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Superintendent Ybarra submits fiscal 2023 budget request for Idaho public schools

(BOISE) – Boosting Idaho students’ reading readiness, continued support for essential resources for students and improving salaries for teachers and support staff are top priorities in Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra’s public schools budget request for next year, Superintendent Ybarra announced Wednesday.

The superintendent’s proposed budget includes \$39.3 million to provide the option of full-day kindergarten to all incoming kindergarteners who are assessed as below grade level in reading readiness. That’s estimated to be approximately 66 percent of all kindergarteners, based on a three-year average of scores on the fall statewide reading assessment, the Idaho Reading Indicator. A related budget request of \$100,000 would provide a screening assessment to identify students who would benefit most from the option of full-day kindergarten.

“We want to provide our children with the best start possible as they enter public school for the first time, and offering the option of full-day learning for students who need more support will help ensure their future success in school,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “This proposal also follows through on the governor’s task force recommendation to prioritize full-day kindergarten funding for students with the greatest need.”

The superintendent’s proposed public schools budget seeks approximately \$2.22 billion from the state’s general fund, an increase of 8.5 percent over the current fiscal year’s appropriation of approximately \$2.05 billion. Of that increase, 4.9 percent is necessary to fund nondiscretionary spending that supports programs already required in Idaho law. Those programs include Advanced Opportunities, which provides secondary students with the funding to take dual credit and other college and career courses and exams.

“Providing opportunities and resources for Idaho students is more important now than ever before as we work to ensure students are on track after the disruptions of the past two school years,” Superintendent Ybarra said.

The proposed public schools budget includes \$82.8 million to increase funding for the Career Ladder, an increase of 7.8 percent for growth and movement on the career ladder for teachers and pupil service staff, including an additional step for veteran teachers.

“Continuing to build out the Career Ladder is vital in our efforts to recruit and retain skilled teachers in Idaho, where salaries still lag behind those in some neighboring states,” Superintendent Ybarra said.

“I’m also asking for a 6 percent increase in base salary funding for school support staff, who also play essential roles in our children’s education.”

In addition, the superintendent is asking for a 5.3 percent increase in operational funding for school districts and charter schools to help them with increased health insurance costs and rising inflation.

The public schools budget also includes approximately \$622 million in federal COVID relief funding that flows through the State Department of Education to local school districts and charter schools.

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Attachments: Budget summary documents