Governor's budget, what should be the highest priorities for that additional spending?

A: Salary increases, beginning teacher support, and student remediation efforts.