



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 8, 2024  
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## **CRITCHFIELD APPLAUDS SCHOOL FACILITIES EMPHASIS OUTLINED IN STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS**

*Critchfield: Governor's Priorities for Public Education Budget Align with and Complement  
Department of Education Priorities*

(BOISE) – Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield is applauding a plan laid out today by Governor Brad Little to increase state support for local school facilities.

In his annual State of the State address, Governor Little said he will ask state lawmakers to approve a plan that would send \$2 billion over the next decade to local schools around the state to improve facilities.

“In recent years the state has focused on supporting educators by increasing salaries, improving their health insurance and adding money to school budgets for support staff,” Critchfield said. “Now, the time is right to put that same emphasis on the buildings where our students learn. I appreciate that Governor Little recognizes the need and is making it a priority.”

Specifically, Governor Little’s proposal would invest \$2 billion to help local districts build new facilities and maintain existing ones. The measure would reduce the burden on local taxpayers by sending more state tax dollars back to local communities. It would be the largest investment in school facilities in state history.

“Additionally, my top priority is making sure that the record amount of funding promised to our public schools the last two years ends up getting to those public schools,” Critchfield added.

The state’s move back to an attendance-based funding formula following the end of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a \$162 million gap in what’s expected to be delivered to schools this year. Critchfield has pledged to work with the governor and state lawmakers to pass legislation that will see those promises through.

Governor Little also prioritized student mental health in today's address. Critchfield's budget includes a request for tools that can help local schools identify students whose mental health is suffering and assist them in supporting those students' parents.

"Part of my first year in office was spent convening a behavioral health working group to determine how the state can play a supportive role in helping our students who are suffering," Critchfield said. "Our kids are in a tough spot right now and I'm appreciative that Governor Little supports these needs."

Critchfield will detail some of her additional priorities in a video to be released Tuesday, January 9.

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