



SHERRI YBARRA, ED.S.
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

650 W. STATE STREET, 2ND FLOOR
BOISE, IDAHO 83702
(208) 332-6800 OFFICE / 711 TRS
WWW.SDE.IDAHO.GOV

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, Sept. 24, 2021
www.sde.idaho.gov

Media Contact:
Kristin Rodine
Public Information Officer
208-332-6807
krodine@sde.idaho.gov

SDE to distribute funds to help schools, districts ease staffing shortages

(BOISE) – Critical shortages of substitute teachers, bus drivers and other staff are stressing school districts and charter schools throughout Idaho, and a new program administered by the State Department of Education is now available to help, Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra announced Thursday.

“This is essential to maintaining the quality of education we offer and safely continuing in-person learning,” the superintendent said. “I am grateful to Gov. Brad Little for allocating this money from the state’s federal COVID relief funds, and my staff is happy to connect districts and schools with the resources they need.”

“Districts and charter schools need money to bring in more substitute teachers to fill in for those who are sick and also to recruit for increasingly hard-to-fill positions such as bus drivers and paraprofessionals,” Superintendent Ybarra said, noting that a shortage of substitute teachers was one of the key issues mentioned by members of her Student Advisory Council this week. “Districts and schools may use the money to increase pay rates and provide supplementary pay according to local needs.”

Districts and charter schools can apply for grant reimbursement funds, and learn about available reimbursement amounts to districts and charter schools, through the State Department of Education.

Gov. Little announced Sept. 10 that he set aside \$10 million in the state’s federal COVID relief funds as recruitment grants to help schools hire the people they need to continue in-person learning despite pandemic-driven staff shortages. The governor also unveiled a new program to enable state employees to help fill the need for substitute teachers.

“Employees of my department and other Idaho executive branch agencies now can get paid time off to serve as substitute teachers, further helping schools and districts,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “They will not have to use their existing vacation leave for this.”

Eligible state employees can get more information, including an application form and a spreadsheet with contacts for local school districts and charter schools, at this [Idaho Department of Human Resources site](#). Employees should reach out to districts and meet all school district hiring requirements and screening requirements before requesting time off, and paid leave for this purpose will be limited to 16 hours per pay period.

Anyone interested in becoming a substitute teacher can access free training modules through a partnership between Superintendent Ybarra's team and the Idaho Digital Learning Academy [on the SDE website](#). Prospective substitutes also should reach out to the districts and charter schools in their area to be added to their local lists of substitutes.

###