

January 26, 2004

STATE BOARD APPROVES ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC INDICATOR

BOISE - The Idaho State Board of Education has approved the final piece of Idaho's State Accountability plan in accordance with federal legislation, "No Child Left Behind."

The Board decision offers school districts a choice of three options to use as an academic indicator for elementary and junior high schools. This indicator provides schools with three options:

- Increase in percentage of 'advanced' students according to the ISAT;
- Decrease in the percentage of 'below basic' students as measured by the ISAT;
- Or a year's worth of academic growth through computer based programs.

School districts can choose one of the three options. "While there are areas in 'No Child Left Behind' that aren't flexible, the Board wants to offer flexibility wherever it can. Under the option approved by the Board, schools can choose the indicator that provides the best fit for their students' needs," said State Board of Education member Karen McGee. "Today's decision is the third element toward meeting 'No Child Left Behind' requirements."

Under NCLB, states must show "adequate yearly progress" through three indicators. All states must show that 95 percent of students took a standards-based exam and met state established proficiency standards in math and reading. States are then offered a choice for the third indicator to measure student progress. In the October meeting, the State Board established a 90 percent graduation rate as the indicator for high school students and today's decision established the third indicator for elementary and junior high students.

"I believe it's important that we offer schools as many choices as possible. The Board- approved indicator gives flexibility to all of our school districts. It allows the school district, not the State Board of Education, to choose the indicator that works best," said Rod Lewis, secretary of the State Board of Education.