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BOARD APPROVES TEMPORARY ENROLLMENT RULE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

The Idaho State Board of Education today approved a temporary rule shifting the methodology for calculating average daily attendance for public school funding from daily attendance to average full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment for the current academic year

The average full-time equivalent student enrollment methodology is based on weekly enrollment reporting and includes restrictions based on student absenteeism.

The action occurred during the State Board’s regular Board meeting in Boise and is the second year in a row that the Board has enacted a temporary rule to account for fluctuating attendance caused as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board will also present legislation during the 2022 legislative session to make the shift to enrollment-based funding permanent.

“With so many students staying home this year, because they are feeling sick and quarantining, our public schools, system-wide stood to lose nearly \$100 million if we funded the system based only on daily attendance this year,” Board President Kurt Liebich said. “We are already working with legislators and stakeholders on switching to FTE enrollment-based funding permanently. We just can’t risk such a big funding hit this year. Our school board members, administrators and educators already have enough to worry about and stable funding shouldn’t be one of them.”

Other actions from today's Board meeting include:

- Approval of the first reading of a revised version of its Higher Education Policy III.B. Academic Freedom and Responsibility. The amended policy is much more extensive than the original Board policy, covering freedom and responsibility of faculty, students and institutions. The current decades-old policy is less than a page long and pertains only to faculty. The Board will consider the 8-page amended policy for final approval when it meets in February.
- Approval of Lewis-Clark State College's plan to purchase College Place Residence Hall, located adjacent to the LCSC campus. The purchase price for College Place is not to exceed \$5.2 million and will be paid for with both institution reserve funds and \$4 million in tax-exempt bonds.
- Approval of Idaho State University's plan to move forward with construction to upgrade ISU's library. The \$2.96 million project will be funded by a \$1.7 million philanthropic gift, \$760,000 in institution funds, and \$500,00 contribution from ISU's food vendor. ISU also got the go-ahead to move forward with a \$20.2 million project to renovate and expand Leonard Hall, home to the institution's College of Pharmacy. ISU has received gift commitments totaling \$16 million for the project and has submitted a request to the Permanent Building Fund Advisory Council for an additional \$3.4 million to put toward the project.
- Approved a request by the University of Idaho to initiate a "4 + 1" program enabling resident undergraduate students to continue into a non-thesis Master's program without having to pay higher graduate school tuition. The U of I believes the program will incentivize students to go on to graduate program, enhancing their job prospects after graduation.
- Approved trustee zone proposals for the College of Southern Idaho (CSI). The new Magic Valley area zones are based on the 2020 U.S. Census. Each zone is represented by a CSI trustee. The Board will consider trustee zone proposals for Idaho's other community colleges at a future date.

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