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Critchfield: With elections in the rearview, it's time to get to work

(BOISE) – 2022 in Idaho brought with it long campaigns and high-profile races in the May primaries and November election. As a result, three of Idaho's statewide offices have new leaders this week, including the office I now hold, Superintendent of Public Instruction. With the rallies, speeches and debates of campaign season behind us, today – our first full day in office - the real work must begin.

We celebrate our elections because they are the moments when we as voters pick our leaders. But for successful candidates truly dedicated to public service, today is also a day to celebrate. This day is special for me because I can finally start to work toward the positive changes I envision for students, educators and parents. In other words, the talking is over and the doing begins.

If you heard me on the campaign trail, you know my to-do list is long and there's an urgency to the work ahead. Our kids don't have years to wait for a system to catch up to their needs. It is time to pivot Idaho K-12 to fit the needs of our students right now.

You will notice many changes in the look, function and work of the Department of Education and in the state superintendent's role. There's a purpose to all of it. I want you to notice many differences in how we do business and how we serve schools. Some changes will be big and bold. Others will be smaller and less noticeable, but will be designed to get results all the same.

My vision for education is to prepare students so they can live meaningful and prosperous lives. Starting today, I pledge to put in whatever work is necessary to make Idaho kids successful. Of course, this work won't be done alone. It will take a true team effort with involvement from numerous partners.

There are many important connections that must be strengthened for our education goals to be realized. While we connect students to opportunities, we must connect educators to practices and resources that help them work with all students. We must connect schools to families by building trust and transparency. Success comes when we provide our communities with a skilled workforce and active citizens who will help shape a more prosperous Idaho.

The trust Idahoans showed in me in 2022 was humbling. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve and I intend to honor that trust by putting in the work necessary to create the very best educational system Idaho can offer. Our kids, teachers and parents deserve nothing less.

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