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## **Superintendent Ybarra outlines plans in JFAC budget presentation**

(BOISE) -- Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra outlined her vision for the future of Idaho's public schools Thursday morning in her budget presentation to the Legislature's Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee.

Superintendent Ybarra's \$1.9 billion state general fund request for Idaho's public schools in fiscal 2020 includes plans to continue and expand successful efforts to improve teacher pay, offer mastery-based education in more Idaho schools, and help high school students throughout the state prepare for college and career through advanced opportunities.

New to the public schools budget this session is Keep Idaho Students Safe, or KISS -- the student safety initiative Superintendent Ybarra introduced last spring. Requested support for the multi-pronged initiative includes a \$19 million supplemental request to immediately help districts across the state address pressing local safety issues as well as social-emotional student needs and trauma-informed teaching strategies.

"Keeping our students safe is a top priority for parents, educators, lawmakers and State Department of Education staff," Superintendent Ybarra said. "It's a massive responsibility, and one we take to heart."

"If students don't feel safe at school, it's harder for them to concentrate, learn and succeed," she said. "The KISS initiative is an essential part of reaching our department's prime goal of preparing all Idaho children to persevere in life and be ready for college and careers."

KISS-related requests include \$1.4 million for development and implementation of educator and staff training, with \$410,000 of that funding included in the 2019 supplemental and the remainder requested for the 2020 budget year.

And Superintendent Ybarra is asking for \$101,300 to add a full-time crisis prevention counselor to the State Department of Education staff to help schools prevent, prepare for and respond to risk behaviors and crises. This is the only new staff position included in the budget request.

Other key items in the 2020 public schools budget request include strategic investments in Idaho schools to attract and retain teachers, provide more personalized instruction to students, improve Idaho students' math skills and understanding, and more:

- Working to reduce Idaho's teacher shortage, attract new teachers and retain experienced educators with Career Ladder pay increases for all teachers, especially the veteran teachers whose experience and expertise is crucial to enhancing Idaho education. The budget request also calls for funding the first year of master educator premiums, which would net qualified applicants an additional \$4,000 a year for three years.
- Creating a "teacher pipeline" to help rural and remote school districts find and keep teachers for hard-to-fill positions. The superintendent seeks \$980,000 to support districts with the greatest need.
- Expansion of mastery-based education, which has been highly successful in many Idaho schools. The superintendent seeks \$1.4 million to expand the approach to more communities, giving students a more engaging atmosphere in which they advance by mastering the subject matter.
- Providing an additional \$1.1 million for Idaho's math initiative, establishing six additional full-time regional math specialists, particularly at the secondary level, to support math teachers in boosting student achievement in a content area that is crucial to a growing number of STEM careers.
- Enhancing the already wildly successful advanced opportunities program with an additional \$3 million to help students pursue their futures while still in high school and save their families money, earning college credits and in many cases associate's degrees before graduating from high school.

"The public schools budget is not a cost but an investment in the lives and futures of Idaho's children," Superintendent Ybarra said. "I am encouraged by Gov. Little placing education funding at the top of his priorities, and by the engagement and commitment of new leadership and other lawmakers."

Altogether, Superintendent Ybarra's 2020 public schools budget request represents a 6.8 percent increase in general fund spending from the current year's budget – if that 2019 budget is supplemented by the requested KISS funding. Without that supplemental, the requested 2020 general fund budget represents an 8 percent increase from 2019. Gov. Brad Little calls for a 6.1 percent increase in public schools funding, echoing many of the superintendent's priorities.

"There are many important and competing demands for the state's resources, and like a family, Idaho's government must live within its means," Superintendent Ybarra said. "My staff and I have worked hard to create a lean, fiscally responsible budget that meets Idaho's needs, and I look forward to further discussions and collaboration on next year's budget."

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**Resources:** Download the [superintendent's JFAC presentation](#). To [read her budget requests](#) go to this link, select "Education" and click on "Public School Support."

**Attached:** Photo of Superintendent Ybarra giving her JFAC presentation.