

April 18, 2022

Dear Voters of Idaho:

I am writing this letter in support for reelection of Superintendent Sherri Ybarra for Idaho State Superintendent of Public Instruction. I have known Superintendent Ybarra since the late 1990's and have a very high regard for her and the things she has accomplished for the students of Idaho.

I first met Superintendent Ybarra when I was in my undergraduate Elementary Education program. She was teaching in the building where I was conducting observations for my teaching classes. She stood out to me right away because of her kindness and encouragement.

A few years later, I had the privilege of teaching in the same school with Superintendent Ybarra. In my 20+ years of teaching, she is one of the most effective teachers that I have ever worked with.

Superintendent Ybarra quickly rose through the educational ranks due to her passion, commitment, hard work, and outstanding leadership skills. She has served as a Vice Principal, Principal, Federal Programs Director, and Idaho State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In each position Superintendent Ybarra has excelled. I will not even attempt to describe all of her accomplishments, but I would like to highlight a few.

Although Idaho educational funding has increased under Superintendent Ybarra's leadership, Idaho funds education at a rate lower than any other state in the nation. Despite this lack of funding, Education Week identifies Idaho as improving from 31st to 19th in the nation for academic achievement.

Superintendent Ybarra constantly travels the state supporting teachers and students. One example is her willingness to carve our time in her busy schedule to substitute in classrooms. This is a reflection of her willingness to roll up her sleeves to help out whenever and wherever needed.

I have had the opportunity to attend some of the professional development offered by the State Department of Education under Sherri Ybarra's leadership. Superintendent Ybarra reaches out to top educational researchers, and brings their expertise to the teachers and students of Idaho. One example of this is bringing in the work of Dr. Louisa Moats, arguably the top reading researcher in the nation, and implementing the Idaho SMART Cohort. This multi-year professional development cohort is where K-3 educators learn about screeners and interventions to serve children with dyslexia. Sherri Ybarra had the Idaho SMART Cohort in place prior to the recent Dyslexia Legislation.

As an Idaho teacher, I would like to personally thank Superintendent Ybarra for the tireless work that she does for Idaho's students.

Sincerely,

Lisa Russell, First Grade Teacher, Mountain Home, Idaho