



October 14, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians of K-12 Students:

My name is Sherri Ybarra, and I am your State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In my position as your elected official overseeing K-12 education, I am writing to you today with a very special request. Please help us keep our schools open and our students learning with in-person instruction, in their schools, with their teachers and peers.

Education, like many other professions today, is experiencing a severe shortage of workers. This is not just for teachers, but also bus drivers, food service workers, and many other support positions that do not require a teaching credential. Many of our districts and classrooms are open, but these shortages are creating some stressful and fragile situations. Due to staffing shortages, we have had schools close in the few short weeks this school year has been back in session.

We all know that the pandemic has taken a toll on our students, and I am asking your help to make sure Idaho children are getting the support they need in these challenging times.

Governor Little has offered financial incentives for substitute teachers and all support staff by providing funds for your local districts to incentivize Idahoans to help in this time of need. I am asking parents/guardians and community members around the state to help to fill the substitute teacher and staff shortages necessary to keep our schools open.

As a teacher for more than 20 years, I will be helping substitute in Idaho's classrooms. So far, my first assignment is in a 2nd grade classroom, and I am so excited to return to my natural habitat – in a classroom with kids!

I recognize that stepping into this kind of role may be out of your comfort zone, which is why my staff has worked to create an online introduction to substitute teaching. It's available on my website [here](#).

Of course, the safety of Idaho's students is our first priority, so everyone who is interested in substitute teaching will be required to pass a background check. My staff and I are here to assist you, as are your local districts and charter schools.

I know how busy you are, so if you are unable to assist, I hope that you will help recruit others and spread the word to those who may be interested in helping. This is about the well-being of Idaho's K-12 students, who are the future of this state. We need them to be in school and to get the education and opportunities they need and deserve.

Please contact your local school district for more information on how you can help and get signed up to help fill the critical staffing needs in our schools.

As the mother of a former public school student, high school graduate and current Idaho college student, I value your partnership and want the very best for all of our students. I look forward to some amazing Idahoan's "stepping up" to help!

Please call your local school or district office today. You are needed!

Thank you,



Sherri A. Ybarra, Ed.S.  
Superintendent of Public Instruction