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Superintendent Ybarra applauds JFAC action on budget for public schools

(BOISE) – Bonuses and pay increases for Idaho’s public school teachers, staff and administrators, along with funding for all-day kindergarten, are top budget priorities for Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra that were addressed Tuesday morning when the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee set the proposed fiscal 2023 budget for Idaho K-12 schools.

“This budget, once approved by the House and Senate, represents an historic investment in public schools – an increase of \$233 million from the state general fund, which brings next year’s appropriation to \$2.3 billion,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “I am thrilled that this budget continues to make support for public schools such a high priority.”

“The morning got off to a great start with approval of \$1,000 bonuses for this current school year for our hard-working teachers, support staff and administrators, an investment of \$36.7 million in pandemic relief funds,” the superintendent said. “This move, one of my top priorities, recognizes that Idaho’s K-12 educators truly are essential workers who continue to go above and beyond for Idaho students.”

Another approved supplemental request for the current budget year provides \$22.4 million for the temporary shift from average daily attendance to enrollment-based funding for the current school year. Fulfilling another top priority for Superintendent Ybarra, the career ladder was funded for fiscal 2023, and an additional \$36.5 million is included for one-time compensation for educators.

“I’m especially grateful that the budget-setting committee approved a 7 percent salary increase for classified school staff for the coming budget year,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “We must continue to improve the pay for school support staff.”

The fiscal 2023 budget also includes a \$105.4 million increase in health insurance funding for public school employees, as well as \$75.5 million in one-time funding to allow schools to opt in to the state health insurance plan.

“Offering competitive health insurance benefits is essential in recruiting and retaining teachers and school staff,” Superintendent Ybarra said.

Another top priority in the superintendent’s budget request was funding for full-day kindergarten, and the budget committee approved \$46.7 in additional literacy funds that could be used for all-day kindergarten.

“I look forward to working with lawmakers to pass legislation to provide schools with the flexibility to offer all-day kindergarten, an essential step toward improving Idaho students’ early literacy,” Superintendent Ybarra said.

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