



**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
July 9, 2020
Office of the State Board of Education**

A special meeting of the Idaho State Board of Education was held via Zoom teleconference on Thursday, July 9, 2020. Board President Debbie Critchfield presided and called the meeting to order at 8:30am (MST). A roll call of members was taken.

Present

Debbie Critchfield, President
Andy Scoggin, Vice President
Kurt Liebich, Secretary
Linda Clark

Emma Atchley
Shawn Keough
Dave Hill
Sherri Ybarra, State Superintendent

Thursday, July 9, 2020, 8:30 a.m. (Mountain Daylight Time)

Governor Brad Little addressed the Board regarding the Fall Reopening Plan, which was discussed later in the agenda, and stated that a press conference would be held later that day to discuss the plan and to provide an update on Idaho's status in the "Idaho Rebounds" phases for reopening. He voiced his support for the plan drafted by the Fall Reopening Committee, which is a subcommittee of the K-12 Emergency Council that was established at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as his appreciation for the extensive work that was put into drafting the plan. Governor Little discussed that the plan is concise yet thorough, and emphasized the importance of closing achievement gaps while still maintaining the safety of students, teachers, and staff.

Board President Critchfield shared the Board's appreciation for Governor Little's leadership. There were no additional questions or comments from the Board.

PLANNING, POLICY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

1. Digital Campus Update

BOARD ACTION

M/S (Clark/Hill): I move to approve the Idaho Online Initial Implementation Plan set forth in Attachment 1, and to direct staff to work with the Governor's Office to

access the \$4M from the Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee for implementation of the plan between now and December 30, 2020. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried 7-0. Ms. Keough was absent from voting.

Board Member Clark introduced the item and discussed that it is a continuation of the conversation the Board had during the June 29, 2020 Special Board Meeting regarding a proposed higher education “digital campus”.

Dr. TJ Bliss, Chief Academic Officer, stated that the initial implementation plan for the “Idaho Online” model is presented within the meeting agenda materials, and, if approved, would utilize the \$4M that was awarded by the Governor’s Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC). Dr. Bliss discussed that the “Idaho Online” model focuses on four main goals:

1. Decrease the number of current students who “stop out” of college by making courses more readily accessible
2. Increase the number of Idahoans who “go on” to college by providing simplified, online pathways to meaningful credentials that have immediate economic value
3. Make courses and credentials more affordable through transparency and negotiation
4. Increase the quality of online courses that are already offered by Idaho’s higher education institutions by implementing a statewide quality assurance process

Dr. Bliss also discussed that these goals will be accomplished by means of: a statewide course sharing platform, access to an alternative enterprise learning management system (LMS), professional development programs and resources to assist faculty with transitioning to hybrid/flexible instruction, and the expansion of dedicated wrap-around services for online students. The implementation of “Idaho Online” stems from work done by the institution Presidents earlier in the year in order to compile an inventory of all online courses and programs that are already being offered at their institutions.

The “Idaho Online” initial implementation plan includes a spending plan as well as strategies that will be executed over the next three years with the intention of fortifying Idaho’s eight institutions of public higher education in the delivery of online and technology-enhanced learning experiences, and informing the ongoing decisions of education leaders in Idaho. The funding awarded from the CFAC will need to be utilized no later than December 30, 2020.

Board Vice President Scoggin shared his concerns around a marketplace approach, stating that the model will need to focus on affordability, simplicity, and speed, elaborating that the model will need to be affordable, simple to access and navigate, and implemented as quickly as possible. He also discussed that the model would be most effective if it were to focus on the most employable degrees and certificates. Board

Member Hill agreed with Board Vice President Scoggin's comments, and reiterated that certificates should be an integral part of the framework for "Idaho Online".

Board Secretary Liebich inquired about the accountability and governance of "Idaho Online". Board Member Hill stated that he will continue to oversee the implementation of the model, and added that Board Member Liebich and Board Member Clark will also be involved as chairs of the IRSA and PPGA committees, respectively.

Board Member Liebich asked Matt Freeman, Executive Director, if it would be possible for Dr. Bliss and Dr. Jonathan Lashley, Associate Chief Academic Officer, to continue with the management of the development and implementation of the "Idaho Online" model. Mr. Freeman referred to the short timeline for utilizing the CFAC funds as well as the need to have courses available prior to the beginning of the fall semester. He added that there will be need for dedicated leadership and governance once the model's framework is agreed upon. Dr. Bliss agreed that he and Dr. Lashley should continue to lead the effort for executing the implementation plan as outlined in the agenda materials, and discussed that it would be best to move forward utilizing the State purchasing process.

Board President Critchfield echoed Board Member Clark's statement that this item continues the Board's discussion during the June 29, 2020 Special Board Meeting, and stated that once the implementation plan is approved, the Board can make concrete decisions during a future meeting in regards to governance and implementation logistics.

Board Member Clark echoed Board Member Hill's previous comments regarding the importance of certificates, and inquired which programs the model should focus on first. Dr. Bliss discussed that the cybersecurity programming that was funded during the 2020 Legislative Session would be a program to consider. Dr. Lashley stated that it will be crucial to conduct an in-depth inventory of the courses and programs that are currently offered, as well as current workforce needs, in order to know which areas to prioritize.

Board Member Hill also inquired about procurement processes. Dr. Bliss discussed that he and Dr. Lashley have had initial conversations with Division of Purchasing, and have identified pathways to procure the items that are outlined within the meeting agenda materials. He added that the Division of Purchasing is aware of the deadline to utilize the CFAC funds, and tentatively planned to be able to move forward with the purchasing process within the next 2 months.

Mr. Freeman referred to Board Vice President Scoggin's previous comments regarding a simple interface, and discussed that he has discussed this with Dr. Bliss and Dr. Lashley. He stated that simplicity in terms of user experience for the marketplace will be key, especially for non-traditional students, and added a comparison to the "Apply Idaho" interface that allows high school students to apply for college in a matter of minutes. Board Vice President Scoggin echoed these comments, and reiterated that it

will be important to create an intuitive experience without recreating what is already available, and to strive to augment what the higher education institutions are currently offering.

Board Secretary Liebich discussed that Superintendent Ybarra has prioritized the implementation of a K-12 LMS, and stated that the implementation of an LMS should be thought of in a broad sense and not just for higher education. Mr. Freeman shared that he recently met with Dr. Bliss, Dr. Lashley, and Chris Campbell, Chief Technology Officer, to discuss the possibility of a K-20 LMS. Dr. Lashley shared that it is beneficial to have a K-20 system because of the possibility to create consistencies throughout a student's path through the system. He discussed that the use of an LMS varies widely depending on the grade level and program, and that it will be important to understand the role of an LMS in the various levels and modes of instructional delivery.

Dr. Lashley also discussed that the role of an LMS in the K-20 system could be one system-wide LMS or several Learning Management Systems to accommodate different needs. Board Member Hill inquired if having different platforms for an LMS could create confusion or technical issues for users. Dr. Lashley shared that quality instructional design can be conveyed regardless of the platform being used, and added that Learning Management Systems often have the same components that are displayed in different ways.

Superintendent Ybarra stated that she is supportive of implementing the "Idaho Online" model, and echoed Dr. Lashley's comments regarding the utilization of an LMS throughout the K-20 system. She discussed that it is important to implement an LMS for K-12 students so they are able to have experience utilizing an LMS platform early in their education.

Board Member Atchley discussed that many of the certificates that will be a focus of the "Idaho Online" model will stem from Career Technical Education programs, and inquired how this will be achieved. Dr. Bliss shared that the proposed model envisions partnerships with agencies throughout the state, including Career Technical Education and the Workforce Development Council. Dr. Lashley added that the goal of the "Idaho Online" model is a collaborative spirit among the institutions and agencies across the state.

Board President Critchfield reiterated that there are many details that will need to be decided upon moving forward, and reminded the Board that this action would allow future discussions about specific details to move forward.

Board Vice President Scoggin inquired about the average cost per course, as Dr. Cynthia Pemberton, Lewis-Clark State University President, discussed during the Special Board Meeting on June 29, 2020. Dr. Pemberton shared that her team has been working to establish a method for gathering this information while taking several

factors into account, including in-state tuition versus out-of-state tuition and varying programs, and will bring this information back to the Board when it is available.

There were no additional questions or comments from the Board.

2. Fall Reopening Plan

BOARD ACTION

M/S (Clark/Atchley): I move to adopt the Idaho Back to School Framework as provided in Attachment 1. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried 7-0. Ms. Keough was absent from voting.

Board Member Clark introduced the item, and asked Board President Critchfield, who chaired the Fall Reopening Committee to provide an overview of the Idaho Back to School Framework.

Board President Critchfield shared that the Fall Reopening Committee, which was a subcommittee of the K-12 Emergency Council that was established by Governor Little at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, was comprised of administrators, superintendents, and representatives of various school operations, as well as Board Member Clark and Superintendent Ybarra. She shared that the difference between the Idaho Back to School Framework and the Student Reentry Criteria that was originally approved by the Board during the regular April Board Meeting on April 16, 2020 is that the framework was designed to serve as an outline to guide local decisions, while the Student Reentry Criteria was more of a “checklist” for schools who wished to reopen during the 2019-2020 school year. The Fall Reopening Committee divided into four subcommittees (School Operations, Student Learning, Staffing Issues, and “Toolkit”) to create the framework in collaboration with local health districts.

Board President Critchfield discussed that local school boards will be driving decisions as the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year approaches, and that their decisions need to be well-informed. The Idaho Back to School Framework is intended to provide the necessary information and resources to aid in those decisions that will best serve local needs, and allow schools to open while prioritizing the safety of students, teachers, and staff.

Board Secretary Liebich voiced his support for the work done by the Fall Reopening Committee, as well as the Idaho Back to School Framework. He reiterated Board President Critchfield’s comments that local school boards will be responsible for decisions moving forward, and shared his appreciation for the fact that the framework outlines what the rules and responsibilities are.

Board Member Clark added that the subcommittees identified many resources that the districts will have access to, and noted that the State Department of Education

established a website to house these resources. The website is listed within the meeting agenda materials.

Board Vice President Scoggin echoed Board Secretary Liebich's comments and agreed that the guiding principles outlined in the framework will aid in the decision-making process in various areas of the state. He also discussed that the document sets an expectation that students will return to school buildings in the fall.

Board Member Atchley echoed her fellow Board Members' comments, and shared her support for the document.

Board Member Clark discussed that the framework provides a color-coded structure, utilizing green, yellow, and red stages to provide clarity for how to move from one stage to another if the need presents itself.

Board President Critchfield discussed that the Fall Reopening Committee spent a great deal of time considering student learning, and hoped that the framework would provide enough guidance for school operations without taking focus away from instruction and student achievement. She also thanked several people who worked on the framework and assisted the committee, including Tracie Bent, Chief Policy and Planning Officer, Greg Wilson, Senior Policy Advisor to Governor Little, Morgan Howard, Administrative Assistant to Tracie Bent, and Superintendent Ybarra's Staff in the State Department of Education.

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 (Clark/Atchley): I move to adjourn the meeting at 9:37am (MST). The motion carried 7-0. Ms. Keough was absent from voting.

The State Board of Education tentatively plans to convene weekly for a virtual Special Board Meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic to receive updates on the status of public education in Idaho and to take action as necessary.