



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER  
GOVERNOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **GOVERNOR SEEKS CONTINUITY OF IDAHO EDUCATION NETWORK SERVICES TO SCHOOLS**

(Boise) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter asked the Legislature today for a fiscal year 2014 supplemental appropriation to temporarily bridge funding to Idaho Education Network (IEN) vendors awaiting E-rate reimbursement through a federal program.

The one-time, \$14.45 million request is aimed at ensuring the IEN's operational continuity through fiscal year 2015.

The IEN connects 218 high schools in 131 districts and charters serving nearly 90,000 students with high-speed broadband connectivity and video conferencing, as well as access to live distance courses. Of those districts and charters, 89 are wholly dependent on the IEN for all Internet connectivity at every school in their district.

The Governor's request to the Legislature's Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee would maintain funding for the IEN and prevent disruption of services to Idaho schools and districts on the network.

Despite an inquiry for clarification, the IEN has received no word from the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) – the entity that oversees federal E-rate funding – about when reimbursement can be expected.

E-rate is a federal program that provides discounts to assist most schools and libraries in the United States to obtain affordable telecommunications and Internet access. Idaho's E-rate reimbursement is about 75 percent.

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