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**MICROSOFT IT ACADEMY PROCESS MOVES FORWARD
WITH NOTICE OF INTENT TO AWARD TO DELL**

(BOISE) – The Idaho State Department of Education has determined Dell to be its preferred vendor to provide Microsoft IT Academy products and services for up to 253 public schools and 145 public libraries in Idaho, Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra announced today.

The notice of intent to award followed a request for proposal process and the independent evaluation and recommendation of vendor proposals for the service, which is designed to support and improve the job skills of Idaho students and residents.

The SDE anticipates it will soon enter into contract negotiations with Dell with the expectation of launching the program by July 1, 2015.

The program to offer Microsoft IT Academy to Idaho's students and citizens is in response to S1189, passed by this year's legislature, which appropriated one-time funds to provide technology education opportunities and/or information technology certifications to students or the state's citizens seeking to improve their job skills marketability.

Microsoft IT Academy's wide variety of information technology education classes and certifications will be made available to Idaho public libraries and free to public school students in grades 9-12. Each library and school will make an independent decision as to whether or not it will opt into the program.

The Microsoft IT Academy package provides training and certifications at the specialist, expert and master levels in the use of Office 2010 and Office 2013. In addition, the Academy offers a Microsoft Technology Associate certification in computer science and Microsoft Certified Solutions Developer (MCSD) certifications for Windows Store apps using C# and Web applications.

In addition to Dell, SHI also submitted a proposal to provide the services. The SDE chose an independent panel of evaluators representing the education and library communities to recommend a final selection.

For more information about the proposal, or Microsoft IT Academy, contact Rick Kennedy at (208) 332-6852 or by email at rkennedy@sde.idaho.gov.

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