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BOARD UPDATED ON FEDERAL CARES ACT FUNDING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Idaho State Board of Education learned today that nearly \$48 million in federal CARES Act funding will be available to public K-12 education in Idaho to help mitigate effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funds will be dispersed to school districts and charter schools based on their proportional share of state Title I funds that they receive - schools with high populations of low-income students. Allocations range from \$14,000 for small districts to \$3 million for larger districts.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra recommended a portion of the CARES Act funds be used to invest in a statewide Learning Management System (LMS) to improve distance learning capabilities (online) across Idaho's public education system. "The emphasis will be across the K-12 infrastructure system and focused on districts that do not already have a robust LMS system," Ybarra said. "We need to make sure there's uniformity and thoroughness. That's particularly important during this school closure." She said she has heard from parents concerned that their children, receiving packets for distance learning, are not getting the same opportunities enjoyed by their peers with established online learning programs.

Board President Debbie Critchfield directed staff to work with the Idaho Digital Learning Academy, school districts, postsecondary institutions, and other stakeholders on a framework for what could be included in a statewide LMS and bring it back to the Board for later consideration. The group was asked to investigate options for a K-12 LMS, and K-12 and higher education solution.

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