



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720  
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

TOM LUNA  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

**March 20, 2009**

**TO:** Superintendents, Principals, Business Managers, Charter School Administrators, Title I Directors, Special Education Directors, Testing Coordinators, Technology Coordinators and Public Information Officers

**FROM:** Tom Luna, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**RE:** Weekly E-Newsletter

### **IN THIS REPORT:**

- **Idaho students make strides in reading**
- **Legislative Update**
- **Superintendent's Schedule**
- **What's New**
- **Reminders**
- **Upcoming Deadlines**

### **IDAHO STUDENTS MAKE STRIDES IN READING (GO TO TOP)**

Scores from the Fall and Winter 2009 Idaho Reading Indicators (IRI) show more Idaho students are reading at or above grade level by the time they leave third grade.

"I am proud of the significant progress we have made over the past two years to boost reading skills among Idaho students," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna. "We still have a long way to go to ensure every Idaho student is reading at grade level, but Idaho's teachers and parents should be commended for all the great strides Idaho students have already made."

The IRI was designed to measure students' reading skills in kindergarten through third grade so teachers can quickly identify students who are struggling and provide the necessary remediation to bring those students up to grade level. The IRI is conducted three times a year – fall, winter and spring – in kindergarten through third grades. It is graded on a three-point scale, with a "Benchmark" score meaning the student is on grade-level in reading. A "Strategic" or "Intensive" score means a student is performing near or below grade-level, respectively.

The Legislature allocates \$2.8 million a year for the Idaho Reading Initiative, which includes more than \$1 million to help Idaho schools provide assistance to students who struggle. In 2007, the state made revisions to the IRI to reflect more current research in reading education and serve as a better measurement of student performance for teachers in the classroom.

The state has already seen great progress since the new IRI was implemented in Fall 2007. The most recent results from the Winter IRI show that 75 percent of Idaho students in grades K-3 scored at grade level or above in reading, up from 68 percent in the previous year.

Students have also shown significant growth since the beginning of this school year, from Fall 2008 to Winter 2009. In third grade, for example, 73 percent of students now read at or above grade level, up from 63 percent in the fall. Last year, only 67 percent of third-grade students were reading on grade level by the winter test.



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720  
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

TOM LUNA  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

To view IRI scores by district or school or to view IRI scores from the previous year, please visit

<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/ipd/iri/IriAnalysis.asp>.

Here is the percentage of students who scored on grade level or above on the Fall 2008 and Winter 2009 IRI:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Fall 2008</b>	<b>Winter 2009</b>
All Grades	63 percent	75 percent
Kindergarten	56 percent	78 percent
1st grade	80 percent	83 percent
2nd grade	54 percent	67 percent
3rd grade	63 percent	73 percent

### LEGISLATIVE UPDATE (GO TO TOP)

House Bill 252 relating to teacher contracts was sent to the full House and is expected to be voted on early next week. Click here to read the text of the bill: <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2009/H0252.htm>. This consensus bill is the result of negotiations between bipartisan stakeholders for the last 30 days and has broad support among all education interests.

Rep. Nonini also introduced a bill to freeze the experience movement in the salary grid and phase out early teacher retirement. This bill is expected to come before the House Education Committee next week.

House Bill 256 relating to public school transportation will come before the House Education Committee for a hearing on Monday. To read the Legislation, click here: <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2009/H0252.htm>.

We expect the Public Schools budget will be set by JFAC in the next 10 days. State Superintendent Tom Luna will schedule a conference call next week to explain provisions in the bills. Stay tuned for notification of the date and time of the call.

### SUPERINTENDENT'S SCHEDULE (GO TO TOP)

- Superintendent Luna will participate in the Governor's Capitol for a Day in Cascade on Tuesday, March 24.

### WHAT'S NEW (GO TO TOP)

- **New Alternative School Summer Program Applications Available Online** -- In an effort to eliminate unnecessary reporting requirements placed on Idaho school districts and public charter schools, the Department is introducing a more user-friendly and streamlined Alternative School Application that will be used for both Regular Session Alternative Schools and Alternative Summer School Programs. It is our hope that this application will ease your burden in filing the application by eliminating some of the unnecessary reporting required in the old application process. The revised application is available online at



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720  
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

TOM LUNA  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

[http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/alternative\\_schools/](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/alternative_schools/) and is due by **April 30, 2009**. If you have any questions regarding your Alternative School Summer Program, please contact Nick Smith at (208) 332-6959 or at [NWSmith@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:NWSmith@sde.idaho.gov).

- **Webinars on the Math Initiative** -- The State Department of Education is hosting Webinars to discuss the Idaho Math Initiative and upcoming Mathematical Thinking for Instruction (MTI) course. The Webinars will be held Monday, April 20 at 4 p.m. MT and Thursday, April 23 at 4:30 p.m. MT. Please visit the IdahoLive web site at <http://idla.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>.
- **Register for Idaho School Safety Summit** – The Idaho School Safety Summit will be hosted by the State Department of Education on April 23, 2009. The focus of the summit is to highlight crisis prevention and response best practices from a national expert in the field, provide an increased understanding of online SDE tools to develop emergency operations plans and raise awareness of safety/security equipment available through vendors offering product at a reduced rate through a vendor showcase. For more information please visit [http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/safe\\_secure/docs/School%20Safety%20Summit%20Flyer.pdf](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/safe_secure/docs/School%20Safety%20Summit%20Flyer.pdf).

### REMINDERS (GO TO TOP)

- **AP Test Fee Grant** -- The State Department of Education will be assisting districts by paying for AP/IB exams for low-income students. The College Board will provide information on AP Central, the AP program's online resource found at [www.apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://www.apcentral.collegeboard.com). Once again, registration will be online. The state will pay \$56 per AP/IB Exam for public and private school students qualifying for the College Board fee reduction. The final AP fee for qualifying students is \$0. Therefore, AP exams are provided at no cost to students. Please go to the SDE Gifted Talented website [http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/gifted\\_talented/announcements.htm](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/gifted_talented/announcements.htm) for further information or call Dr. Val Schorzman at (208) 332-6920.
- **New Census in Schools Web Site Coming Soon** -- Beginning the end of March 2009, the U.S. Census Bureau will be launching a new Census in Schools Web site. The website will incorporate information for teachers and students on using the 2010 Census in classrooms through teaching tools, resource materials, and professional development opportunities. To view the Census in Schools Web site, visit [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) and click on "For Teachers & Students."
- **Web Applications Migration** -- The State Department of Education is in the process of preparing our computing environment for many new changes that will help us better serve students, educators and other school and district personnel. The first step to these larger projects, such as the statewide longitudinal data system, is to migrate all of our existing web applications to a single server. This change will ONLY impact people who have bookmarked certain web applications, because bookmarked URLs will change. This change will have NO impact on those who use the Department's website to get to the web applications. After the change, the bookmarked URLs will prompt users to the Department's website, where links to all web applications are posted on the "Data Collections" page. The migration was completed on March 18, 2009. If you cannot find the web application you need on the Data Collection page of [www.sde.idaho.gov](http://www.sde.idaho.gov), please call the Director or Coordinator responsible for the web application so they can assist you immediately.



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720  
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

TOM LUNA  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

- **Welcome new state Educational Technology Coordinator** -- Jimmy Takata is the new state Educational Technology Coordinator at the State Department of Education. In this position, Takata will work with Idaho schools and districts to improve technological opportunities in the classroom and act as a liaison with district technology coordinators. Before joining the Department, Takata worked at Micron Technology as a Workforce Development Specialist and spent nearly a decade working with school districts in Oregon and Idaho on educational technology issues. Takata has a master's in educational technology from Boise State University. You can contact Jimmy Takata directly at (208) 332-6937 or [JTakata@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:JTakata@sde.idaho.gov).
- **School Improvement Webinars** -- Here is the schedule for upcoming School Improvement Webinars:
  - April 28, 2009: Action Planning Webinar
  - May 14, 2009: Parental Involvement WebinarThe estimated time frame for all webinar sessions is 1 hour. You can register at <http://idla.blackboard.com>. Select the Idaho Live tab, and then click on "Webinar Registration." Please contact Lisa Kinnaman or Katherine Weatherspoon at (208) 426-4852 with any questions.
- **Mathematics of Personal Finance Professional Development** -- Mathematics teachers wishing to use the new Mathematics of Personal Finance content standards can attend a free professional development opportunity in Boise on April 21, 2009 sponsored by the Idaho Financial Literacy Coalition in partnership with the State Department of Education. These math content standards can be used as the basis for a district developed math course that will satisfy the new high school graduation requirement in mathematics for ninth graders entering school in the fall of 2009. There are five major strands to the content standards: Money Management; Savings and Investment; Education, Employment and Income; Taxation; and Data Analysis and Statistics. Free materials will be provided. For more information and online registration, please visit <http://www.sde.state.id.us/site/math/> or contact Amanda Salazar at [adsalazar@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:adsalazar@sde.idaho.gov) or (208) 332-6974.
- **IEA Teacher Awards** -- Every month, September through June, the Idaho Education Association offers eight (8) \$50 awards to teacher members who are new to the profession (5 years or less). Applying is easy. Just e-mail your name and a statement of how you plan to use your Cold Hard Cash for your Classroom to [ecurrie@idahoea.org](mailto:ecurrie@idahoea.org). If your name is not selected this month, your entry is rolled over to the next month. Visit [www.idahoea.org](http://www.idahoea.org) for more information.
- **ASVAB** -- The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) program is one way to help students identify a future career path. The ASVAB program is a comprehensive career exploration and planning program that includes a multiple-aptitude test battery, interest inventory and various career planning tools designed to help the student explore the world of work. The program is free of charge. Please consider using ASVAB in your school or school district. For more information, you can contact: David Hodson, at (208) 334-1450 ext. 213 or [david.a.hodson@mepcom.army.mil](mailto:david.a.hodson@mepcom.army.mil) or Colleen Owen at (208) 334-1450 ext.214 or [colleen.owen@mepcom.army.mil](mailto:colleen.owen@mepcom.army.mil). Schools in Northern Idaho, north of New Meadows should call Fred Bernize at (509) 353 3105 ext. 242 or [fred.bernize@mepcom.army.mil](mailto:fred.bernize@mepcom.army.mil).

### UPCOMING DEADLINES (GO TO TOP)

---

Office Location  
650 West State Street

Telephone  
208-332-6800

Speech/Hearing Impaired  
1-800-377-3529

Fax  
208-334-2228

---



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720  
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

TOM LUNA  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

- **March 20, 2009** -- The deadline to nominate an individual for the 2009 Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education. This year's award will recognize three individuals who address the connection of education and innovation in one of three broad categories: PK-12-focused school and community programs, teacher training and professional development, and policy at all levels of government. Recipients will receive \$25,000. For more information, please visit <http://www.mcgraw-hill.com/prize/>.
- **March 31, 2009** -- The deadline to apply for Northwest Professional Educators' awards for continuing education scholarships and classroom support for materials, technology, projects, etc. Additionally, teachers new to the profession, their grade level, or their school district may apply for \$250 New Classroom Start-Up Grants to assist with classroom expenses. To apply for any of these awards, visit [www.nwpe.org](http://www.nwpe.org) for applications.
- **March 31, 2009** -- The deadline to register for the Title I Conference, "Education & Service: Gifts without Boundaries." The conference will be held April 15-17, 2009 in Boise. For more information or to register, please visit [http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/title\\_one/conference09/](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/title_one/conference09/).
- **April 1, 2009** -- The deadline to apply for the Early Retirement Incentive Program. Applications are online at [http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/finance\\_tech/early\\_retirement.htm](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/finance_tech/early_retirement.htm). *Please bear in mind:* Submission of the application does not guarantee that the early incentive program will be funded. Actions by the 2009 Legislature could affect this section of Idaho Code. Interested parties are encouraged to watch the daily activities of the Idaho Legislature for any changes that might affect this law, including but not limited to the Department web site at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/schoolsbudget/>.
- **April 10, 2009** -- The deadline to postmark nomination packages for the sixth annual *Preserve America* Idaho History Teacher of the Year Award, sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and Idaho Council for History Education. The Idaho Council honors each state winner with an award of \$1,000. All elementary (K-6) teachers who have responsibility for teaching American history are eligible this year. Please visit [http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/social\\_studies/](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/social_studies/) for more information.
- **April 15, 2009** -- The deadline for Idaho school districts and public charter schools to submit requests for proposals for Learn and Serve grant funding. Please review application information available online at [http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/learn\\_serve](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/learn_serve). If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Tina Naillon, Learn and Serve Coordinator, at (208) 332-6904 or [TMNaillon@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:TMNaillon@sde.idaho.gov).