

June 16, 2006

STUDENTS CAN GET MORE FINANCIAL AID

TWIN FALLS - Idaho high school students who take rigorous classes may be eligible to receive additional Pell Grant money under a new federal law, reported the State Board of Education at its meeting in Twin Falls.

State Board members approved criteria forwarded to the Federal Government that will allow Idaho students to take advantage of an additional \$2,050 per individual in federal aid. The provision is part of President Bush's Academic Competitiveness Grant Program and allows states to set graduation criteria for what is considered "academically rigorous."

In order to be eligible for the extra funding, students must take at least the number of credits required by Idaho colleges and universities for admission, including: eight credits of English, six credits of math, five credits of social studies, two credits of humanities or foreign language, and three credits of performing arts or debate. Students must graduate with a 2.0 GPA and take either the ACT or SAT. In addition, students must be Pell Grant eligible and be first or second year college students. More than 46 percent of Idaho's college students are Pell eligible. Students who are eligible will receive \$750 their freshman year and \$1,300 their sophomore year. Students who have taken two advanced placement or International Baccalaureate courses and received a passing score for the tests associated with these courses will also qualify for additional financial aid.

The Board's decision only applies to individuals attending institutions the Board directly oversees, including Boise State University, Idaho State University, University of Idaho, Lewis-Clark State College and Eastern Idaho Technical College.

In other State Board actions:

- o Boise State University can offer two new graduate programs - a masters in educational leadership and a masters in hydraulic sciences.

- o Idaho State University's athletic contracts for head soccer, head women's basketball, head men's basketball, and head softball coach were unanimously approved. The University of Idaho's head men's basketball coach's contract was also approved.

- o The Board passed a temporary rule to reverse increased high school graduation requirements. The Board will work with stakeholders over the next few months to bring back a plan to improve Idaho's high schools to the Legislature in 2007.

- o College and University President FY 2007 salaries were approved by the Board. As part of new policy, college and university presidents will only be paid in state dollars. In the past, salaries have been paid through a combination of state funds and university foundations. Presidents also have homes or a housing stipend provided and use of institution vehicle. Salaries for the college and university presidents will be: Boise State University, Dr. Bob Kustra, \$261,262; Idaho State University, Dr. Arthur Valias, \$260,000; University of Idaho, Dr. Tim White, \$286,188; Lewis-Clark State College, Dr. Dene Thomas, \$137,869; Eastern Idaho Technical College, Bill Robertson, \$107,910.

- o The Board approved a new distribution formula for state appropriations between the two existing state community colleges: College of Southern Idaho and College of North Idaho.