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**For Immediate Release**

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## **BOARD VOTES TO MAKE SOME STUDENT FEES OPTIONAL**

The Idaho State Board of Education today approved a plan to make some student fees optional at Idaho’s four-year higher education institutions during its virtual regular Board meeting in Boise.

The plan, developed by representatives from each institution, creates four fee categories: Student Enrollment, Engagement and Success; Institutional Operations, Services and Support; Student Health and Wellness; and Student Government. The fee categories will be adopted by the college and the universities.

The institutions will create an opt-out option for fees supporting student activities, clubs and organizations, which will be a subset of the Student Government category. Students who decide to opt-out of subsidizing activities, clubs and organizations will receive a refund effective in the fall of 2022.

A report on fees eligible for op-out will be submitted in December to the Legislature’s Joint Finance Appropriations Committee in accordance with the requirement of House Bill 387.

### **School Readiness**

The State Board also adopted “School Readiness” guidelines designed to help parents prepare their children to succeed in kindergarten. The guidelines include

activities for parents, families and caregivers to use to help children develop skills needed to help them be ready when they enter kindergarten.

The guidelines, developed by a team of educators and education leaders, with input from the public, will be distributed statewide. “The final document is useable, clean, and very well done,” Board Member Bill Gilbert said. Board President Kurt Liebich added, “It would have been so nice to have had this last year when the legislature voted down the federal grant for collaborative pre-K, to be able to say this is what we are talking about in terms of school readiness.”

### **K-20 Performance Reporting**

Yesterday, during the meeting’s first day, the Board discussed at length the Board’s strategic plan performance outcomes at all levels of Idaho’s public education system. Discussion focused particularly on student performance growth targets in the K-12 system and degree and certificate production targets at Idaho’s higher education institutions.

The discussion included incremental projections from each institution on the number of graduates they can produce to meet growing industry demand over the remainder of the decade. The Board directed staff to develop targets for certificates and degrees for measuring progress and to bring them back to the Board for consideration at the December Board meeting. “I do believe we’ll have strong support from business and industry for this approach,” Board Member Dr. Linda Clark said.

The Board approved the following new institutional programs:

- An online Bachelor of Applied Science in Cyber Operations and Resilience degree at Boise State University, which will be available in collaboration with other Idaho institutions on Online Idaho, the Board’s online instruction delivery platform.
- An online Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity Management degree at Lewis-Clark State College, which will be available in collaboration with other Idaho institutions also on Online Idaho.
- An online Bachelor of Science Degree Completion Program in Respiratory Therapy at Idaho State University.

- An online Basic Technical Certificate in Cloud Computing at Idaho State University.
- An online Graduate Certificate in Listening and Spoken Language at Idaho State University

In other actions, the Board also approved:

- The State Department of Education’s methodology for distributing the Board’s 2.5 percent set aside of American Rescue Plan Emergency and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds to non-Title 1 and low-Title 1 school districts and charter schools, and the Idaho Bureau of Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind. The 2.5 percent set aside totals nearly \$11 million.
- A \$2.5 million increase in Boise State University’s annual athletics limit as designated in Board policy, and a \$4.5 million request by Boise State to begin planning and design for a new housing project for freshman students.
- Idaho State University’s request to spend \$355,000 to begin planning and design to upgrade the ISU Library’s first-floor common area and add a Starbucks store.
- A \$2.4 million request by the University of Idaho request to replace a chiller used to cool university buildings under a Public Private Partnership approved by the Board in 2020.
- Lewis-Clark State College’s Seven-year Campus Master Plan.

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