

During the campaign season, prospective office holders often receive questionnaires from different political action groups. I thought that you might be interested in the questions asked by the Idaho Education Association and my responses.

1. The IEA supports legislation to provide state funding to reduce the number of students in grades K-6 classrooms to no more than 20 students per teacher and students in middle school/junior high and high school to no more than 160 students per teacher day.

**Comments: Agree, My first concern is to increase student satisfaction so that discipline problems are reduced making teaching more enjoyable.**

2. The IEA supports legislative efforts to improve instruction. In that regard, the IEA supports state funding for reinstating Idaho's new teacher support program, including providing mentoring, peer assistance, and professional development for new teachers.

**Comments: I agree with these efforts coupled with a more transparent curriculum and more parent-student-teacher flexibility.**

3. The IEA supports state funding that will raise the beginning teacher salary in Idaho to \$40,000 in order to assist Idaho school districts in the recruitment and retention of quality school educators.

**Comments: Disagree, There simply is not money available for an \$8,000 increase in salaries with H&W and Corrections budgets increasing. This may be an option if we can control social spending.**

4. The IEA supports state funding that will result in the Idaho teachers' average salary being equal to the U.S. teachers' average salary.

**Comments: The Statesman had an article that compared teacher salaries and cost of living on a per state basis. Idaho ranked #15.**

5. The IEA supports compensating Education Support Professionals to ensure these education employees make a living wage.

**Comments: Agree, one of the ways that this can happen is by increasing parental involvement and student satisfaction so fewer support employees are necessary.**

6. The IEA supports the use of public funds exclusively for public schools. The IEA opposes tuition tax credits, vouchers, income tax credits, or other direct or indirect mechanisms to channel public funds to private, parochial or home schools.

**Comment: Disagree, public schools do a good job. They should not fear competition.**

7. (Long question on teacher pay based upon testing. I basically agreed.)

8. The IEA supports legislation that will provide full retirement for any public employee who is at least 55 years of age with 30 years of service or 60 years of age with 25 years of service.

**Comments: Undecided, why do teachers want to retire early?**

There were a couple of other questions about category 4 contracts and support staff; but, this should give you a feel of the type of stands the IEA has and my responses.

13. As a legislator, what would be your top three priorities for public schools in Idaho?
1. Acceleration through the curriculum
  2. Stronger student-parent-teacher partnerships
  3. Strengthen concurrent enrollment.

Finally, I included a two page paper that listen the framework that I use to judge educational issues. It can be found on my website [Thayn4Idaho.com](http://Thayn4Idaho.com) and is one of the featured articles on the homepage.