



For Immediate Release

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IDAHO’S TEACHER SHORTAGE PROBLEM PERSISTS

The Idaho State Board of Education today learned that the number of vacant teacher openings statewide are about a tenth of what they were last spring but that the majority of vacancies that continue to exist are in hard to fill positions such as Special Education, Math and Science. School Districts have filled many positions through emergency certifications, using paraprofessionals and others to fill vacancies.

Last May, an informal survey of school districts showed there were as many as 900 vacancies statewide. A follow-up survey indicates that the number of vacancies for certified teacher positions across the state dropped to 134 since the start of the school year.

Of the 134 vacant positions, 68-percent are in Special Education, 52-percent are in Math and 35-percent are in Science. Many of the vacant positions are being filled by people with little or no education experience or training.

“This is not just an Idaho problem, it is a nationwide problem and it is incumbent on education leaders to find ways to mentor the people who are filling these positions to ensure that quality education continues in our classrooms,” Board Vice President Dr. Linda Clark said.

Lewis-Clark State College and the College of Southern Idaho have both initiated programs to provide pathways for certified staff such as teacher’s aides to earn teaching credentials without having to relocate.

Also, the State Board of Education will introduce a proposal during the 2023 legislative session to create a teacher apprenticeship program to help districts fill vacant positions with staff interested in becoming a certified teacher.

87 of Idaho's 115 school districts responded to the latest survey conducted by the Idaho Association of School Administrators.

Idaho Reading Indicator Results Improve

The Board heard encouraging news about the spring Idaho Reading Indicator test results. Nearly 89 percent of students who started kindergarten and stayed in their school districts through the 3rd grade are reading at grade level.

Based on an analysis conducted by SAS on the impact of the pandemic, students in many schools and districts across Idaho met or exceeded the pre-pandemic expectations. Approximately 50-percent of schools and districts met or exceeded the pre-pandemic expectation in ISAT ELA, 25-percent of schools and districts met or exceeded in ISAT Math, and over 10-percent met or exceeded in IRI.

Board Actions:

- Approved the University of Idaho's request to sell 638 acres in Minidoka County to the State Land Board. The sale, along with proceeds from the sale of U of I property near Caldwell, will be used to begin development and construction of the University of Idaho's Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (CAFE) facility at the location in Minidoka County. The U of I plans to begin the first phase of construction of the experimental farm and research dairy facility later this year. The second phase is slated to be completed in early 2026.
- Approved a request by Boise State University to issue a request for proposals for design-build services to begin the North End Zone expansion project at Albertsons Stadium. The design and planning phase of the project is not to exceed \$2.5 million, which will be funded using Boise State Athletic Department reserve funds. After the design and planning phase is complete, Boise State will request approval from the Board to begin construction, which is estimated to cost \$32 - \$40 million.
- Approved Boise State University's request to enter into a five-year agreement with a private developer to become the sole leaser of a student housing facility to be located adjacent Boise State on the west side of campus. The agreement includes an option allowing Boise State to purchase the facility after the third year of the agreement for \$52.5 million. The facility must be ready for occupancy by August 2024.

- Approved a new multi-year contract for Idaho State University Head Men’s Basketball Coach Ryan Looney. Looney will be paid \$123,000 per year and will be eligible for supplemental compensation based on the team’s performance in the classroom and on the basketball court. The contract runs until May 2027.
- The Board also approved a multi-year agreement for Idaho State’s new Head Women’s Volleyball Coach Sean Carter. Carter’s annual salary will be \$78,000 and includes supplemental pay based on his team’s performance in academics and on the volleyball court. The contract runs until January 2026.

The two-day regular Board meeting was held on the Lewis-Clark State College campus in Lewiston.

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