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www.sde.idaho.gov

Media Contacts:

Kristin Rodine

Public Information Officer

208-332-6807

krodine@sde.idaho.gov

Superintendent Ybarra welcomes chance to address ChalleNGe Academy graduates

(BOISE) – On Saturday afternoon, Dec. 15, a record 129 Idaho teenagers will cross the stage as graduates of the Idaho Youth ChalleNGe Academy, and Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra will be on hand to congratulate them.

“I am thrilled to be a part of this pivotal event in so many young lives,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “This will be my third time speaking at the ChalleNGe Academy commencement, and each time I’m inspired by the effort and heart of the graduating cadets and by the dedication of the staff here. The academy is an essential part of Idaho’s educational fabric, and this year’s record number of graduates is testament to its success.”

The commencement ceremony is set for noon Saturday in the Lewiston High School Auditorium, 1114 9th Ave., Lewiston. The academy is located in Pierce, a tiny town east of Orofino in Clearwater County.

Graduating cadets have completed the intensive, 22-week residential phase of the program, in which they live at the academy and spend their days in a highly structured schedule of classes, physical training and other activities. Now they begin the yearlong post-residential phase, each working with an established mentor from their hometown to help achieve post-graduation goals.

[The Idaho Youth ChalleNGe Academy](#) was established in 2014 as a voluntary intervention program for teens ages 16 to 18 who are at risk of dropping out of school or have already dropped out. The academy’s mission, as described on its website, is to instill in program graduates “the values, life skills, education and self-discipline necessary to succeed as responsible and productive citizens of Idaho.”

The academy, part of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program, emphasizes eight core components: leadership and followership, responsible citizenship, community service, life-coping skills, physical fitness, health and hygiene, job skills and academic excellence. It is a fully accredited high school.

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Note: Journalists are welcome to attend the ceremony. Learn more at <http://www.idyouthchallenge.com/>