



For Immediate Release

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Article: Public Education Fares Well this Legislative Session

By Kurt Liebich, President, Idaho State Board of Education

The 1st Regular Session of the 67th Idaho Legislature has concluded and the overall outcome for public education in Idaho is positive.

Our K-12 educators and staff will see increased funding, and our higher education institutions are getting much needed capital improvement dollars to maintain campus infrastructure.

In particular, the Legislature approved funding that will greatly expand career-technical education (CTE) capabilities and opportunities in both secondary and postsecondary public education.

Governor Brad Little's Idaho Launch initiative will provide up to \$8,000 to high school graduates to pursue career-technical education certificates, attend community college or complete workforce training for in-demand careers. This will also extend the reach of the Opportunity Scholarships for students attending Idaho four-year institutions.

State Superintendent Debbie Critchfield's Career Ready Students program earmarks \$50 million to expand CTE programs available to middle and high school students in rural Idaho. The one-time funding will be used to build and equip CTE facilities at schools throughout our state.

Idaho's public schools' budget will increase overall by 2% next year including an historic 16.4% increase in state funding. The budget includes \$171 million in additional pay for teachers to help attract and retain Idaho educators.

Other noteworthy education legislation that became law include:

- \$100 million for school districts and charters to increase classified staff pay, which includes secretaries, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and other essential support staff.
- \$54 million in additional discretionary funding for districts and charters to use according to local needs.
- \$10 million for classroom technology, infrastructure, and instructional management systems.
- \$4.9 million for teacher professional development including support and training for teachers who work with students identified as having characteristics of Dyslexia.
- [HB 92](#) makes it a requirement for all high schools to teach a class in financial literacy. Students will learn the basics of real-world personal finance and how to make sound financial decisions in their everyday lives. This class will fulfill a graduation requirement for financial literacy.
- [HB 163](#) codifies parental rights to facilitate communication between parents and schools. The bill establishes uniform parental rights in public schools statewide.
- The College of Western Idaho received almost \$900,000 to expand its capacity for nursing and STEM students, and for student outreach and recruitment.

Now that the legislative session is behind us, I look forward to working with stakeholders and legislators during the interim to craft strategy and legislation to implement enrollment-based funding for public schools on a permanent basis next session.

For three years now, we used the Board's temporary rulemaking authority to use enrollment rather than average daily attendance to calculate state funding for

public schools and it worked extremely well during the pandemic and after to stabilize funding for schools.

Finally, I'll close by thanking the Idaho Senate for confirming Dr. David Hill to another term on the Idaho State Board of Education.

Dr. Hill is a noted scientist and mathematician. He is a retired deputy director for science and technology at the Idaho National Laboratory and has been invaluable as a member of the State Board.

I, and the other members of the Board, look forward to continuing to benefit from Dr. Hill's expertise and insight as we work to support and improve public education in Idaho.

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