

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 1, 2023
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Critchfield Submits Request for Idaho's K-12 Education Budget

(BOISE) – Superintendent Debbie Critchfield has submitted her annual budget request for Idaho's K-12 education budget. Each year, the request for the state schools' budget is due to the Governor's Office by September 1.

Idaho's K-12 budget is one of the state's largest allocations of public money. The spending plan—along with the State Department of Education's annual operating budget—is Critchfield's first budget proposal to be submitted to Governor Brad Little since she took office in January.

The K-12 budget proposal comes amidst an effort by the superintendent to modernize the state's outdated school funding formula. This summer, Critchfield convened a group of education stakeholders to begin addressing key updates to the 1994 formula, which includes members of the Governor's Office, legislators, educators, district administrators and business managers. With input from the working group, this proposal moves Idaho towards weighted, per-student funding with an emphasis on investing in student success while fully funding core constitutional commitments like staffing, operations and student learning and achievement.

Critchfield's request builds on last year's record increase in the K-12 budget by adding approximately \$120 million in additional state general funding. Highlights include:

- Consolidating the K-12 budget into three budgets aligned with the state's constitutional obligations and supporting local flexibility.
- Converting Current Discretionary Funding into Per-Student, Weighted Discretionary Funding.
- Building Outcomes-Based Funding into the budget that pays for growth and proficiency in the core learning areas of early literacy, math and college and career readiness.
- Proposing a Student Teacher Pay incentive, with particular focus on incentives for rural, remote, and underserved schools.

This budget also supports the department's existing commitments to implementing the fifth and final year of the career ladder, maintaining LEA staff salary increases from last year and continuing ongoing funding increases to LEAs to cover health insurance costs.

“This K-12 budget request is a critical first step in the continuation of the efforts to update our state’s 30-year school funding formula,” Critchfield said. “We’re taking a phased approach, providing stability in supporting school core operations while increasing flexibility, transparency and accountability to taxpayers.”

Work on updating the formula will continue throughout the fall and during the 2024 legislative session. The SDE is also supportive of the efforts of legislators on a package of school facilities legislation and will support additional investments going toward these efforts when work is complete.

“It will be an incremental effort,” said Critchfield. “However, I’m excited about the engagement and the commitment to come to a consensus that modernizes our formula and, most importantly, works for every Idaho student.”

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