



Idahoans for Choice in Education

Creating a Brighter Future for Idaho Families

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

Home School

Harbor School


Traditional School

Charter School


Virtual School



Choices



Darrell Deide,
Chairman



Holland Johnson,
Treasurer

The Digital Divide

By Emma Roemhildt: Student at Northwest Nazarene University

My name is Emma Roemhildt, I am a student at Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa and I am in my second year representing Idahoans for Choice in Education here at the Idaho Legislature. I went to elementary and secondary school in a small town in Alaska, not unlike many of the small towns in Idaho, and I know first hand the importance of being technologically literate.

Technology is impacting our lives at an increasingly faster rate. Those who are technologically illiterate are falling behind at an even higher rate; it's called the "digital divide. I fell victim to this because upon arriving at college I felt technologically unprepared although I had bought a laptop after graduating from high school. My unfamiliarity with using laptops and online aids made an already difficult first semester of college even worse. A college student, without a laptop is unheard of and a great number of high school students are already equipped with i-phone, i-pads and laptops. Class readings, supplements, grades, schedules, research and assignments are all online. The time I could have spent thoroughly reading and completing assignments, was instead spent trying to figure out how to use the laptop and online systems. Computer labs have their place, but laptops are more efficient for the on-the-go student and adult. Moreover, everyone uses them.

Implementing a laptop program would have helped me tremendously. The responsibility of high school students having their own laptops is a great one indeed. However, it need not be a barrier to the benefits that would come from them. Laptops could be issued for each student to be responsible for but still remain school property. Feasible yearly fees could offset the school's maintenance costs. The summer months could be a time for refurbishing, keeping software and hardware up to date for the next school year. At the end of four consecutive years and graduation the laptop could be purchased by the student for a pre determined amount.

Not only could this type of program benefit students, but teachers as well. Just as critical that the students learn how to use laptops is the teachers ability to take full advantage of the them. Teachers too should receive laptops and training. What use is giving a student a laptop if their teachers cannot teach them how to use it? Technology may not be the end all solution, but it is a tool that is becoming more necessary and essential in education. Technologically investing in teachers and students is something that today we may not recognize; but without it, the frustrations I went through, as a freshman in college will be realized on a larger scale.

As much as we like to debate the issue, the world will not wait for Idaho to decide whether

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Freedom to choose a school that provides the environment that you desire...not someone else's!

Freedom to choose a school that meets your student's needs... not someone else's!

Freedom to choose a school that meets your expectations... not someone else's!

Freedom to choose a school based upon its performance... not where you live!

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Directors

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Julie Yamamoto,
Leslie Mauldin,
Ann Rydalch
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Jack Barraclough

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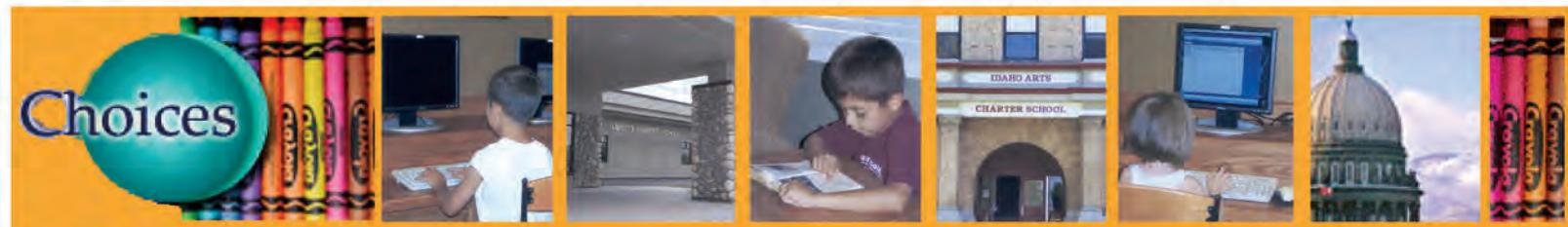
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laptops and other forms of technology are good for educating students. The world has already decided; yes, they are. The longer we wait, debate and remain ignorant of the benefits technology can have, in and outside the classroom, the further the divide gets. Do not leave Idaho on the wrong side of the "digital divide."

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