



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 17, 2024
www.sde.idaho.gov

Media Contact:
Maggie T. Reynolds
Public Information Officer
208-332-6976
mreynolds@sde.idaho.gov

Critchfield: Administrators Lead the Way to Whole-School Success

From Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield

(BOISE) - Like any successful business, an effective leader and CEO drives the plan to meet desired outcomes and goals. The superintendents and principals in our schools are no different.

October is National Principals Month and an opportunity to highlight the work and roles our school administrators, principals and superintendents hold in their districts and charters. The job description has morphed over time, but fundamentally these people are viewed as the educational leaders. For our rural, remote and charter schools, superintendents and principals wear many hats. We have administrators who drive buses, coach teams, take on recess duties and fix broken down boilers. On top of managing, leading and evaluating, our public school administrators are expected to drive academic outcomes, develop their school's culture, mentor new teachers, increase educator pipelines, support student and staff wellbeing and partner for community-based supports. As teacher responsibilities have expanded, so too have those for administrators.

When we study data about the growth in the number of administrators over the last 10 years, our statewide average increase is a mere 2.7 percent. Again, this is a statewide average, but even so, the overall increase is quite low compared to others in our region and even nationally.

However, when we analyze current trends and needs, I am concerned about administrator pipelines that provide our districts and charters with the experienced and knowledgeable leaders they need to be successful. With improvements in teacher pay over the last decade, the difference between teacher and administrator pay for most of our districts and charters is not significant and because administrators have more contracted days, the daily pay rate is actually less. When making decisions about these leadership roles, an important factor is the additional cost of attaining the necessary training requirements, which averages about \$12,000.

I have initiated a conversation with the State Board of Education to review the current Idaho requirements for building and district administrators. We are listening to school board members

Debbie Critchfield, Superintendent of Public Instruction
(208) 332-6800 | 650 W. State St., Boise, ID 83702 | sde.idaho.gov

and seeing the challenging hiring environments in our communities around the state. These state requirements haven't been comprehensively reviewed for years and I believe that Idaho can do better to prepare our aspiring leaders.

There are many ways to do this, including recognizing out-of-state certifications, competency-based learning and apprenticeships. We repeatedly hear that experience in key areas of professional knowledge is the most valuable trait for new administrators and for maintaining leaders in their jobs.

I welcome a statewide discussion on how we encourage educators to become quality administrators, what we ask them to do to become qualified and how we support them in carrying out these essential roles.

We hold high expectations for our school leaders, and proper training and preparation will help our administrators and superintendents meet them. When we invest in leadership development, we will improve the overall educational system in our communities.

###