



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR OTTER SIGNS READING LITERACY BILLS

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter signed two pieces of legislation today aimed at ensuring Idaho public school students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade.

House Bill 451 highlights the importance of reading literacy in the early grades and the need for strong collaboration between teachers and parents to support student success. "The ability to read is the foundation on which all other learning depends," Governor Otter said. "I thank all those who have helped step up efforts to our youngest students struggling to learn to read."

House Bill 526, developed by the State Board of Education, specifies how State funding for reading intervention will be distributed. It represents two years of work by a committee of the Task Force for Improving Education, which recommended that the State provide \$10.7 million to school districts and charter schools for proven, research-based intervention programs and methods in kindergarten through third grade. The Legislature appropriated \$9.1 million in new funds and dedicated \$2.1 million from existing remediation funding for intervention efforts in the coming fiscal year.

"Providing early and adequate intervention to struggling readers and ensuring that parents are involved in helping their children learn to read are top priorities," said Representative Julie Van Orden, who sponsored both bills in the House of Representatives. "This legislation will help Idaho children reach the important benchmark of reading proficiency by the end of the third grade."

"Idaho Business for Education thanks Governor Otter for making reading and literacy one of his highest priorities in this legislative session. The Governor knows that if kids can't read, they can't learn," Idaho Business for Education President Rod Gramer said. "And IBE also thanks Representative Van Orden for taking a leadership role by sponsoring this vital legislation. Thanks to the Governor, Representative Van Orden and the Legislature, thousands of children in Idaho will receive the gift of reading which will set them up for success in school, work and life."

"With the support of the Legislature and Governor, Idaho has made a strong commitment to ensuring that our students are strong readers," State Board of Education member Debbie Critchfield said. "Strong reading skills empower our students and pave the way for their future success."

The bills signed today address one of the 20 recommendations from the Task Force for Improving Education. Recommendation #3 focused on ensuring that Idaho students are proficient in reading by the end of the third grade.

The new laws will be effective July 1 and will be in effect for the 2016-2017 academic year.

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