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School Board Appreciation Month Has Added Significance

By Kurt Liebich, President, Idaho State Board of Education

The apparatus governing Idaho's public schools is huge and made up solely of volunteers. I'm talking about the people serving on local school boards, all 115 of them and on the 75 boards that oversee our public charter schools – a total of over 800 volunteers who give of their time on behalf of our students.

June is School Board Appreciation Month in Idaho and I want to take this opportunity to personally thank our school board volunteers for their dedication to public education.

Serving on a school board is not a part-time endeavor. It takes many hours of study to understand complex funding formulas, budgets, and various state and federal education-related laws and regulations.

It takes patience too, particularly over these past two and a half years. The pandemic generated challenges that our school boards could never have imagined and forced hard decisions, which is exactly where those choices needed to be made, at the local level.

We realized early on during the pandemic that a one-size-fits-all approach was not appropriate. Our local school boards stepped up, worked with parents and public health officials to craft plans that worked best for their communities.

Our school boards are good examples of local governance in action and they demonstrated throughout the pandemic the importance of engaging in open and transparent communication with parents, teachers and staff.

The Idaho Constitution charges the State Board of Education with the general supervision of our state's public school system, which now encompasses over 300,000 students. There is no bigger enterprise in the entire state and there is no way the State Board could fulfill its mandate without our local school boards and the volunteers that make them up. Thank you.

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