Why "Students Come First" Is Good for Teachers, Good for Students, and Good for Idaho

Governor Otter recently signed legislation called *Students Come First* that will make a big change in Idaho. The Teachers Union is concerned because it takes some control from the Union and gives it to local school districts. Here is some information that will help you understand the issue:

Current System	NEW SYSTEM
Teacher pay is frozen	**Teacher pay will be restored and the pay grid will be funded. Teachers will now be able to receive raises.**
Minimum teacher pay for new teachers is cut.	**Minimum pay will be restored to $30,000, plus there will be a plan to increase minimum pay in future years.**
No teachers will receive a pay increase.	**Many teachers will have the opportunity to receive pay increases.**
Teachers cannot earn money above and beyond their base salary.	**In addition to their base pay, teachers will be able to earn up to $8,000 in bonuses every year for leadership, teaching in hard-to-fill positions and helping students grow academically.**
Not all students take college entrance exams (ACT, SAT or Compass). Students don't know if they are college ready.	**Every student will take ACT, SAT or Compass exams paid for by the state.**
New math and science requirements are not funded at all.	**Districts will receive $5 million to hire more math and science teachers.**
Student achievement is not considered in a teacher's or principal's annual performance evaluation.	**Now student achievement will be 50 percent of a teacher's and principal's evaluation.**
Parents have no say in a teacher's evaluation.	**Parent input will be considered as determined by the district.**
Teachers gain tenure after three years.	**Teachers with tenure keep it. New teachers will be on a one-year or two-year renewable contract instead of gaining tenure after three years.**
Newer teachers are laid off first no matter what they teach or the quality of their work.	**How long a teacher has taught cannot be the criteria used in determining who is laid off. Districts may choose to keep the better teachers.**
Teachers are paid $15,000 to $17,000 to retire early.	**Tax dollars will not be used to pay teachers to leave public education early.**
Teacher salary negotiations occur in closed meetings.	**All negotiations will be held in the public domain.**
Negotiations include any issue.	**Negotiations will be limited to salary and benefits.**
Once something is negotiated, it can never be taken out of the agreement unless both parties agree. Agreements continue forever until the Union agrees to change.	**Negotiated agreements will be for one year only.**
The education system always needs more money to do things differently.	**The education system will spend the money we currently have differently.**
Seniors who meet graduation requirements early leave school or go through "senior slump."	**Students who complete high school graduation requirements early will be able to take up to 36 college credits free, while still in high school.**
Students and parents need permission from the school district for students to take online courses.	**Students will be able to sign up for accredited online courses at registration without permission from the school district.**
The least technological part of a student's day is when they are in school.	**Every classroom will be equipped with state-of-the-art technology.**
Little or no investment in technology and professional development.	**A long-term plan to invest in classroom technology and professional development for teachers.**
Access to technology varies depending on where you live in Idaho.	**Every Idaho student will have access to computers and technology, no matter where they live.**
Patrons have little information on school finances.	**Each school district must post its budget online. The state will publish a fiscal report card for every school district.**
Class sizes are determined by the local school board.	**Class sizes are determined by the local school board. (*No Change*)**
Students in rural Idaho are limited in course offerings and instructors.	**All Idaho students will have access to rigorous courses and effective teachers no matter where they live.**