



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT AND SCHOOLS OFFER STUDENT PROGRAMS FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR

(BOISE) – Parents of students registering for public school this year are being reminded by the Idaho State Department of Education of several programs that they may wish to explore in more detail with school guidance counselors for the enrichment, enhancement or support of their children’s education.

Besides any district-specific programs that may be available, the State Department of Education supports in each district the following programs:

- **Advanced Opportunities** programs help students prepare for further academic or technical education after high school, typically providing students with the opportunity to earn college credits or technical certifications while in high school. Advanced Opportunities is a series of four interrelated programs: **8-in-6**, which typically begins as early as the seventh grade, can result in a student completing the normal eight semesters of high school in just six; **Fast Forward** and **Early Completers**, which pay for exams and “dual credit” courses that allow students to begin earning college credit in high school, and the **Mastery Advancement Program (MAP)** that provides in-state scholarships for students who graduate early. For more information, go to the State Department of Education website at <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/advancedOpp>.
- **GEAR UP Idaho** offers targeted early intervention services to students, especially those in rural areas where inadequate academic and financial preparation can make the dream of postsecondary education appear unattainable. Beginning in the 7th grade and continuing through the 12th grade the program helps to improve academic achievement and readiness for postsecondary education by developing a Parent Approved Learning Plan for challenging courses that include three years of math and science, and specific course requirements for postsecondary admission. GEAR UP students also participate in college campus visits in grades 8 and 10. Go to <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/gearup/gearup.htm> for more information.
- **Think Through Math** is an online, supplemental math instruction and tutoring program offered for students struggling with their math classes as part of the State Department’s Math Initiative. It provides students with focused instruction, rigorous math problems, and access to live certified teachers and a motivation program with rewards for working on math problems. Think Through Math works with the classroom teacher to tailor the online math instruction to the needs of the individual student. Students can access the program anywhere they can get Internet access. Think Through Math also is now available to utilize as curriculum for Algebra 1 credit recovery and district approved Alternate Route for Graduation criteria. Go to http://www.sde.idaho.gov/SITE/math/intervention_tools.htm for more information.



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- The **Idaho Science and Aerospace Scholars (ISAS)** program is designed to reach out to rural districts where science education is limited, but is available to all students in Idaho. Students can sign up for the NASA-developed on-line course in early September. The rigorous aerospace science class concludes in the spring with a series of capstone events that show off the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs of Idaho's colleges and industry. The top students in the program are invited to the program's Summer Academy at BSU, which includes a trip to NASA's Ames Research Center in Sunnyvale, Calif., for a chance to meet with some of the nation's top aerospace scientists. Go to <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/science/ISAS> for more information.
- **Microsoft IT Academy** programs are now being offered through many of the state's secondary schools. Designed for students in grades 9-12 to work at their own pace, the on-line classes provide job-skill certifications in Microsoft Office 2010 and 2013. Check with the district's professional technical education coordinator or guidance counselor to find out if your district offers the program. If not, there are alternative means for students to earn the certifications. Go to the State Department of Education's Digital Learning page at <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/digitalLearning/> and click on Microsoft IT Academy to learn more about the program.
- Some districts also provide after-school enrichment programs through **21st Century Community Learning Centers**. The centers help provide a boost for education, both during the school year and the summer months, with an emphasis not just on students, but their families as well. Any child in the offering school district can participate. Among a long list of goals, the 21st CCLC Centers are designed to provide academic help for struggling students, enrichment programs for all students, and after-school safety for "latch-key kids." In addition, they offer literacy or other educational services to help adults and other members of the families of the participating children. Check with your school district to see if this program is offered. For more information, go to: <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/cclc>.
- For information about the **Idaho Core Standards**, go to <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/common/toolkit.htm>. Additionally, the Idaho State Department of Education has announced the Idaho Challenge allowing educators, parents, and any interested Idahoan the opportunity to provide input on the Idaho Core Standards. More information about the Idaho Challenge is available at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/IdahoChallenge>.
- For a growing number of students, English is not their native language or the language commonly spoken in their home. Every school district has programs available to assist those students to improve their English-language skills and accommodate their needs in other classes so they may ultimately achieve their full academic potential. Parents of those students should contact their school district and ask for the coordinator of **the Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** program. Migrant families also are encouraged to contact the **Migrant Liaison** of each district for information on assistance available. Go to <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/lep>.

Local school districts throughout the state may offer additional programs to support students. Remember to contact your local school district for more information on what help is available. For additional information on the programs mentioned above, please contact the Idaho State Department of Education at (208) 332-6800 and ask for the program of interest.

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