

The Idaho Constitution requires our state legislature to “establish and maintain a general, uniform and thorough system of public, free common schools.” Idaho PTA represents 120 of these public schools, and more than 8,000 members across our great state. Discussions about private school vouchers are alarming, as such a voucher system would threaten Idaho’s constitutional mandate, and put the education of some of Idaho’s most vulnerable children at risk.

Idaho PTA and The National PTA oppose education voucher proposals for public and nonpublic preschool, elementary and secondary school students. We also oppose tax credits and deductions for elementary and secondary school tuition and other education-related expenses for public and nonpublic school students. We believe that these funding methods would have a detrimental effect on our public school system. Such funding would promote division without diversity, create division and separation within the community, and negate the long struggle to desegregate our schools and our society.

Idaho is largely a rural state, and children in these communities could be most negatively impacted by such proposals. They do not have the same private school options available to children in more urban areas, and a shift of monies away from the general fund toward private vouchers or tax credits would directly impact the primary funding source for these schools.

Idaho and National PTA understand that no one educational program is best for all children. Public school personnel and parents must address the different ways that children learn, and how public school systems can provide the best education for all children. Public Charter schools, public on-line schools, and other choice within the public school system are important ways to meet the needs of children otherwise not served in the traditional public school system. These schools must be held to the same educational standards as traditional public schools. Vouchers, tax credits, deductions and other such funding sources do not provide the means for bringing about improvements in our public schools.

Thank you,
Lesli Schei,
Idaho PTA President

cc: Maria Lorcher
Idaho PTA VP of Advocacy