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**For Immediate Release**

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**BOARD APPROVES CHANGES TO POLICIES ON COLLEGE  
ADMISSIONS AND ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY**

The Idaho State Board of Education today approved changes to its policy on minimum college admissions requirements and a second policy intended to make textbooks more affordable for college students.

The Board amended its policy requiring students take a college entrance exam in order to be admitted to Idaho's four-year college and universities. That requirement will now be left up to each institution to decide.

“Research shows that college entrance exams like the SAT and ACT aren't the best predictor of student success,” Board President Kurt Liebich said. At the same time, we are trying to reduce barriers for students to attend college and therefore the admission standards are better managed at the institution level.”

Later this summer, the Board will also consider changing an administrative rule that requires high school students take a college entrance exam in order to graduate. A decision will be made during the August Board meeting on proposed changes to the minimum state high school graduation requirements. If approved, the proposed changes would occur through the negotiated rule making process, which includes opportunities for public input prior to a final decision being made.

The Board also approved a policy change directing institutions to develop plans that ensure students have access to low-cost or no cost books and other educational materials known as Open Education Resources (OER).

During the recently concluded academic year, OER materials were used by at least 471 faculty in over 600 courses taught at all eight of Idaho's public higher education institutions. The more than 25,000 students enrolled in these classes paid less than \$10 per class, on average for instructional materials.

### **Other Board Actions**

- Approved the state plan to implement the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) requirements under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. The plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for approval. The state plan is a condition to accessing the full amount of ESSER funds available to Idaho. ARP Act ESSER funds can be used to help schools continue to conduct in-person learnings safely, and to assist students who experienced “unfinished learning” as a result of the disruption caused by the pandemic.
- Approved an amendment to its K-20 strategic plan specifically intended to address the unfinished learning problem throughout the state. It also approved new five-year strategic plans for K-20 Idaho Indian Education, Idaho's public postsecondary institutions and agencies overseen by the Board.
- Approved a new Master of Science in Cybersecurity program at the University of Idaho.
- Approved a \$35 per credit hour professional fee for upper division courses in Boise State University's College of Engineering Construction Management and Computer Science programs. The professional fees are supported by industry and take effect in spring 2022.

## **Legislative Ideas**

The Board also approved seven legislative ideas including a proposal to provide state funding for fulltime kindergarten. School districts would still be able to decide whether to offer fulltime kindergarten, halftime kindergarten or both. Kindergarten enrollment is not required in Idaho.

Another Board-approved idea would create a student loan forgiveness program for educators who agree to work in high-need or rural school districts and charter schools. The proposals will be sent to the Governor's office for consideration. If approved, proposed legislation will be presented during the 2022 legislative session.

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