The Academic Preparation of Earth Science Teachers, 1983-84 School Year

Schools in the United States are experiencing a shortage of qualified science teachers. This trend is more serious in rural states like Idaho. The shortage has lead to the widespread use of unqualified science teachers. A survey of Idaho science teachers in the 1983/84 school year revealed that earth science teachers had the poorest academic preparation. The following tables show the data indicating the preparation of Idaho earth science teachers as compared with all science teachers in Idaho.

	Earth Science Teachers	All Science Teachers
Number of Teachers in Idaho	113	632
Masters Degree	27%	32 %
Certified in Subject Taught	17%	57%
NOT Certified in Science	1 %	8%
30 or More Credits in Subject Taught	10%	44 %
Less Than 20 Credits in Subject Taught	82%	39%

Average Number of Credits

Biology	27.7	26.4
Chemistry	10.7	11.5
Physics	4.4	5.4
Earth Science	11.3	6.4
Total Science	54.1	49.7
Mathematics	7.7	10.0
Science Methods	2.1	2.0

Credits in Subject Taught

Credits	0	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-19	20-29 minor	30+ major
Earth Science Teachers	10	18	18	6	5	1	6	7
All Science Teachers	16	32	51	58	50	39	108	276

Note: The information in this table is based on a sample of 63% of the earth science teachers in Idaho and 69% of all science teachers who were teaching in the 1983/1984 school year.

> Prepared by Michael W. Heikkinen College of Education, University of Idaho



MAIN OFFICE AT MOSCOW MORRILL HALL, THIRD FLOOR MATH-GEOLOGY, ROOM 223C UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO PO Box 443014 Moscow, ID 83844-3014

BRANCH OFFICE AT BOISE BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY Boise, ID 83725-1535

BRANCH OFFICE AT POCATELLO PHYSICAL SCIENCE, ROOM 235 IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS Box 8072 POCATELLO, ID 83209-8072

www.idahogeology.org 208-885-7991 email: igs@uidaho.edu SINCE 1919, SERVING THE STATE THROUGH GEOLOGIC RESEARCH