



## LONG-TIME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ISBA TO RETIRE

The Executive Board of the Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA) is formally announcing the retirement of long-time Executive Director and our friend, Karen Echeverria. This is a bittersweet moment for Karen as she moves on from her life's work with an organization and people who mean everything to her and for the Association that will have the impossible task of trying to replace her.

Karen is the heart and soul of ISBA, and she has spent the past 14 years making the organization into one of the most respected advocates for education in Idaho. "She is a complete dynamo who has made ISBA a force in the education circles in Idaho and the nation through her insight and knowledge" according to ISBA President Jody Hendrickx of St. Maries. Under her leadership, ISBA has built a reputation, among education stakeholders and the public, as an organization that fights for its membership while working to build consensus on education issues. This approach creates opportunities for ISBA to be part of the critical discussions about local governance, accountability, and transparency in the education community. Her close friend and former ISBA President from Weiser, Margie Chipman, puts it like this, "Karen not only broke the glass ceiling, she shattered it. She continues to be the voice of reason and is a powerful advocate for our school children." Asked about her dedication to education, Karen simply says, "it is my passion." Karen, who is very proud of her Basque heritage and her status as a native Idahoan, born and raised in Mt. Home, has achieved a great deal and has been recognized across the state as one of the most influential and dedicated voices for education in Idaho.

Through Karen's leadership, ISBA has played an ever increasing role during the legislative session, in support of legislation that benefits Idaho's educational system and in strong opposition to legislative proposals that would undermine the value and strength of local school boards in determining the fate of their district's or charter's students and programs. If you are keeping score, and we are, Karen and her staff have been extremely successful in ISBA's lobbying efforts year in and year out. She brings the knowledge and passion that is required to be an effective and valued educational resource to legislators on both sides of the aisle. As another close friend and former ISBA President, Anne Ritter of Eagle says, "Karen's insight into complex educational legislation and policy issues sets her apart from all the noise

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around her. It allows her to focus on what is important to the educational community and how it will actually impact our children and their academic achievement.”

Organizationally, Karen has assembled a highly skilled and knowledgeable staff that has allowed her to expand services to the Association’s membership. These services have thereby strengthened the local boards’ ability to adopt educational and operational policies, programs, and services. As Misty Swanson, ISBA Chief Deputy and Quinn Perry, Director of ISBA Government Affairs put it, “Karen has had a tremendous impact on our professional careers and brought us together as a staff with focus and commitment to achieving our mission each and every day.” They talk about her “cool demeanor and ability to contain her frustrations,” adding “but there are those rare occasions...” as they laugh.

Karen came to ISBA with an extremely ambitious vision and, through hard work and dedication, she has successfully turned that vision into reality. She has made ISBA into an association that truly represents its membership and stands for integrity and uncompromising ethics.

We wish Karen all the best in life as she splits her time between her home in Boise and her vacation home in Arizona. We wish her many sunny days on the golf course and more time to spend with family and friends. We can never thank her enough for the incredible impact she has had on education in the Great State of Idaho. We will truly miss her.

Karen’s retirement date is December 31, 2021.