



**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
April 13, 2020
Office of the State Board of Education**

A special meeting of the Idaho State Board of Education was held via Zoom teleconference on Monday, April 13, 2020. At this time, the Office of the State Board of Education is closed to the public in accordance with Governor Little's Stay at Home Order issued March 25, 2020 in response to the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Board President Debbie Critchfield presided and called the meeting to order at 3:00pm (MST). A roll call of members was taken.

Present

Debbie Critchfield, President
Dr. David Hill, Vice President
Andrew Scoggin, Secretary
Emma Atchley

Dr. Linda Clark
Shawn Keough
Kurt Liebich
Sherri Ybarra, State Superintendent

Monday, April 13, 2020, 3:00 p.m. (MST)

BOARDWORK

1. Public Education – Issues related to the COVID-19 Epidemic

Board President Critchfield called the meeting to order and asked Matt Freeman, Executive Director, to provide an update regarding the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding. Mr. Freeman discussed that the US Department of Education announced on April 9, 2020 that they will release the first portion of the higher education emergency relief funds under the CARES Act, and shared that the funds must be distributed to students in the form of emergency financial aid grants.

The funds will provide financial relief to students who have experienced campus disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as food service, housing, course materials, technology, healthcare, and childcare expenses. Mr. Freeman emphasized that institutions cannot not use these funds to reimburse themselves for any costs or expenses, including refunds or benefits that an institution may have already issued to students. Institutions have significant discretion in determining the amount and allocation of the grants for its students, and must sign a certification agreement in order to receive the funds. The US Department of Education has indicated that they will release the second portion of CARES Act funds within the next two weeks, which can

be used for institutional expenses related to changes in course delivery and instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The total amount that will be received by Idaho's public institutions of higher education is approximately \$36 million, with roughly \$18 million being distributed directly to students.

There were no questions or comments from the Board.

Postsecondary Education Update

Board President Critchfield introduced Dani Dunstan, Chief of Staff to the President at Idaho State University, who provided an update on the conference calls that have been taking place between representatives from each of Idaho's eight public higher education institutions. Ms. Dunstan shared that during the most recent call, institutions did not report any significant issues or barriers to online course delivery. Institutions are making adjustments to ensure continued success for students, since as shifting grading systems and moving to pass/fail grades where appropriate, extending course withdrawal dates, and moving summer sessions to an online format.

Ms. Dunstan discussed that the focus of the conference calls has shifted from day-to-day logistics to the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and institutions are working to prepare for changes in enrollment and possible decline in revenue. Institutions are also focusing on communication with faculty, staff, and students, to ensure that students' needs are being met and that faculty and staff have the resources they need to be successful and effective. Ongoing communication efforts are taking place by means of virtual "town hall" meetings as well as videos and e-mail messages distributed to the campus communities. The allocation methodology for the CARES Act funds has also been a topic of discussion during the conference calls.

Board Member Liebich inquired if it would be possible to structure the student allocation of the CARES Act funding in a way that would assist with fall re-enrollment. Mr. Freeman responded that the US Department of Education's certification agreement states that institution must promptly distribute the funds to students within one year of signing the agreement, and that the funds are intended to assist students who experienced campus disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kevin Satterlee, Idaho State University President, shared that he believes that there is a way to distribute the funds that would encourage students to utilize the funds in the fall. He elaborated that they would not be able to specifically distribute the funds as a deposit that must be used for fall semester expenses, but that they could structure the payments in a way that would encourage and assist students with continuing their education.

There were no additional questions or comments from the Board.

At this time, Board President Critchfield introduced TJ Bliss, Chief Academic Officer, who gave an update regarding the “K-12 to Higher Education Crosswalk” that is being developed as a result of many questions that have been posed to the Board and to the State Department of Education regarding topics such as grading, dual credit, scholarships, SATs, and Direct Admissions. Board Member Clark, IRSA Committee Chair, shared that a special IRSA Committee meeting was recently held and that the crosswalk was developed by institution provosts and the Council for Academic Affairs and Programs (CAAP).

Mr. Bliss began his update by stating that all of Idaho’s public institutions of higher education are committed to doing whatever is necessary to hold students harmless for the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many high schools are moving dual credit courses to a pass/fail grading structure, keeping in mind that the grading structure must match that of the postsecondary equivalent. Institutions are working with high schools to determine grading policies that are best for students, and students who receive a “pass” grade will not be required to take any further placement tests to receive dual credit for that course. Many institutions have extended their drop and withdrawal dates, and this would also apply to dual credit courses.

Mr. Bliss then discussed the effect that pass/fail grading structures may have on students’ Grade Point Averages (GPAs). Representatives from Idaho’s public higher education institutions do not anticipate that this shift will have a significant impact on admissions, placement, or scholarship decisions. The Board and the State Department of Education are working to determine the impact of pass/fail grades on the Direct Admissions and Apply Idaho initiatives as well as the Opportunity Scholarship.

Mr. Bliss reminded the group that the Board previously waived the SAT as a graduation requirement for this year’s juniors as well as this year’s seniors who have not yet taken the SAT. The State Department is exploring alternatives, such as an “SAT Day” in the fall to replace the canceled spring date and an opportunity for students to take the SAT in the fall at no cost. Institutions are determining if alternative criteria will need to be developed to replace college entrance exam scores as an admission requirement. Mr. Bliss also discussed Advanced Placement (AP) exams, stating that these exams will be delivered virtually, and that institutions will still grant dual credit for AP test scores of 3 or higher.

Finally, Mr. Bliss discussed the potential disruption of student learning that has occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The higher education institutions are working to develop plans to support incoming students in the fall who may need additional support, and seeking input from K-12 representatives in order to best serve students. The Outreach Team in the Office of the State Board of Education is hosting webinars to gather feedback and determine areas where higher education institutions can be of assistance to incoming students.

A full summary of the “K-12 to Higher Education Crosswalk” will be available on the Board’s website. Board Member Clark voiced her appreciation for the work that the provosts have been doing within the CAAP group, and shared that the IRSA Committee is willing to meet at any time if there are updates or if action is needed.

Board Member Liebich inquired whether there has been any guidance from the NCAA regarding eligibility requirements for student athletes. Board Member Clark stated that this issue has not yet been discussed specifically, and that she would request a conference call with institution athletic directors with the intention of sharing an update during next week’s Special Board Meeting.

Board Vice President Hill inquired how the Board is communicating with and providing updates for students aside from news articles and press releases. Mr. Freeman shared that the Office of the State Board of Education is working to produce videos that can be shared with students, particularly pertaining to school re-entry criteria. Board President Critchfield shared that the Next Steps Idaho website could also be a “one stop shop” for communications to students and community members. President Satterlee mentioned that it would be beneficial for the Board to work with the institutions’ marketing and communications staff to ensure that communications are consistent.

There were no additional questions or comments from the Board.

K-12 Education Update

Superintendent Ybarra gave a brief update regarding K-12’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the statewide “soft closure”. She shared that she reached out to Idaho’s teachers of the year to gain insight recommendations as to how to best help students in the future, and will provide an update with their findings in the future. The State Department is working with Idaho Public Television (IPTV) and Idaho Business for Education to allow teachers to provide instruction via IPTV for students in grades 3-6, with the first broadcast scheduled for Monday, April 20.

Supt. Ybarra introduced two motions for Board action. The first motion was in regard to current Title I funding, and would allow flexibility of spending in the area of professional development as it relates to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The second motion was in regard to revisions to the Idaho Public Driver Education Program Manual. The manual states that classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel instruction must occur simultaneously, and this waiver would allow for students to continue online classroom instruction that is not sequential or concurrent with behind-the-wheel instruction.

BOARD ACTION

M/S (Ybarra/Liebich): I move approve the waiver request of provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and funding flexibility pursuant to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act as provided in attachment 2 and authorize the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to submit the waiver request on behalf of the State Board of Education. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried 8-0.

There were no questions or comments from the Board.

BOARD ACTION

M/S (Ybarra/Hill): I move to waive the subsection 2.2.4 and 2.2.6 or the Operating Procedures for Idaho Public Driver Education Programs, incorporated by reference into IDAPA 08.02.02.004 for the remainder of the 2020 calendar year. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried 8-0.

There were no questions or comments from the Board.

Following Supt. Ybarra's update and motions, Board Vice President Hill introduced a motion that would waive the requirement for proctored exams for students enrolled in courses through the Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA). Dr. Hill elaborated that this waiver does not change the requirement or content for exams, but removed the requirement that exams be proctored for IDLA students. Board President Critchfield added that this waiver was requested by IDLA.

BOARD ACTION

M/S (Hill/Atchley): I move to waive IDAPA 08.04.01.102.01. proctored final exam requirement for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried 8-0.

There were no questions or comments from the Board.

At this time, Board President Critchfield stated that Board Member Clark has received questions regarding the use of facilities for non-educational purposes, for schools who will not reconvene if they do not meet the re-entry criteria. Dr. Clark stated that this item will be discussed at a future meeting once the re-entry criteria has been established by the Board.

Board President Critchfield reminded the group that the Regular April Board Meeting will be Thursday, April 16, 2020. One of the topics to be discussed and voted upon during this meeting is the student re-entry criteria; it was established during the April 6, 2020 Board Meeting that the "soft closure" of schools statewide would continue through the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, unless the re-entry criteria established by the Board is met.

There were no additional questions or comments from the Board.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was entertained.

BOARD ACTION

M/S (Scoggin/Hill): I move to adjourn the meeting at 3:49pm (MST).

The State Board of Education will be conducting a virtual Special Board meeting on Mondays at 3:00 pm during the COVID-19 pandemic to receive updates on the status of public education in Idaho and to take action as necessary.