



For Immediate Release

August 24, 2022

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

BOARD MEMBERS EXPRESS STRONG SUPPORT FOR GOVERNOR'S EDUCATION PROPOSALS

The Idaho State Board of Education opened its regular Board meeting today by expressing full support for Governor Brad Little's education proposals that will be taken up next week during a special legislative session.

"I think this is potentially the biggest thing that has happened for Idaho education, ...this is a significant investment not only in our K-12 system and our higher education system, but our entire system," Board President Kurt Liebich said. "Our ability to continue to move the dial on student achievement will be improved with this investment."

Liebich continued, "What we are doing here is dedicating funds. \$330 million for K-12 and an additional \$80 million for higher education (to expand training for in-demand careers), and what is encouraging to me is that it is being dedicated out of sales tax, which is markedly most reliable and it's an ongoing investment, not one time. The onus is going to be on us, and our entire educational system to show return on that investment."

Governor Little unveiled the proposals yesterday, which prohibited the Board from taking formal action in support of the proposals, given the timelines outlined in Idaho's Open Meetings Law.

None the less, Board members went around the table expressing their individual support for the proposals.

"This is an historic opportunity," said Board Member Bill Gilbert who added that education stakeholders must be focused on growth in educational achievement. "This is the opportunity we have to put dollars behind that and continue to make that the north star."

Board Member Cally Roach said, "This is a great opportunity and I am excited and I think it is going to move the dial."

Board Vice President Dr. Linda Clark said, "This speaks to the commitment of our Governor and our Legislature to quality education."

Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra added, "It's a great day for public education. It will be a great ending to (my) term to watch this happen for public education."

"This is an amazing opportunity to build in structurally an appropriate level of investment with the help of the Legislature to direct it at the right things so that overall, the system improves and that is the way you drive change," Board Secretary Dr. David Hill said.

Board Members Shawn Keough and Cindy Siddoway also voiced their appreciation to the Governor and dozens of lawmakers who are co-sponsoring the proposed legislation.

The proposals, part of a single bill designed to address historic inflation, will be heard during a September 1 special legislative session. If approved, the bill would dedicate \$410 million in additional funding annually for education; \$330 million toward K-12 public schools and \$80 million to higher education.

#####