



650 W. State Street • Room 307 • Boise, ID • 83702
P.O. Box 83720 • Boise, ID • 83720-0037

For Immediate Release

September 27, 2018

Contact: Mike Keckler
208-332-1591 (office)
208-866-5734 (cell)
Mike.Keckler@osbe.idaho.gov

**Op-Ed: State Board Committed to Addressing Magic Valley's
Teacher Shortage**

By Debbie Critchfield, vice president, Idaho State Board of Education

The College of Southern Idaho last summer proposed offering a Bachelor's degree in Education at the College of Southern Idaho.

The reasons behind the request are real; the Magic Valley region is coping with a teacher shortage and students interested in becoming teachers either cannot, or are reluctant to travel either to Idaho State University or Boise State University to finish work on their degree.

Magic Valley school superintendents have voiced frustration about addressing teacher shortages in our region. As the Board vice president and as a resident of the Magic Valley, I want the people of my area to know that the State Board of Education understands this concern, is aware of the teacher shortage and is committed to finding the best way to address it.

Idaho State University is charged by the Board with offering baccalaureate degree programs in the Twin Falls region. With a new president at ISU's helm, the Board would like to allow him an opportunity to address the concerns Magic Valley residents have expressed about ISU's delivery of the program.

President Kevin Satterlee has pledged to fix the problems, including reviewing requirements for students either to move to Pocatello or travel back and forth in

order to take upper-level courses. This could include ISU providing partnerships for CSI to teach these classes in Twin Falls.

We are striving to operate Idaho's higher education system as one system. The Board believes offering the same degree program at two institutions in the same service region is duplicative and not an efficient use of our higher education dollars. With that said, ISU must demonstrate it can meet its responsibility in the Magic Valley.

It is also worth noting that the Board did approve CSI's request to offer a Bachelor of Applied Sciences degree in Advanced Food Technology. This degree is currently not available in the Magic Valley and it was approved to meet the workforce demands in the area's food manufacturing industry. This means CSI will be the first Idaho community college to offer a four-year degree.

If Idaho State University cannot fulfill its pledge to improve its offering of baccalaureate degree programs to prospective teachers in the Magic Valley, the Board may revisit this, making it possible for the College of Southern Idaho to offer a second four-year degree.

#####