

A PUBLICATION OF THE IDAHO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

summer
2022

SLATE

magazine



Home Grown Leadership

p. 36





Supporting Education Through Activities

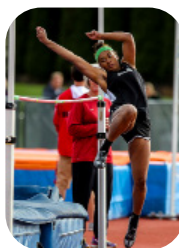


MORE THAN A GAME

- Students involved in activities average fewer absences per year than the general student population
- Participation in high school activities is a valuable part of the overall high school experience
- Students who compete in high school activity programs achieve higher grades and have better attendance
- School activities teach lessons that include citizenship, teamwork, motivation, cooperation and self-discipline
- Those who participate in activity programs are less likely to have discipline referrals than the general student population
- High schools that offer multiple activities meet the needs of a wide variety of the student population
- High school activities are fun!



Students Now Citizens Forever



SLATE

magazine

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MISSION:

The Idaho School Boards Association advocates for Idaho students and public education with leadership and service for local school boards.

VISION:

Empower Local Boards for Student Success

STANDARDS:

1. Vision and Mission
2. Continuous Improvement
3. Advocacy
4. Accountability
5. Community Engagement
6. Board Operations and Professional Development

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magazine

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2022 ISBA CALENDAR:

July 4	Independence Day • ISBA Office Closed
September 5	Labor Day • ISBA Office Closed
September 9-10	Executive Board Meeting • Boise, ID
September	Region Meetings • Dates & Locations (TBD)
November 9-11	ISBA Annual Convention • Coeur d'Alene, ID

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COMMITTEES THAT ISBA REPRESENTS OUR MEMBERS ON

The ISBA staff and members serve on a variety of committees, councils, and boards in an effort to provide statewide representation and a voice for all members on a variety of topics. Here is a list of just a few of the committees we serve:

1. Governor's K-12 Emergency Council
2. Professional Standards Commission
3. Idaho High School Activities Association
4. State Technical Assistance Team
5. Accountability & Oversight Committee
6. Vaccine Advisory Council
7. Ready Idaho (Early Childhood Coalition)
8. Bias and Sensitivity Committee
9. Commission for Education Excellence
10. Committee for Educator Preparation Standards
11. Idaho School Safety & Security Advisory Board
12. Idaho's Teacher of the Year Selection Committee
13. Consortium of State School Boards Associations
14. Keep it Local Idaho

2021-2022 ISBA Executive Board:

OFFICERS:

The Idaho School Boards Association is governed by a 22-member Executive Board which includes four officers and two representatives from each of the nine regions of ISBA.



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Jason Knopp
Melba SD #136



President-Elect
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- REGION 6
- REGION 7
- REGION 8

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Region 7 Vice Chair
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Region 9 Chair
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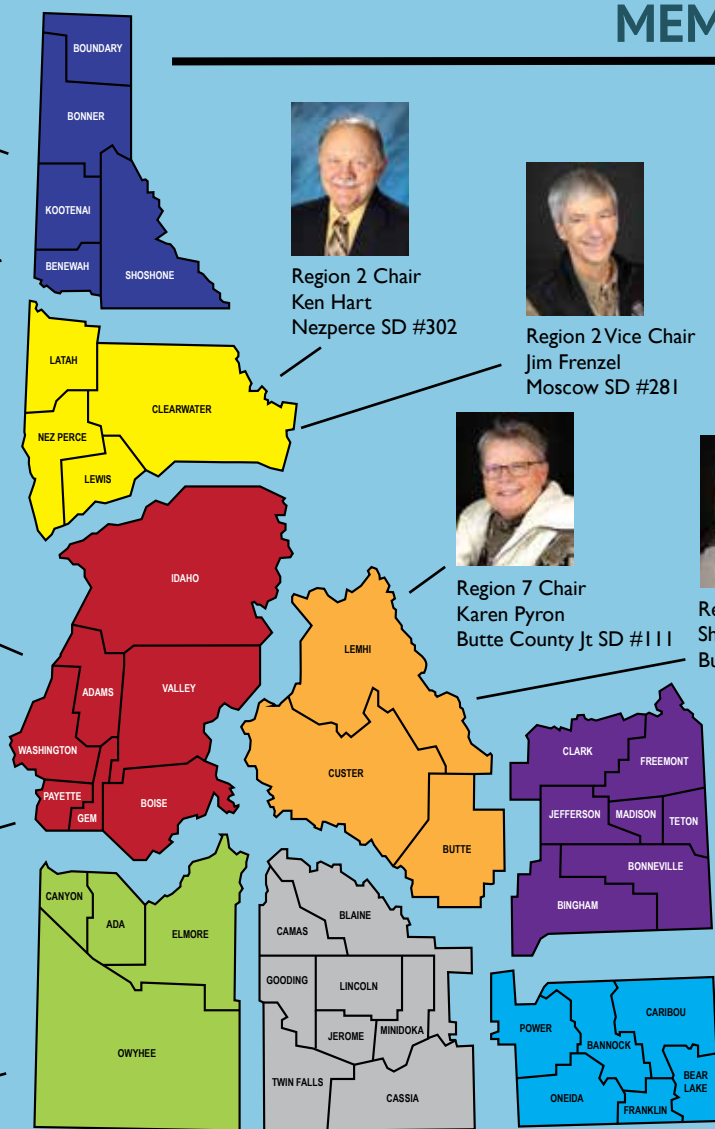
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Region 6 Vice Chair
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FIRST THINGS FIRST

By Misty Swanson / ISBA Executive Director

THE ART OF...

LISTENING

In my observations over the years, boards that listen are better boards. And the same message rings true for any nonprofit organization. Just like strong school boards — ISBA is committed to hearing from our members — listening to the challenges you are facing, hearing your successes and accomplishments, and learning from each of you what services we can and should provide.

Winston Churchill said, “Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”

I believe listening is the path forward in these turbulent times as board members, but also as engaged citizens, colleagues, friends, and family. I have observed that boards who excel at listening are far more effective than the boards that do all the talking and hardly listen at all.

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In my 16 years with the Idaho School Boards Association, I have had countless individual conversations with school board members, assisted approximately 60 districts with their Superintendent searches, and have connected with large audiences on what healthy school board governance looks like. I have watched from the sidelines at community meet & greets for parents and patrons to meet their future Superintendent. It is truly special to see an entire community come out on a Tuesday night and grab a cookie and some juice for the opportunity to share their concerns and insights with board members – to witness how invested our community members are in their school districts and charter schools.

This year marks ISBA's 80th Anniversary. I have been reflecting on the evolution of this association and our accomplishments along the way. There have been many achievements – from our first annual meeting in 1942 to the first-time trustees from around the state gathered in masse in support of additional public education funding in 1961, to 2014 when ISBA became the first school boards association in the U.S. to accept charter school boards as full members.

I have also been reflecting on good governance and how to best serve our growing membership. Of all the governance improvement strategies our association has recommended over the past years, improved listening continues to have a profoundly positive impact on the effectiveness of governance in school boardrooms. While compassionate listening is not without its challenges, the rewards are impressive.

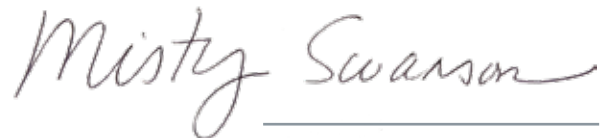
Good listening skills in my professional career have granted me the opportunity to better understand stakeholders, find common ground, and to identify the changing needs and challenges of our members.

Membership engagement and listening continues to be our goal moving forward. We offer services that provide each of you opportunities to offer feedback and connect with fellow board members. We have also launched new initiatives to hear from our members monthly, on demand, or through scheduled training. Here are just a few of the ways we are committed to listening:

- **Monthly Meet-Up:** Each month we offer a virtual meeting to hear in-the-field updates, share best practices, and respond to current challenges. If you have not joined us yet, consider joining our next meet-up and sharing highlights from your district or charter school.
- **Listening Tour:** As Executive Director, I will continue to travel the state and visit board meetings and hear the good work taking place in your district or charter school.

- **Board Development:** Our trainers and consultants take each professional development opportunity to better learn the unique challenges you're facing and offer guided facilitation to help you grow as a board.
- **Communications Focus Group Interviews:** We want to hear from our members on what information you'd like to receive from ISBA. We will be organizing a series of focus group interviews to hear directly from our members. Stay tuned.
- **Member Consultation:** You don't have to wait for an event, a survey, or a focus group interview to share your feedback, seek advice, or share what is happening in your schools. ISBA prides itself on offering real-time assistance.

Listening is an art, but it is also a leadership skill, and far too often it is left off the job description. School board members that listen are able to create trustworthy relationships that are transparent and result in future growth for the district or school. Listening is a core value of ISBA. We hope you embrace the high art of listening; the success of our schools depends on it.



Misty Swanson
Executive Director
Idaho School Boards Association



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Jason Knopp / ISBA President



Lessons from a Firefighter

Every June, the Idaho School Boards Association celebrates School Board Appreciation month in honor of the hundreds of locally elected public servants, who serve on their local board for the betterment of all children, now and in the future. Sadly, over the past two years, school boards have been featured negatively in many local news stories and front-page articles, both nationally and here in Idaho. Whether it is contentious school board elections, heated board rooms, or decisions regarding local levies, school boards have been front and center.

Many people don't know this about me, but I wear several hats for the Melba community. When I'm not holding a gavel, I'm serving as a firefighter for the Nampa Fire Protection District. And this is true for many Idaho school board members—we are dairy farmers, loggers, real estate agents, business owners, ranchers, teachers, grandparents, and parents. And while we wear multiple hats in our day jobs, we try and put on a collective hat when we do the hard work of leading our school districts.

As President of the Idaho School Boards Association, I feel compelled this year to peel back the curtain and share what school board members really do, who we are, why we serve, and what lessons I have learned along the way as both a school board member and a firefighter.

Over the years, my training as a firefighter has helped me become a better school leader and board member. For many of us the last 24 months has felt like putting out one fire after another—but the best of school governance requires a coordinated effort to

plan, prepare, and execute for a range of different scenarios. Like firefighters—school board members must respond in an assured, controlled, and well-rehearsed manner no matter the disaster.

School board members have more in common with firefighters than you might think.

Good Board Members:

Build High-Performance and Focused Teams:

In the fire service there is no room for individual heroics—we operate as a close-knit unit where everyone knows their responsibility and is expected to perform their role. The school board members that I know and collaborate with work alongside their Superintendent, school staff, teachers, and students to help shape the character and success of our schools. Great boards know and understand their role and responsibility and believe it is better to have a working team than a single political agenda.

Make Informed Decisions:

There may be smoke, but that does not mean the fire is flaming. A healthy board bases decisions on facts, not gut reactions. The school board is a local governmental body that can take action only by a majority vote at a legally called public meeting. The individual board member's major responsibility is to study issues facing the district or charter school, evaluate needs and resources, and, after fair consideration, vote in the best interest of all students at board meetings.

Are Adaptable:

Over the last two years, school board members have displayed their tenacity and skilled crisis management. Good boards have a goal in mind but are flexible and quick to adapt under pressure. The Melba School District and many other boards throughout Idaho have worked under pressure in partnership with families, school staff, and other stakeholders to keep our students safe and healthy. We have reimagined the possibilities of learning and have prepared for different education scenarios along the way.

Are Lifelong Learners:

Fire crews are committed to continuous training and professional development and growth. School board members are lifelong learners at heart. To be adept at solving problems, board members spend a substantial amount of time analyzing a situation from multiple perspectives. They participate in many hours of professional development to keep them informed and knowledgeable of current issues and the latest school leadership trends. School board meetings are just a small fraction of the time and energy that school board members devote to their schools and districts. School board members attend training, conferences, and on-going professional development.

Thank Your School Board Members:

Someone once said, "Firefighters save hearts and homes." The same can be said of school board members. They are everyday citizens whose decisions affect our children – what they learn, who will teach them, and what kinds of facilities house their classrooms. Our system of local school districts and boards of trustees epitomizes participatory government – when citizens are elected from their area to make educational decisions based on the needs and expectations of their communities. School board members exemplify local citizen control and decision-making in education. They volunteer hundreds of hours and an immeasurable amount of energy to assure our schools are providing the best education possible for the children of our community.



Jason Knopp
President

Idaho School Boards Association



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STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

By Sherri Ybarra / Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction

Big Money, Great Responsibility, and Opportunities Ahead



Seven Idaho lawmakers from both parties and differing points of view gathered on the Statehouse steps with Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra March 24 to celebrate adoption of new content standards to replace the long-controversial "Common Core" standards. It was a great moment near the end of a legislation session marked by collaboration, cooperation, and commitment to education.

This year's legislative session brought historic investment in Idaho public schools – a general fund appropriation of \$2.3 billion, up more than \$256 million from the appropriation one year earlier.

Great! But this massive infusion of funds carries equally high expectations from the Legislature (and the public) for impressive results in repairing learning loss, boosting student achievement and closing in on our goal of making sure all students can read at grade level by the end of third grade.

To paraphrase Voltaire (and Spiderman's uncle): With great money comes great responsibility.

We will be under pressure to show results, but I'm confident our schools and districts are up to the task. My department will continue to partner with you to make sure you have what you need.

Unlike last year, this session was not dominated by discussion of federal COVID funds. But that funding continues to be vital to school operations as we emerge from the pandemic. I commend districts' wise, strategic use of COVID relief funds to reduce learning loss through high doses of tutoring, increased academic time, and enhanced intervention.

I expect that during next year's legislative session we will see intense focus on how you used your funds and what was gained from those expenditures. I also expect those results will be impressive.

The same is true for the session's big boost in early literacy funding, which jumped from \$26 million to \$72.8 million, opening up options and opportunities for districts to develop literacy intervention programs that best meet local needs – including offering optional full-day kindergarten, one of my goals for this session.

That's more than \$46 million in new early literacy dollars focused on making sure all students learn to read by third grade so they can read to learn throughout school and beyond.

We also have a new law designed to detect and address characteristics of dyslexia, providing more screening for students and training for teachers. That is a big part of our K-3 efforts, identifying students with this learning challenge early in their education and offering targeted interventions so they can learn to read on an even playing field with their peers.

One lesson from the past couple of legislative sessions is how important it is for stakeholder groups to work together. We have been successful in getting compromise on bills that could have been very problematic – and we have done it by working together.

We also have had commendable success in weathering the pandemic. A national "Pandemic Scorecard" ranked Idaho third among all states in how our education outcomes withstood COVID-19, pairing with our No. 4-ranked economic response to propel our state to an overall ranking of fourth in the nation despite considerably lower marks in the categories of social wellbeing and health.

Our kids outperformed students in most neighboring states and their peers across the country. That's encouraging, but not surprising, because for the most part we kept our schools open during the pandemic.

You have done an amazing job of supporting our students, and although we definitely need to address our learning loss – especially for our English language learners and students with disabilities – we haven't seen the devastating impacts on performance that many states experienced.

However, there's no doubt that the mental health of many students suffered during the pandemic – in Idaho and across the nation. Last fall, the American Academy of Pediatrics declared a national emergency, citing "soaring rates of mental health challenges among children, adolescents, and their families over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbating the situation that existed prior to the pandemic."

And this spring the CDC released survey results showing how the pandemic has impacted high school students' mental health. According to this new data, in 2021 more than a third of high school students reported poor mental health during the pandemic, and 44 percent reported persistent sadness and hopelessness over the past year.

Not surprising to educators, the results also show that feeling cared for and supported at school has a vital positive effect on students. Youth who felt connected to adults and peers at school were significantly less likely to report persistent sadness or hopelessness than those who did not.

Idaho is not immune. Youth suicide is a serious problem here, and the most recent Idaho Youth Risk Behavior Survey found more students – 39 percent – reported feeling sad or hopeless than at any time in the previous decade. About 22 percent of the surveyed students said they had seriously considered attempting suicide.

We all know that supporting the mental, emotional and social wellbeing of our children is imperative. It is the right thing to do, and it comes naturally to educators.

We need to be very clear about what

social emotional learning means to us. It's not about "indoctrinating" students; it's about helping them learn self-control, self-awareness, problem solving, strong interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making. It's helping students learn how to cope with life challenges and succeed – academically, socially, and professionally.

Social emotional learning has been a priority for my department and schools throughout Idaho for several years, with numerous programs geared to support students' emotional wellness and detect and address warning signs.

And it's helping educators and staff understand what to watch for and how to intervene when necessary.

Again this year, we've heard some lawmakers and others loudly proclaim that our public schools are failing families, that our public education system is broken, and the only solution is to allow taxpayer money to be diverted from public education to private education.

This kind of rhetoric is a huge disservice to students, parents, educators, and school staff. It comes from a vocal minority with an agenda, but we can't ignore them.

We saw two bills emerge this session that would have created vouchers or education savings accounts, allowing tax dollars to be used for private education. And those won't be the last such bills we see. Already, there are discussions about crafting a new funding formula to accomplish this.

We must continue to ensure that public education is the No. 1 choice for Idaho students and families.

And, to do that, we must listen to dissenting voices and look for common ground.

Some opportunities this past session came through enhancing civics standards and replacing the controversial "Common Core" with new math and ELA standards that were developed with educators in the lead and adopted with strong support from lawmakers and education organizations alike.

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Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sherri Ybarra, delivered her K3 Reading Summit speech via zoom with the 13 Student Advisory Council members gathered behind her.



More than 300 K-3 teachers from across Idaho filled Boise State University's Stueckle Sky Center May 2 for the SDE's second annual K-3 Reading Summit: Set Your Sights on the Science of Reading.

We also managed to get through the session without another bill on critical race theory.

As I have traveled the state, I have dropped in on many government and history classes, and I have not seen CRT – in any of its varied definitions – being taught. Kids are learning about the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and they're being encouraged to question their teachers and form their own opinions. I have not heard teachers push their own ideas or tell students what to think.

But as I've talked to people across Idaho, I can tell you that the conversation around "indoctrination" is not dying down, and we must address specific concerns as they are brought forward.

One key is to enhance students' civic involvement and their – and their parents' – understanding of civics. The civics standards resolution I co-sponsored with legislators drew overwhelming support from lawmakers, educators, and families. Highlighting our civics standards in a standalone document will give parents and the public easy access to these standards, and encourage public involvement in our upcoming, regularly scheduled review of social studies content standards.

My team is doing the same with our standards for financial literacy, another piece of the social studies standards that prepares students to be responsible, successful members of society.

In addition to providing strong return on public investment, we have some major issues looming before us – notably, how we determine school funding and what we can do about our increasingly run-down collection of public school buildings.

This session we'd hoped for a permanent change to funding based on enrollment instead of attendance, which has been a long-standing recommendation from Governor's task forces and the Legislature. Although that didn't happen, I cast my vote along with my fellow board of education members in April to reinstate the temporary rule to fund based on enrollment for the rest of this year and for next year.

Our state also has unresolved issues about our school funding formula. I am on record in support of changes that simplify the formula and give districts and charters more flexibility – as long as the Legislature funds the transition so that our schools have fiscal stability and won't face a financial cliff a few years down the road.

As for Idaho's aging school facilities, that's a longstanding issue that is now getting a lot of attention, thanks to a new statewide evaluation of Idaho's K-12 public school buildings by the Legislature's Office of Performance Evaluation (OPE).

The 77 school districts that responded to the statewide survey ranked more up to 60 percent of all their school buildings as

either "fair" or "poor." The report estimates it would take \$847 million to get all of the buildings up to "good" condition.

It's no surprise to any of us that the OPE reports the number of districts with supplemental levies has increased substantially, going from 57 districts in 2006 to 92 in 2020. Part of that increase can be explained by the reduction in discretionary funds districts received during that time period.

Idaho ranks near the bottom nationwide for funding school building maintenance – again, no surprise.

As your state superintendent and as a member of the Land Board, I want you to know that I will be working to find ways to tap into the state's Endowment Fund to help address this need and improve K-12 buildings. The endowment board already directs millions of dollars derived from Idaho public land to help public schools, and next year's allocation has been set at more than \$61 million.

I would love to see some of that money used to improve the structures where our children learn. The physical learning environment is important and sends an important message to our kids about how we value them.

Making sure Idaho's children feel valued and supported is the focus of what we all do every day. Thank you for all you do every day.



SDE Offers New Online Resources for Parents & Educators

Meeting with parent groups this winter, and in individual conversations with moms and dads, I kept hearing that parents want to be more engaged with their child's education, but they could use some help with ideas and resources, from child care to advanced opportunities.

Those conversations sparked the idea for my department's new **Parent Resource Toolkit**, a website designed to help connect parents with their child's school and district, as well as a wealth of programs and services. Handy resources include early learning programs, science and math activities, mental health, supports for students with disabilities, Career Technical Education, scholarships, and financial aid. Just go to prtoolkit.org.

I also encourage families and educators to check out our new Dyslexia Resources page, featured in the toolkit with access to providers' directories, a digital library, and links to information on Idaho's new dyslexia education bill, assessments, and more. We'll be adding to and refining this new toolkit throughout the summer and into the school year. Please check it out and let us know what works for you, what could use improvement, and what should be added. Email suggestions to infosuperintendent@sde.idaho.gov.

- Sherri Ybarra, Superintendent of Public Instruction



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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

By Kurt Liebich / President / Idaho State Board of Education

Enrollment Rule Approval Follows a Successful Legislative Session

School boards and administrators statewide are anxious, and rightfully so, about whether they will receive the funding necessary to operate their schools.

The State Board of Education recognizes that and recently took action to ensure that funding will continue to be based on enrollment rather than attendance for another year. At its April Regular Board Meeting in Moscow, the Board approved a temporary rule extending enrollment-based funding until the conclusion of the 2023 legislative session next spring.

We all know how the pandemic has caused school funding to fluctuate in recent years because many parents are choosing to keep their students at home. While most of those students are still enrolled, they would not have been counted in the attendance calculation had the State Board not extended the temporary rule.

As I stated at the Board meeting, it is my intention to work closely with lawmakers during the interim to find a permanent solution. In the meantime, our school districts and charter schools will have budget certainty and stability for another year.

Education Wins

Idaho's public education system scored several wins during the recently concluded 2022 legislative session, and I'd like to thank the legislators and Idaho Governor Brad Little for making historic investments in our students, our schools, and in the dedicated educators throughout our state who keep our system running while dealing with tremendous challenges, especially these past two years.

Idaho's public schools' budget will increase overall by 6.7% next year, including a historic 12.5% increase in state funding. The budget includes \$47 million in added literacy dollars to help young students learn to read by the 3rd grade. These literacy funds will be used by schools to pay for extended time literacy intervention programs such as optional full-time kindergarten to provide literacy intervention to struggling students.



Other noteworthy education legislation that became law includes:

- \$105 million in ongoing funding for school districts and charters to use to improve health insurance plans for teachers and their families, while lowering out-of-pocket costs. This will result in higher take home pay. Educators will also receive \$1,000 bonuses in recognition of their extraordinary efforts since the pandemic began.
- One-time funding for instructional staff and pupil services staff equal to the estimated amount that would have been distributed through the career ladder for one additional year of service and an approximate 7% increase to the salary-based apportionment for school administrators and classified staff.
- Dyslexia screening and training for teachers who work with students identified as having characteristics of dyslexia. House Bill 731 will have a positive impact on thousands of Idaho students affected by dyslexia by identifying characteristics early so that they can receive appropriate interventions to help them learn to read.
- A rural educator incentive program designed to encourage new teachers to work in rural districts by offering funds to help pay student loans or reimburse them for additional education costs such as earning credits to qualify for additional content area teaching endorsements or high-level degrees.
- The Empowering Parents grant program will provide new resources to parents to pay for things such as computers, tutoring, internet connectivity, and other needs for their students to help them succeed academically.
- HB 654 will allow licensed professional counselors or licensed professional clinical counselors to serve as school counselors.
- HB 656 Will allow the placement of teachers from out of state on the career ladder based on years of experience when that experience is equivalent to that of Idaho instructional staff.
- With a record-setting state surplus and an infusion of federal American Rescue Plan dollars, our elected leaders seized an opportunity and made a real difference for public education at all levels. During this legislative session, Governor Little and the majority of legislators demonstrated their commitment to our students and our educators, and I commend them for it.

Proud to team with Idaho schools to design for the future



Pocatello High School Addition, Pocatello



Idaho Fine Arts Academy, Meridian



Hillsdale Elementary School, Meridian

- Architectural Design
- Interior Design
- Master Planning
- Campus Planning
- Programming
- Feasibility Studies
- Energy Efficiency Studies
- Building Evaluation/Code Analysis
- Bond Assistance
- Cost Estimating
- Tenant Improvements
- Construction Administration
- Graphic Design + Branding
- Architectural Visualization

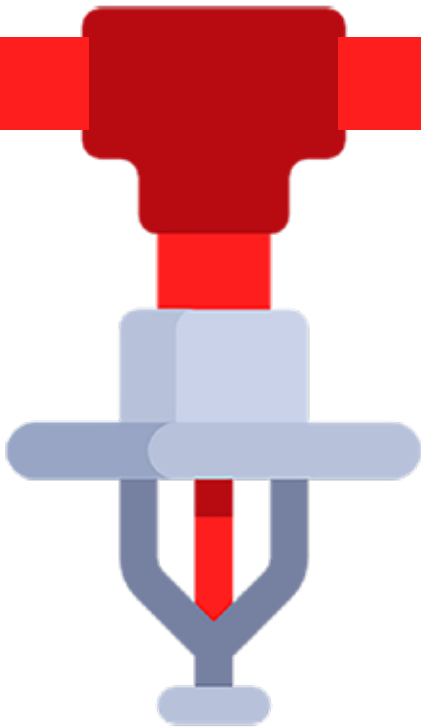
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SAFETY NOTES

By Dane Higdem / Moreton & Company



Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems

Like any mechanical device, automatic sprinkler systems must be properly inspected and maintained to ensure that they will always work as designed if a fire were to break out. In general, the following should be completed as part of your scheduled preventative maintenance for your campus:

- Know where all the control valves are located and inspect them at least once every 30 days to ensure that they are in the fully open position. Unless the valves are all in a room protected by lock and key, the valves should be chained into the open position.
- Inspect all sprinkler heads, and replace any sprinkler head that has been painted, or those that have an obstructive accumulation of dust or other debris.
- Check to ensure that stored items are at least 18 inches below the sprinkler heads to allow for designed discharge patterns.
- Inspect your gyms and multi-purpose rooms to ensure that sprinkler heads that are exposed to errant thrown or kicked balls are protected by wire cages.
- Check all sprinkler piping to ensure that it is properly supported and that nothing has been hung from the pipes.

- Inspect the fire department connections to ensure that they are easily accessible, and that they are provided with protective caps and plugs.
- Maintain an adequate supply of spare sprinkler heads.
- Have your automatic sprinkler system inspected and tested on at least an annual basis by a licensed Automatic Fire Sprinkler Contractor

In addition, for dry pipe systems:

- Ensure that the dry valve room is adequately heated to temperatures of at least 40+ degrees
- Check and record the water and air pressure gauges on at least a weekly basis to the specification provided by the sprinkler valve manufacturer and inspect the compressor for proper operation
- Inspect for low spots as these will collect water, and drain condensation from low- point drains to ensure that they are free of water



SafeSchools

All new school buildings are required by state and local building codes to be equipped with automatic fire sprinkler systems, and for good reason. Automatic fire sprinkler systems are extremely effective in controlling property damage from fires, as almost 90% of all fires are extinguished by just 1 or 2 sprinkler heads in buildings equipped with fire sprinkler systems.

However, automatic fire sprinkler systems can also be an expensive source of property loss due to water damage from improperly inspected or maintained sprinklers, or when they are accidentally allowed to be exposed to freezing temperatures. Although these claims are not as costly as burning down a school, they can still cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. This past winter a middle school in the Magic Valley suffered with extensive water damage caused when the building's dry-pipe sprinkler froze and cracked, resulting in claim costs exceeding \$550,000.

Freeze-ups in wet pipe sprinkler systems occur most often from failure to provide adequate heat. They happen during weekends or other shut down periods when cold weather catches a school unprepared. Thermostats are turned down to save energy, and isolated spots within the building have temperatures that drop to levels where the water freezes in the sprinkler pipe. Pipes that are located by windows, doors, attics, and in crawl spaces are the most prone to freezing.

To prevent frozen automatic sprinkler pipes:

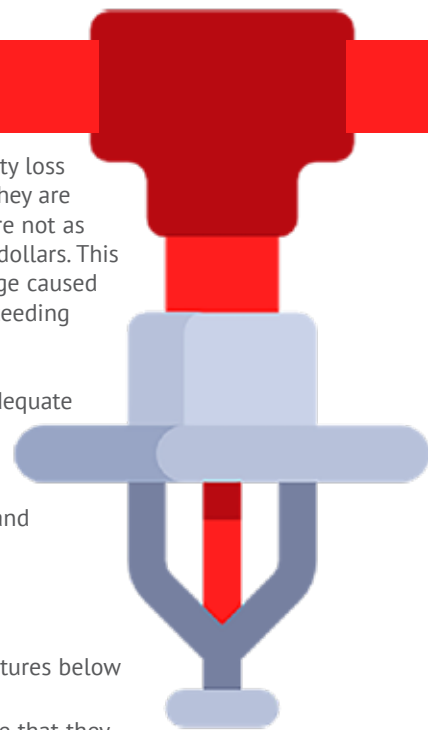
- Provide adequate heating so that no area of the building is exposed to temperatures below 40 degrees
- Pay particular attention to attics, crawl spaces, and false ceiling spaces to ensure that they receive adequate heat
- Maintain a tight building envelope, search for isolated drafts or cold air leaks that could reach sprinkler pipes, and make any necessary repairs
- For dry pipe sprinkler systems, inspect and replace any broken, missing, or loose pipe hangers, as they can create low spots where water can accumulate
- Ensure that air intakes for the compressor are not located where moist warm air is located, as this will condense in pipes and collect in low areas where it may freeze
- Install air dryers between the compressor and sprinkler pipe system to catch any condensation
- Drain valves should be installed at all low points, and opened at least once per month to remove any condensation

There are times when it may be necessary to disable sprinkler or fire alarm systems on a school campus. The probability of a fire or explosion causing major damage is increased whenever a system or alarm is impaired.

Impairment is defined as a shutdown of a fire protection system. Fire protection systems include sprinkler systems, standpipe/hose systems, fire pumps, fire protection water supplies, and special extinguishing systems that are typically found in your cafeterias.

Many large losses in protected properties might otherwise have been small had it not been for an impaired fire sprinkler system. When impairment is planned or occurs accidentally, precautions must be taken to minimize the duration and extent of the impairment, ensure prompt restoration, provide temporary protection and supervision, and reduce hazards in the affected area.

School employees and contractors should follow an impairment procedure whenever it is necessary to disable a fire protection system. This procedure applies to all sprinkler systems, fire suppression systems, and fire alarm systems.



There are three types of impairments: Planned; Emergency; and Hidden.

A Planned Impairment is a scheduled impairment. It may occur during routine preventive maintenance, during facility renovation or new construction.

Emergency Impairments, sometimes called unplanned impairments, occur when an unexpected event impairs the normal function of the protection system. Emergency impairments are the result of a fire accident or damage incurred to the sprinkler system, such as a ruptured or leaking pipe or an interruption of the water supply.

A Hidden Impairment, or concealed impairment, is one which is not known to exist and is, therefore, the most serious type. It occurs when a fire protection system is inadvertently left out of service upon completion of work, a system is shut down without proper notification, or a system is maliciously shut down. This type of impairment can be prevented by locking the main water control valves in the open position, by installing tamper switches to the control valves and linking the switches to the buildings alarm system, and by periodic visual inspections of the valves and other sprinkler system components

Best safety practices suggest the assignment of an Impairment Coordinator by the School Administrator or Director of Building Maintenance. The Impairment Coordinator:

- Authorizes the shutdown of the fire protection system
- Ensures that the impairment procedures are being followed and completed
- Verifies that steps to restore systems to service have been followed and that the systems are restored to service as soon as possible

Before a Planned Impairment:

- Determine the expected duration of the impairment, and the area of the building involved.
- Inspect the areas or buildings involved and determine if there are increased fire risks, such as use of flammable or combustible liquids, or hot work consisting of welding, cutting, or grinding
- Get authorization from the District's Impairment Coordinator to shut down the sprinkler system
- Notify the public fire service so they can be ready to handle any emergency that might occur
- Notify the alarm company that the sprinkler system will be out of service
- If the sprinkler is out of service for 4 hours or more, you should contact your insurance company and initiate an impairment request
- Assign a fire watch to patrol area where protection is out of service
- Plan to have temporary fire protection on hand: extra fire extinguishers or charged fire hose lines if applicable
- Shut down any hazardous operations involving flammable liquids or spark generating equipment
- Expedite the work. Workers, materials, equipment, and tools should be ready before any system is shut off

- Notify employees in area that fire protection systems will be shut off
- Determine how to quickly return the sprinkler system to service in case a fire occurs during the impairment

Many schools use written Sprinkler Impairment Tags that help plan and manage impairments, and to restore full fire protection. The tag acts as a reminder that authorization is needed before the system can be shut down, and to indicate that a system, or portion thereof, has been removed from service. The tag also helps to document the fire safety precautions that are to be put into place during the sprinkler impairment. Sprinkler impairment tags are available.

During the Impairment

- Prohibit all hot work including cutting and welding. If hot work is essential to complete the work, discuss in advance with the fire marshal or the District head of Facilities or Maintenance
- Establish a fire watch where protection is out of service

After the Impairment

- Open all valves that were secured during the impairment
- Conduct a 2-inch drain test in the wide-open position
- Ensure the fire protection system is placed back to "automatic" service
- Reset alarm system and notify the alarm company
- Notify the public fire department
- Notify the district's Impairment Coordinator

School District personnel should be trained in the Sprinkler Impairment procedures. This training should be provided too:

- All Facility and Maintenance Department managers and supervisors
- All Maintenance Department personnel that work with the sprinkler and fire protection systems
- The campus administrator, its head custodian, and the lead custodian on each shift at every building site that has a sprinkler system

All contractors that work on the fire protection system or need to shut off the fire protection system during construction, remodeling or short duration repairs must follow the Sprinkler System Impairment procedures outlined in your district's program. A copy of the procedures is to be issued to the contractor(s), and a signed receipt should be required that verifies they have read and will comply with the district's procedures.

Contractors should coordinate with the District's Impairment Coordinator before closing a sprinkler valve to ensure that all Fire Protection System Impairment steps are followed and actions to mitigate fire losses are taken. The fire protection system must be restored to full service as soon as possible to provide fire protection to the building.

To protect your gym floors, you need to protect your fire sprinklers. With higher energy sports such as basketball, volleyball, and kick ball being played indoors and in our gyms, an errant, miss-aimed ball can spell disaster for your floors.

Recently there have been multiple losses of gym floors due to this type of unfortunate event. The accidental flooding of the floors required full floor replacement costing both time loss of the venue and monetary loss to the district.

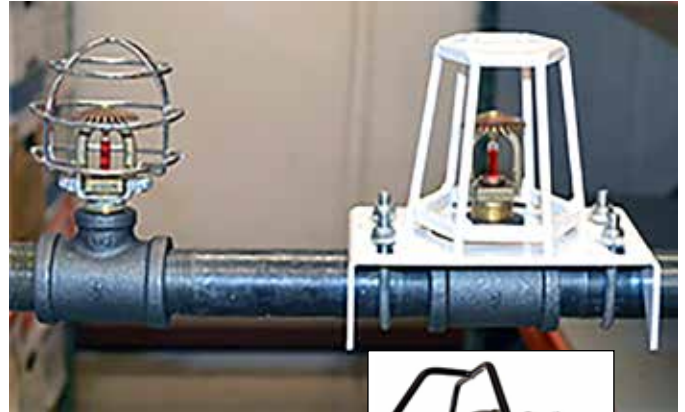
Breaking a sprinkler head is no small matter. For school districts looking to avoid a major headache — one that involves calls to the fire department, insurers, water damage repair contractors, and fire sprinkler installers — head guards are an investment that can't be beat.

The use of head guards can go a long way to preventing this type of loss, and it is highly recommended that they be used by your district in gyms and other areas of the building where there could be impacts to sprinkler heads. Physical damage to a fire sprinkler head is the most common reason for a fire sprinkler to unnecessarily discharge, but careful selection is required.

There is a large selection of head guards available on the market today. It is recommended that heavy duty sprinkler guards that can withstand a substantial impact be used. These guards normally mount to the supply pipe and not the actual sprinkler head.

As can be seen in this picture, the white guard on the right would be able to withstand a greater impact than the guard that mounts to the head itself, like the guard on the left, which may break off where the head screws into the sprinkler system.

The use of such sprinkler head protection should be discussed with your fire suppression contractor that maintains your system to ensure system compatibility. Your contractor will work with you



There are protectors for all types of sprinkler heads, such as the pendant shown here.



and the appropriate local authorities to ensure proper selection and installation of guards.

If you would like to have a copy of a Sprinkler Impairment Notice, or have questions related to the inspection, maintenance, or sprinkler impairment process, please contact:

Chad Ranstrom or Dane Higdem at Moreton and Company. They can be reached by phone at 1-800-341-6789 or by email at dhigdem@moreton.com

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AT YOUR SERVICE

By Quinn Perry / ISBA Deputy Director & Government Affairs

2022 Legislative Session Recap

To explain the legislative process to an outsider is like explaining the inside of a tornado to people – it's chaotic. It happens so fast yet feels like forever. The legislative process is so full of thought, yet irrational. So, instead, I'll say this: This was a good legislative session for public education in Idaho. We saw many positive, proactive things and defeated bills we thought had negative impacts on public schools. Most importantly, stakeholders came together to ensure that good things happened for Idaho kids. It's an honor to do this work on behalf of school board members, even if during the session my eyes are bloodshot, and my hair gets a tiny bit grayer.

All bills take effect July 1, 2022, unless otherwise noted.

HB 443: This legislation created a dedicated fund for the purpose of funding the one-time amount required for public schools to buy in to the state's medical and dental insurance plan. The creation of the fund does not require school districts and charter schools to buy in to the plan, but creates the necessary resources to do so if schools or districts choose. Schools and districts would have two-years to utilize these funds to join the state pool. It was funded at \$75 million, and the health insurance discretionary amount was increased by \$105 million. One last important note – the bill did phase out Leadership Premiums from the public schools' budget. For questions and inquiries about joining the state pool, please contact the Office of Group Insurance at the Department of Administration. You can call ISBA for more contact information if you'd like!

HB 444: This bill extended the sunset - also known as the 'repeal' date - of the Coronavirus Liability Immunity Act. This code section protects school districts and charter schools from litigation that arise out of COVID-19 infections. Since its original passage during the Infamous Extraordinary Session of 2020, they have extended the sunset date at least once. HB 444 extends it from July 1, 2022 until July 1, 2023.

HB 461: This is a bipartisan piece of legislation that amended Idaho's scholarship for military families who have a parent or spouse die in combat. The bill allows military families to be eligible for the scholarship if their parent or spouse dies in training or in their line of service. The change stems from a recent tragedy where three members of Idaho's National Guard died in a Blackhawk helicopter exercise, and their children were not eligible for the scholarship because they didn't die in combat.

HB 555: After hearing a concern on the cost of Return to Work for certain school employees, PERSE brought this legislation which creates a new class for school employees. While the bill does not change the contribution rate, it could allow the PERSE Board to consider a contribution rate – which we have been told the PERSE board is prepared to do. It would likely reduce the general member rate but keep the teacher rate the same as it is today. It also allows all retired public employees to be eligible for Return to Work – meaning, retired city officials could work for schools without creating an issue on an employee's individual PERSE collection and vice versa. Director Drum is planning to put on a roadshow to explain the impact of HB555.

HB 566: This legislation amended the "Public Integrity in Elections Act" to clarify that public property that is available to the public during certain times and in certain manners may be used by a political candidate, provided that the space is made available to all political parties in a fair and equal manner.

HB 607: This legislation was necessary so that Idaho can still remain in the Multi-State Lottery Association and play Powerball, Idaho's most popular lottery game. Idaho schools receive a significant amount of support for facility upgrades and bond/levy equalization. Without this legislation, Idaho would have no longer been eligible to have Powerball, and the funding for these programs would have been at risk.

HB 650a: This legislation updates the curricular materials adoption committees set up in Idaho Code. It now requires that school boards utilize these adoption committees when considering new or updated curricular materials used in classrooms. It also states that at least half the committee shall be persons who are not public educators or school trustees and shall include parents or legal guardians who have children attending a school or schools within the school district.

HB 654: Based on an ISBA resolution, this legislation adds licensed professional counselors and licensed clinical professional counselors as individuals eligible to qualify as school counselors.

HB 656: Based on an ISBA resolution, this legislation helps more accurately place out-of-state teachers and administrators on Idaho's career ladder allocation model when they may not have met the specific evaluation framework or other criteria to make them eligible for movement. It also helps more accurately place Idaho administrators who return to the classroom but who also don't have the specific criteria to be placed at a higher allocation rung of the career ladder.

HB 682: This is a new section of code that states any city or special district who have to "zone" shall notify the county clerk of any approved changes of the school district zones and boundaries within 30 days of approval of such changes or 30 days prior to the filing deadline for candidates of the governing bod – whichever is earlier. This is something to remember when the 2030 census rolls around!

HB 695: This legislation amends the recall petition process – including those for school trustees- and aligns the code to state that if no such election was held in the last six years, the petition must be signed by 20% of the number of electors eligible to vote for the official, as calculated at the time the petition is filed.

HB 701: This legislation creates an advisory commission who would be tasked with developing, implementing, and maintaining a statewide workforce housing plan. The fund would be created to accept funds appropriated by the legislature and distribute funds according to the statewide workforce housing plan implemented by the Commission. We supported the legislation and believe that collaboration with other local governments and employers to recruit and retain a workforce in Idaho's schools is dependent on having housing available to our workforce. This went into effect immediately and has a sunset of 12/31/2026.

HB 716: This legislation directs the State Board of Education to adopt the draft Idaho Content Standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science drafted by a group of educators, trustees, parents, and community members. When the bill was in committee, we testified that we needed assurance from the State that schools would receive the necessary resources to implement the standards. What is likely to happen next is a comparability study of the standards to truly understand the impact at the local level.

HB 731: This legislation was a compromise of multiple competing dyslexia bills that first defines dyslexia – a common learning disorder that involves difficulty reading..It then directs the State Department of Education to create screening tools and intervention practices to support children with dyslexia. It requires schools and districts to provide evidence-based interventions in alignment with the literacy plan and dyslexia handbook. It also requires all instructional staff members and coaches involved in the instruction of students in kindergarten

through grade 5, including special education teachers, to receive professional development on dyslexia interventions. By 2023, every teacher, administrator, and school counselor with an instructional certificate in grades 6 through 12 will be required to have received professional development on characteristics of dyslexia. By 2025, all teachers and administrators with a K - 8 endorsement, exceptional child endorsement, or blended early childhood endorsement and every school counselor serving students in grades K through 5 will be required to earn one or more credits of professional development on dyslexia and understanding the pedagogy for instructing students with dyslexia to re-certify.

HB 790: This legislation was a "compromise" bill that changes the literacy distribution formula. The first 50% of the funds allocated will be distributed based on the number of students enrolled in kindergarten through 3rd grade. The second 50% will be based on the number of K-3 students who move a full level or who are proficient from the spring-to-spring administration of the IRI (or, for kindergarten students from fall to spring). It also weights economically disadvantaged students as "1.75" and ensures a minimum of \$2,000 for schools with fewer than 5 students. The bill also added a levy disclosure piece requiring school districts who run supplemental levies to list out the approximate amount and intended purpose of supplemental levy funds. You will also be required to post the disclosure and a summary of the revenue and expenditures at your following budget hearing. We will be updating our sample resolution on levies in the ISBA Clerks Manual.

SB 1238: This legislation allows students to request and teachers to designate students as a “self-directed learner.” This is a mastery-type concept that says students can have more flexibility with their day-to-day schedule, but it would still require students to meet the school district or charter school’s graduation requirements. It does provide that each student still be counted as a 1.0 FTE student, so it has no impact on your budgets. This one will require a policy update, which will be released in an upcoming update.

SB1247: Current sections of code allow two or more school districts to join for educational purposes to form a “cooperative service agency” to purchase materials or provide services. SB 1247 created an amendment that says any eligible cooperative service agency must “own” or maintain a facility separate from any of the member school districts that makes up the cooperative service agency.

SB 1253: This legislation sponsored by the Idaho Workforce Development Council facilitates the expansion of work-based learning to the workforce needs of state agencies. It eliminates a clause that prohibits youth served under the Council’s employment and training programs from being employees of the State of Idaho.

SB 1255: This legislation creates a grant program modeled after “Strong Families, Strong Students” for low-income families to use towards eligible education expenses for their kids. There is an income threshold starting with \$60,000 for the first 30 days and \$75,000 for the next 30 days. The program is open to all households regardless of income after that. Each student would be eligible for a \$1,000 grant, and each family is capped at \$3,000 total. It goes into effect this fiscal year, and when information is released; we encourage you to share information on this with parents in your schools and districts.

SB 1290: This bill has bi-partisan support and establishes a rural educator incentive program for high-need or rural districts and charters. It would provide a maximum amount of eligible funding that gradually increases for the number of years the educator stays in the high need or rural district/charter. Funds could be used for loan repayments, additional degrees, or other education costs. We are working with the state board to help create the criteria for eligibility.

SB 1291a: This legislation will allow local charter school boards to create a charter-specific certificate for individuals that hold a bachelor’s degree and/or CTE certificate. Individuals would not be required to be working on an alternate route to certification. It is only allowed at charter schools, and only transferrable from charter to charter via MOU. It also allows the charter to create their own professional development which could be substituted for the State Board of Education. We urge Boards to consult legal counsel before issuing a charter certificate to employees.

SB1292: This legislation was a supplemental appropriation bill which funds the “Art in Public Schools” grants which were provided to expand fine arts, performing arts, and design courses in collaboration with the Idaho Commission for the Arts. The bill went into effect immediately upon passage.

SB 1319: The bi-partisan federal infrastructure investment and jobs act of 2021 – which congress recently passed – appropriated \$5 billion nationwide between FY2022 and FY2026 to fund the purchase of low or zero emission school buses. The funding for these will be available as grants and rebates to assist fleets in purchasing new, cleaner school buses. One requirement of the recent law was that school buses purchased with the funding must be operated as a part of a school fleet for which the award was made for not less than five years. This bill created exception from existing restrictions for school buses purchased and operated by a contracting transportation service company. It also went into effect upon passage.

SB 1341: This will allow county clerks to report their county’s election results any time after their polls have closed if there are no election contests that are also taking place in another time zone.

SB 1354: This legislation would allow high school students who have completed two years of high school to enroll in a licensed barber or cosmetology program and begin accruing training hours during their junior year.

The Budget:

I won’t go into detail about every budget bill, but there was some exciting need-to-know information, including:

- \$1,000 bonuses in this fiscal year for administrators, teachers, pupil service staff, and classified employees. They used the calculation from the February 2022 payment of staff – so there may be discrepancies. Watch for information from the State Department of Education.
- \$46.6 million increase in literacy intervention funds
- 7% increases for classified and administrative staff
- \$36 million in additional compensation for teachers using one-time COVID relief funds, in addition to the \$25 million of statutory increases to career ladder salaries
- \$105 million increase in health insurance discretionary money. This budget bill also created a new health insurance report that will begin in December of 2022 to compare your existing policies to what you might be able to fund under new money. This is likely to drive policy decisions moving forward.

What Didn't Advance this Legislative Session?

Here are bills that did not become law this year:

HB 512: This legislation would have prohibited a failed bond proposal from being re-run for 1 year. The proposal never received a hearing in the Senate.

HB 533: This legislation would have extended the Master Educator Premium to teachers who received the premium but moved into an administration role. The Governor vetoed this legislation, and the legislature did not override him.

HB 545: This bill would have created a “revolving loan fund” for charter schools at the state level where charter schools would obtain lower interest rates on loans. It died in Senate Education due to concerns about the viability of the revolving loan and whether it was a risky program for the state to take on.

HB 571: This legislation would have created a statute that would override the state rule on school bus speed limits so that school buses could travel up to 70 miles per hour on the interstate. It died on the Senate floor.

HB 651: This legislation would have required school districts and charter schools to drug test substitutes prior to their hire. It died on the House floor.

HB 669: This would have created a “Hope & Opportunity Scholarship” in which public taxpayer funds could be used towards private school tuition – also known as a school voucher. This died in House Education.

HB 671: This would have changed the process for when a school trustee resigns due to recall or is recalled. It would have left the zone vacant if an election were to be held in 120 days. The bill died in Senate State Affairs.

HB 680: This bill would have required parental permission for students to participate in school clubs. It also would have required that the school board approve all clubs. It never received a hearing in the House.

HB 723a: A compromise on moving the state permanently to Enrollment and away from average daily attendance, this bill would fund schools on full-time equivalent enrollment for FY23 and FY24. It would also call for a new committee to study Idaho's funding formula. This legislation had to be amended in the Senate to ensure that Idaho's kindergarten student funding didn't get “cut in half” twice – meaning, to ensure the half day funding for Kindergarten students was not inadvertently cut into a quarter-day. It was vetoed by the Governor prior to adjourning sine die, however, the State Board of Education did extend the temporary rule for the remainder of this school year and for next.

HB 734: This would have required school districts and charter schools to provide either a medical, religious, or philosophical “opt-out” exemption to students and their families to rules requiring they wear a face mask at school. It never received a full hearing in the Senate.

SB 1315: This was a true “Full-Day Kindergarten” bill that would have adjusted the support unit calculation for kindergarten students. It never received a hearing, and sponsors worked on compromise bills that were first SB1373 and then HB790.

SB 1374: This legislation would have defined career exploration for 8th grade students to assist them in identifying potential interests and resulting career paths. The bill died in the House floor.

Don't Forget:

ISBA's legislative platform is set by its members. Submit a resolution to ISBA by July 31st! Contact me if you have any questions about the process.



COMMUNICATIONS CORNER

By Catherine Bates / ISBA Communications & Program Manager

10 REASONS Why You Should Thank a School Board Member

Every June, Idaho celebrates our public school board members. School board members contribute hundreds of hours each year helping lead our districts and charter schools. They continue to persist in the face of challenge and exemplify resilience. Their efforts to help all children succeed are truly appreciated. There are countless reasons why we should recognize the service of these everyday heroes. Here are 10 reasons why you should thank a school board member this month.

- 1. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ARE PUBLIC SERVANTS** - It is easy to forget that school board members are volunteers—and as volunteers they must grapple with a myriad of issues such as reviewing dress code policy, updating the roof of the school library, lunch plans, and monitoring the fiscal health of the district or school. Many of these decisions happen after hours and at the cost of missing dinner with their families. These everyday heroes work to enhance public education and ensure student success, and they do it as unpaid volunteers.
- 2. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS BENEFIT YOUR COMMUNITY** - Public schools are often the heart and soul of our communities. They host career fairs, and library nights, and draw the whole family together for an evening basketball game. Our public schools give back to their communities with food drives and fundraisers for local charities—they inspire the minds of young children inside and outside the classroom, shaping future generations. School Board members generously provide this important public service because they care about the students and families in their community.
- 3. IT'S A TOUGH JOB!** - Let's not forget that serving as a school board member is hard work. School Board members give their time, energy, and counsel to school districts and charter schools without pay. These men and women take on the job of governing, making the best decisions they can for our children, fully understanding that they will receive only the satisfaction of their contribution.
- 4. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ADVOCATE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION** - The K-12 education landscape can be difficult terrain to navigate. There are a lot of moving parts and a lot of different players. Your locally elected school board members are often your best bet for someone to advocate on your behalf and bring attention to the needs of your students and school. School board members continually advocate for the children in our school districts and charter schools, and in the past year school board members have made passionate pleas to legislators, pushing for critical reforms.
- 5. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ARE LIFELONG LEARNERS** - School board members are lifelong learners at heart. To be adept at solving problems, board members spend a substantial amount of time analyzing a situation from multiple perspectives. They participate in many hours of professional development to keep them informed and knowledgeable about current issues and the latest school leadership trends. School board meetings are just a small fraction of the time and energy that school board members devote to their schools and districts. School board members attend training, conferences, and on-going professional development.
- 6. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS SET THE VISION AND GOALS FOR THE DISTRICT OR SCHOOL** - We often say that school board members determine the "what", and the superintendent manages the "how." Your school board members determine the path ahead for their district or charter school. The strategic goals of the district and charter school are created by the Board—part of good board service is collaborating to create a vision and seeing that vision become a reality.
- 7. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ARE TEAM PLAYERS** - Time and time again, school board members in Idaho have demonstrated perseverance, and a roll-up-your-sleeve work ethic. They work alongside their Superintendent, school staff, teachers, and students to help shape the character and success of our schools. A well-run school or district is like a strong relay team. Each member of the team has a vital role, but they must successfully work together to win the race.
- 8. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ARE FOCUSED ON THE STUDENTS** - If you ask a school board member why they serve, they often say it's for the kids. Great governance is not motivated by singular political issues; it is fueled by a commitment to our students and our community, and a desire to continually improve the education system for all students. Strong boards don't have tunnel vision—they worry about the success of each student and govern for a brighter future.
- 9. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS RISE TO THE OCCASION** - Over the last two years, school board members have displayed their tenacity and skilled crisis management. Under pressure, they have made difficult decisions in partnership with families to keep our students safe and healthy and have reimagined the possibilities for learning. Despite the hurdles, Idaho's elected school board members stand committed to our students and their success.
- 10. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS** - A school board is a local governmental body that can take action only by a majority vote at a legally called public meeting. The individual board member's major responsibility is to study issues facing the district, evaluate needs and resources, and, after fair consideration, vote in the best interest of all students at board meetings. School Board meetings welcome public input and provide the public a chance to observe the way their government operates and to influence their government in important and meaningful ways. This summer we hope you'll thank your elected board members and acknowledge their contributions to student achievement and the advancement of public education.

Thank You!!!

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POLICY UPDATE NEWS

By April Hoy / ISBA Research & Policy Specialist

New Trends in Board Elections & Appointed Trustees

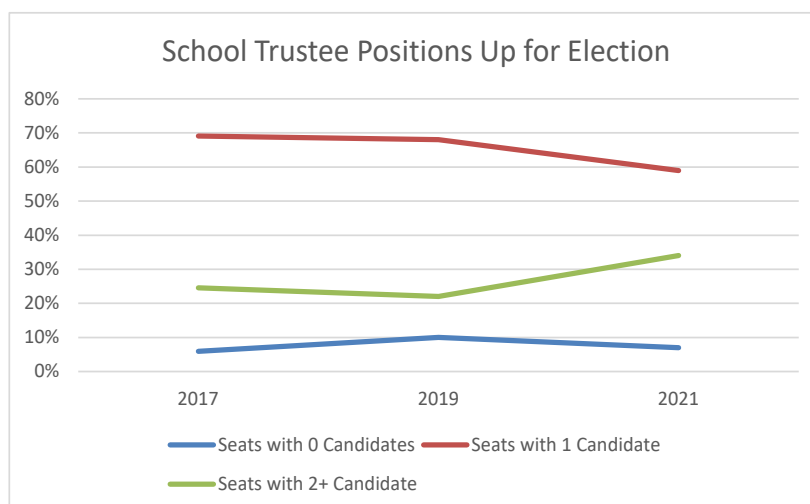
Early in 2022, ISBA conducted a survey of clerks whose boards belong to the Idaho School Boards Association. The main purpose of the survey is to update the contact information used to communicate with them and the other members of the District's leadership. However, we also use the school district version of this survey as an opportunity to learn a little bit about the Board's election held late the previous year and about the appointment of trustees to fill vacant seats. (We do not survey charter schools about the selection of board members because the variety in the timing and processes used to seat new members of their boards vary too much to investigate with a simple survey administered at a single time.)

After removing known duplicate responses, this part of the survey included information from 100 of Idaho's 115 school districts. This is the third time we've conducted a survey like this following a school trustee election date. It shines a fascinating light on the volunteers who take time out of their schedule to serve public schools and is beginning to yield information on trends in school board elections and vacancies.

One noticeable difference stood out in this year's survey results. There seems to have been more trustee elections with two or more candidates this year and fewer cases of only one person stepping forward as a candidate. This matches the subjective feeling many of us in the ISBA office had during the election season—that elections around the state were heating up and more challengers were stepping forward. However, it also puts it in perspective. In 2021, 59% of seats up for election were filled by a candidate who ran without any opponent. No one in these races seems to have felt a need to run beside them on the ballot or to step forward later as a write-in candidate.



While that percentage is noticeably less than the two prior election years, in which more than 2/3 of the seats had only one candidate, well over half the seats up for election had no challenger. Either the incumbent or an unopposed volunteer for an open seat stepped in to help govern their district without objection. While it feels like more controversy than usual has settled around public education at the state and federal levels within the last couple of years, most Idahoans seem to be fairly happy with their local schools, or at least not unhappy enough to throw their hat in the ring.



While a smaller majority of trustee seats than usual saw only one person come forward to claim them, some seats had even fewer volunteers. 7% of the seats that were up for election had no candidates at all. This percentage hasn't changed much over the last few years, ranging from 6% in 2017 to 10% in 2019. The school boards with these empty seats would have been obliged to seek out volunteers to appoint to the seat, preferably from the seat's zone. Failing that, they would have begun seeking volunteers from anywhere within the District and, as a last resort, had their county step in to appoint someone for them. This doesn't just happen around elections. It can occur any time a resignation, death, or other circumstance leaves the district missing a trustee.

At the time the survey was conducted, 14 of the 98 respondents to the questions about at-large appointees said they currently had an at-large appointee on their board. When asked about at-large

appointees within the last four years, 22 of the 98 respondents had one at large appointee, while nine districts had two at-large appointees within that time, and one had three or more. While the number of contested races seem to have increased since 2017, the number of districts with at-large appointees have too.

It will be fascinating to follow this data in elections to come. Are we seeing the emergence of new trends, when it comes to contested elections or the challenge of filling vacant seats with in-zone appointees? Is this election a fluke brought on by some aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic, political trends, or social changes? Or is this just a minor blip in the data that will eventually prove to be within the ordinary amount of change from year to year? Time will tell.



**Idaho
Out-of-School
Network**

**Partnering
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Afterschool
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Accelerate
Students'
Learning
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Recovery**

Decades of Research Show Participants in Afterschool :

Gain
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Explore
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Build
Healthy relationships with peers and adults



We have the relationships and expertise to help schools build robust community partnerships that accelerate students' academic and social-emotional learning. We offer:

- Flexible, shovel-ready programs
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- Expertise in leveraging community partners and volunteers
- Professional development and training opportunities for educators

Contact:

-  Anna Almerico, Director
-  208-947-4271
-  aalmerico@jannus.org
-  www.idahooutofschool.org





ISBA ANNUAL CONVENTION

Nov. 9-11, 2022
Coeur d'Alene, ID

Please plan to attend the 2022 ISBA Annual Convention at the beautiful Coeur d'Alene Resort in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. This year marks ISBA's 80th Anniversary and we have chosen the time-honored symbol of the oak tree to commemorate those 80 years. The oak tree is a symbol of strength, resilience, and longevity. The Idaho School Boards Association has played a role in Idaho public education since 1942. This year's Convention will be a celebration of 80 years of service to our members, policy makers, state education agencies, and the public around the State of Idaho. It is a milestone we are extremely proud of, and will be an event we hope you can attend.



SAVE THE DATE

**Coeur d'Alene
Resort**
Nov. 9-11, 2022

WE NEED YOUR AWARD NOMINATIONS!



Board Chair Of The Year Award

**Nominate Your Outstanding Board Chair For
The 2022 Board Chair Of The Year!**

- Submit An Application For Them To Receive Recognition! -

ISBA would like to recognize an amazing board chair who runs a well structured meeting, keeping their board on task, and complying with Idaho Open Meeting Laws. We're seeking a board chair who is a great leader for their team.

- Please submit your application by October 1, 2022. -



Clerk Of The Year Award

**Nominate Your Outstanding Clerk For
The 2022 Clerk Of The Year!**

- Submit An Application For Them To Receive Recognition! -

ISBA would like to recognize an amazing board clerk who goes above and beyond in his or her duties. Someone who provides outstanding service, provides direction to the board, and has provided contributions to the board and district or charter.

- Please submit your application by October 1, 2022. -



20 Years Of Service Award

**Do You Know Someone Who Has Served As A
Board Member For 20 Or More Years?**

- Submit An Application For Them To Receive Recognition! -

ISBA would like to recognize those individuals who have selflessly given **20 years** or more to the students and education system of Idaho. Award recipients will be recognized during the Awards Banquet. If you are a board member (or know of a board member) who has reached their 20 year mark, we want to know!

- Please submit your application by October 1, 2022. -



Jessica Gearino Harrison "Bulldog" Award

This award recognizes an individual who best embodies the "bulldog spirit" of Jessica Harrison, through their tenacious efforts to support and provide leadership through advocacy on behalf of Idaho's public schools with unrelenting courage.

This award should honor an individual for their leadership and advocacy at the local, county, regional, state, and/or federal level. Though it is preferable that the nominee be a school board member or school leader, it is not required.

- Please submit your application by October 1, 2022. -

Awards Will Be Presented At The Annual Convention

Download nomination forms at www.idsba.org • Please submit via email, fax, or mail.

Email: mika@idsba.org • Fax: (208) 854-1480 • PO Box 9797 • Boise, ID 83707-4797

Workshop Proposals

Can The Board Members & District/Charter Leadership Of Idaho Benefit From Your Expertise & Experience?



ISBA invites Board members, administrators, agency representatives, and others to submit proposals for workshops to be presented at the ISBA 80th Annual Convention. Convention attendees are seeking information and skills to help them govern and lead more effectively in the ever-changing world of public education. Workshop proposal applications are available at: www.idsba.org/convention-workshop-proposals/

*** Please apply by July 15, 2022.**





2022 ISBA Scholarship Recipients

This year, the ISBA Scholarship Trust awarded scholarships to 23 children and grandchildren of school board members. Those awarded included students from all areas of the State.

Thank you to all of those who participate in the Scholarship Auction held each year at the ISBA Annual Convention! The items you donate to be auctioned off and your auction purchases are what make this program possible.

RECIPIENT:	REGION:	BOARD MEMBER:	RELATIONSHIP:
Travis Alfrey	2	Patricia Alfrey	Parent
DanniKa Barfuss	5	MaLissa Barfuss	Parent
Wyatt Castagneto	4	Pete Castagneto	Parent
Joshua Castaneda	4	Alejandro Castaneda	Parent
Tessa Dalton	9	Deby Infanger	Grandparent
Taya De Kruyf	4	Dean De Kruyf	Parent
Emalissa Espinosa	2	Chad Knowlton	Parent
Gregory Fullmer	5	Alan Erickson	Grandparent
Benjamin Gee	5	Antonette Gee	Grandparent
Caleb Gee	5	Antonette Gee	Grandparent
Makenna Hart	5	Larin Ward	Parent
Allie Hunt	6	Donna Jean Kinghorn	Grandparent
Kaylee Hunt	2	Jesse Hunt	Parent
Aubrey Irons	1	Rob Irons	Parent
Emma Johnson	6	Steve Johnson	Grandparent
Sydney Kelsey	4	Zachary Kelsey	Parent
Megan Krein	9	Melissa Krein	Parent
Jacob Krick	2	Alan Krick	Parent
Steven Roberts	5	Kayla Roberts	Parent
Trinity Seefried	7	Holly Seefried	Grandparent
Eric Taylor	4	Kimberly Taylor	Parent
Grace Tiegs	2	Oscar Tiegs	Grandparent
Riley Valley	1	Amber Valley	Parent

By
Ryan Garrett / The Ridge Middle School
 ELA Instructor

Jennifer Keene / The Ridge Middle School
 Science & Social Studies Instructor



Belonging at The Ridge



BELONGING. People of all ages, races, cultures, and socio-economic status are searching for it. This quest for belonging is perhaps most prevalent among our youth. As an epidemic of mental illness plagues the young people in our society and as our youth are looking for acceptance and a place to belong, how do we as educators do better to meet those needs of our students? We believe that one way to do so is to offer a learning environment where students feel accepted, and emotionally safe. It would be a place where students' voices are heard, where they are not overlooked, where their creativity is encouraged, and where their

differences are celebrated. For this reason, when we were given the opportunity to create and implement a middle school design, we saw it as a chance to create a different type of school culture. Our goal was to design a middle school where students belong to a comfortable and safe environment, are instilled with habits of character, grow in their understanding of what it is to be a life-long effective learner, and grasp their role in contributing to a better world. We wanted a small school community where students could truly belong.

Comfortable and Safe Learning Environment

Curling up on a couch to write an essay in the warm light of a lamp, experimenting with magnets at a dining room table while sitting on a stuffed chair, taking notes about World War I while reclining on an old, padded church pew, relaxing with a cup of hot chocolate while watching a football competition before class starts—these are all scenarios that you could observe at The Ridge Middle School. Rooms are filled with couches, recliners, beanbags, lamps, restaurant booths, and unique work and play spaces. The physical spaces of our learning environment are designed as places where students can feel comfortable and at home and where they can connect with one another to build meaningful and safe relationships. We wanted to create a place where students feel like they belong to a unique learning environment that encourages their creativity. Students have played a large role in the design of many of our spaces. Their creativity and unique ideas are evident in every room. It is their space, where they belong.



Becoming Ethical People

Our effort to create a comfortable and safe learning environment for students goes beyond unusual school furnishings and cozy lighting; we also strive at The Ridge Middle School to create a place where students feel emotionally safe. Character education is intentionally taught and integrated into the curriculum and the culture of the school. Each day begins with crew meetings. A crew is made up of a multi-grade-level group of students and a faculty member. This is where our community building begins. Teachers function as mentors for students within their crew and see their primary role as connecting with students in meaningful and trusting relationships. Meanwhile, adolescents are highly influenced by peers, which means relationship building with other students is key to giving them a sense of belonging. Crew is the foundation in developing school culture and in building a trusting community with peers and teachers. Within crew meetings, students take part in problem-solving processes, determine the school's behavioral expectations, and participate in team-building activities. It is a place where students discuss difficult topics and go to their peers for advice or sometimes for just a little empathy and emotional connection. It is where students learn to work towards becoming ethical people. Crew is where students find acceptance and social belonging.



Becoming Effective Learners

Students at The Ridge Middle School receive explicit instruction as to what it is to be an effective learner and to belong to a learning community. Students learn to approach their thinking critically, look for connections, and apply their learning to real-world situations and problems. Students are also required and encouraged to communicate their learning to teachers, peers, and the extended community in a variety of formats. Instruction is rooted in cross-curricular thematic areas of studies so that students see learning as interconnected, interdisciplinary, and purposeful. Social studies and science instruction, as well as STEM projects, are directly connected to

English Language Arts modules in this thematic approach to learning. The habits of character also extend into the curriculum as students discuss and reflect upon the concepts of integrity and responsibility within content area lessons.

An integral part of our learning community is peer critiques. Students produce drafts of their work, give feedback about the work of their peers, edit and revise based on feedback and self-assessment, and present their final products to their learning community. As students work together in this process, they learn from one another and play a vital role in their own and their peers' academic successes. By belonging to a supportive learning community, students hold each other accountable to rigorous academic standards and academic improvement while also celebrating growth and encouraging one another to produce high-quality work.

Contributing to a Better World

Students at The Ridge Middle School recognize that they not only belong to a supportive academic environment, but also that they play a meaningful role beyond the walls of the school. We do not confine our learning to the classroom. The community is our classroom. This real-life connection gives learning meaning and purpose. Thematic areas of study in our curriculum culminate in student-directed service projects that identify and meet a need in society or the environment. We invite experts to guide us along the way and apply our learning with the goal of improving our world. These service projects are driven by student choice and design. They help learners to understand that they belong to a larger community and that they have the power and responsibility to contribute to building a better world.

The Ridge Middle School is a place where students want to be. Students understand that they play an important role within the school community. They know their opinions are valued and that they have a voice and that they have a right to have their voice be heard. They know their differences are celebrated and their ideas and input are valued. Our unique learning environment and our habits of character of becoming ethical people, becoming effective learners,

"The teachers care about you, and when you need help with something, they will always help you no matter how hard you have to try to learn." -Regina, 6th grade



and contributing to a better world build strong connections among learners. Our students feel a shared understanding and purpose and have positive connections with peers and faculty members. The Ridge Middle School fulfills its students' crucial need for a sense of belonging and trains up our youth to become quality community members for the future.

"My favorite thing about The Ridge is the community and how everyone is really nice, and you get to know a lot of people." -Gavin, 6th grade



80 GREAT THINGS ABOUT ISBA

Below is a list of 80 great benefits that membership in ISBA provides.

1. Board training at your district
2. Representation on the teacher Performance Evaluation Task Force
3. Legislative advocacy
4. Scholarship Trust - Student Scholarships
5. Business Session at Annual Convention to provide for education advocacy
6. Buy Board
7. Opportunities with ISBA Business Partners
8. Policy Update Service
9. Ask ISBA – questions & answers posted on the ISBA website and SLATE Magazine
10. Policy Manual Rewrite Service
11. ISBA Property & Liability Insurance Program
12. Over 50 workshop options offered at the Annual Convention
13. Updated and easy-to-use ISBA website
14. Options for paperless board meetings through Simbli, BoardBook, and BoardDocs
15. Participation at Boise Chamber events
16. Legal support provided to board members & districts
17. Member engagement on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/idahosba>)
18. Twitter (<https://twitter.com/IDSchoolBoards>)
19. Pay for Performance Design and Implementation Committee
20. Assistance with community surveys
21. Capitol Notes
22. SLATE
23. Clerk's Manual
24. Idaho Education Network Content and Curriculum Committee
25. New Board Member Packets
26. Salary Schedule
27. Convenient office location in downtown Boise
28. Student entertainment and talent at Annual Convention
29. Executive Board members that represent you and your region
30. Wednesday Webinar
31. ISBA Committees: Governmental Affairs, Board Training Professional Development & Leadership, Scholarship, Audit, and Nominations
32. Annual Convention
33. Scholarship Auction
34. Legislative Lunch during Day on the Hill
35. Fall Region Meetings
36. Day on the Hill
37. Leadership Institute
38. Representation on the Professional Standards Commission Committee
39. Monitoring trends in education at the local, state, and national level
40. Yearly calendar contest with Moreton & Company
41. Boise Chamber of Commerce Education Committee Member
42. Resolution discussion
43. Representation on the Idaho High School Activities Association (IHSAA) Board
44. Superintendent Search Service
45. Student contests (art, photography, poetry)
46. Exhibit Show during Convention
47. Monthly Meet-Up with ISBA
48. Alumni Program
49. Board Member Spotlight in the SLATE
50. Job postings on ISBA's Job Center
51. Trustee rezoning assistance
52. Video library on YouTube
53. Educational and motivational keynote speakers at ISBA events
54. Literacy training
55. 4 Free Hours of Legal Service to Each District
56. Awards (Board Chair of the Year, Clerk of the Year, 20 Years of Service, Bull Dog)
57. Knowledgeable and skilled ISBA Consultants
58. School Board Appreciation Month
59. Job Description Manual
60. ISBA Newsletter
61. ISBA Code of Ethics
62. ISBA standards
63. Idaho's Teacher of the Year Selection Committee Member
64. Qualified Trainer with SBOE
65. Searchable Master Agreement Database
66. Staff available to answer questions via phone, email, etc.
67. Consortium of State School Boards Associations Member (COSSBA)
68. Emergency K-12 Council Member
69. Stand Up 4 Idaho Public Schools Campaign
70. Accountability & Oversight Committee Representation
71. Commission for Excellence in Education Representation
72. Stakeholder engagement on local issues
73. School policy research
74. Representation on Governor Education Taskforce
75. State Technical Assistance Team (STAT) Representation
76. Representative for Idaho's ESSA Plan
77. Sponsors for Annual Convention and Day on the Hill
78. School Board Appreciation Month
79. Members to the Idaho School Public Relations Association
80. An exceptional staff who advocates for Idaho students and public education

By Dr. Geoff Thomas / Idaho State University
Assistant Professor,
Former Superintendent, Madison School District #321



Home Grown Leadership

In this post COVID era, we are living in times of great employment transitions where large numbers of workers have resigned, countless others have retired, and as a result there is an acute shortage of qualified workers nationwide, and many jobs are going unfilled.

The School District Superintendent is not immune to these societal trends. Idaho has witnessed an amazing transformational change of leadership. Roughly half of the 115 superintendent positions have changed hands in the last three years, and the trend continues unabated.

Districts are finding fewer qualified and experienced candidates seeking or applying for open superintendent positions. Given these facts, and facing a dwindling number of qualified applicants, it behooves districts to develop their own, internally grown future superintendents.

Last spring when I stepped down after 20 years at the helm as Superintendent of Madison School District #321 in Rexburg, Idaho, the board of trustees, immediately promoted an incredibly well qualified assistant superintendent, Randy Lords, as my replacement.

This seamless transition did not occur overnight. Here is the back story.

Safely nestled in the heart of southeast Idaho potato country, Rexburg is a great family community with easy access to

excellent hunting, fishing, and hiking; and it's within easy driving distance of beautiful state and national parks. Though Madison County enjoys many positive attributes, given our lovely, endless arctic winters and fierce winds, plus being a long distance from larger metropolitan areas, Rexburg is not always considered a destination spot.

Given these factors, the very first step was to align the district leadership vision of the school board and superintendent. In our discussions, the board and I knew that in order to attract and retain quality school leadership, we needed to be strategic about our future. As superintendent, my emphasis as a leader was to create more leaders.

The next step is keeping an eye out for leadership talent regionally and statewide by purposefully recruiting effective school leaders. During regional or state administrative meetings, I was always on the lookout seeking to lure great principals or assistant principals to Madison. Though occasionally turned down, (Ty Salisbury 😊) we were able to recruit several talented administrators to our district from other districts.

As openings occurred, during the interview process, I would ask applicants what their long-term goals would be, seeking those individuals who had a genuine love for the community, the personal and professional characteristics

of being upwardly mobile, wanting to showcase their talents by taking on new and greater responsibilities, and ultimately desiring to one day work in the district office.

Not to be overlooked in seeking out talent, is by knowing your teaching staff. During classroom visits, I kept an eye out for excellent teachers who not only were effective in the classroom, but also possessed positive leadership characteristics. I would then encourage them to work towards a graduate degree in K-12 administration. We were able to reap the benefits of this personal, one-on-one recruiting technique as we hired several excellent administrators directly from our teaching ranks.

Financially, a district can incentivize administrators and principal candidates by adopting a board policy that reimburses the cost of one or more of their graduate courses upon successful completion of the degree.

A major step that the school board and I took was to consistently invest heavily into administrator professional development. Attendance at state and national conferences was encouraged and often subsidized. Membership in professional organizations was promoted and, in years when money was more plentiful, paid for by the district.

District administrative leadership trainings occurred monthly. All administrators were invited to attend "Leadership Academies," typically held once a month on a Monday



evening, (generally when there were no scheduled extracurricular activities), where the district purchased professional books for the group and shared peer reviewed research findings which were then analyzed.

During these Leadership Academies, snacks and dinner were provided along with insightful lessons on leadership. Group discussions occurred, and district and building level issues were thoroughly discussed and collectively addressed.

After a few years of attending these voluntary gatherings, a school administrator would have a small library of books on leadership, school finance, child development, curriculum, assessment, team building, politics, and educational philosophy.

The next step was to facilitate frequent intra district administrative transfers. Instead of leaving an administrator at the same building for a long stretch, our goal was to rotate leadership positions regularly, thoroughly preparing each administrator where possible, with opportunities to work at all three levels of K-12 administration: elementary, middle, and high school. Working in the different levels provides rich administrative opportunities to learn the entire K-12 system, work with students and parents in all stages of child development, and supervise everything from kindergarten roundups to overseeing graduation.

Finally, every effort was made to ensure

administrators that wanted to serve in the district office were given that opportunity. As our district student population grew, the board approved an increase of district level positions including creating an assistant superintendent position.

I selected Randy Lords to serve as the assistant superintendent. Randy had worked exceptionally well at the middle, high school, and district levels. In his new capacity, Randy worked particularly close with support staff, special education, and federal programs.

For six years, Randy was invited to participate in all my city and community meetings, every board meeting and retreat, every planning meeting, and every executive session. He and I collaborated closely on every district and community problem and concern.

When the board appointed Randy as the Superintendent, he was the most experienced, qualified, and prepared potential candidate. The board was familiar with him and his leadership style. Randy knew the community, the board, all the administrative staff, and much of the teaching/support staff.

Thus, Randy could step into his new role and avoid the mistakes and build on the programs created by his predecessor. Randy was alternately a familiar and a fresh face, leading and supervising the district in his own way.

Randy has now promoted a deeply experienced and talented special services director to be his assistant superintendent. An excellent and experienced principal was promoted to serve as Special Services Director. An assistant principal was promoted to that principal position and a teacher was hired as the new assistant principal, ALL hires coming from within the district.

Barring any unforeseen major mishap or meltdown, the current MSD 321 district office team will effectively lead for the next twenty years.

Though our process may not work for every Idaho district or situation, growing your own leadership can be done. It requires a shared vision between the board and superintendent; time; constant recruiting; great attention to proper administrative hiring, development, and placement; financial investment into personnel; and trusting the process.

By growing and promoting your own, there is better leadership and greater district stability. Staff members, parents, and the wider community recognize and appreciate a stable, well operated district led by experienced administrators who know and care deeply about the community.



By **Lea Duffin** / SIF - Idaho Workers' Compensation
Safety Services Manager

ERGONOMICS



Introduction

According to the National Safety Council, a quarter of all workers' compensation claims are due to overexertion. At SIF, we have seen similar statistics for school districts. One-quarter of all claims for school districts (24%) were for overexertion, accounting for 34% of the total cost. Overexertion claims, like slips, trips, and falls, tend to be more severe with longer recovery times and higher indemnity costs with more days away from work. The National Safety Council has also reported that manual lifting tasks, which account for two-thirds of overexertion claims, cost over 20 billion dollars to the industry.

Not surprisingly, we see similar trends for the school districts as well. Lifting was the fourth most frequent and the most costly of all of the causes of accidents. Other notable causes of accidents include stepping and bending (both bodily motion). Any job at a school district may have overexertion injuries.

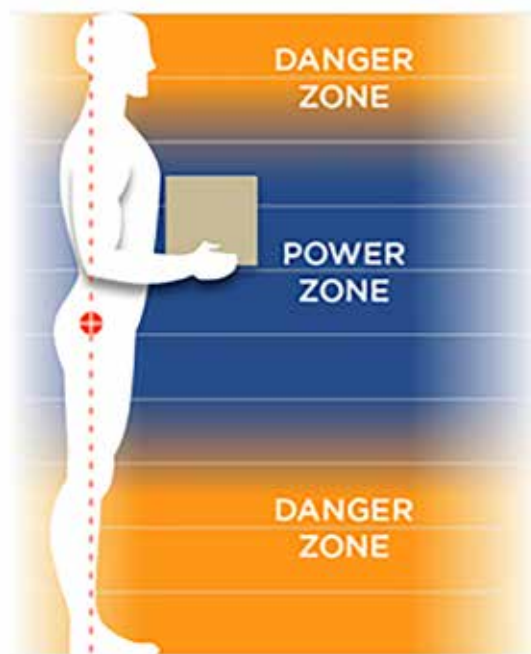
What is ergonomics?

To avoid overexertion injuries, we must first understand ergonomics and anthropometry. The dictionary defines ergonomics as the "applied science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely." Anthropometry is the study of human dimensions. Because people are not all the same size, designers and engineers may design an object with an average human, the most extreme human, or a range of people in mind. These ranges aren't always an exact science, however. For example, a chair designed with an average person in mind is uncomfortable to many people because most of us are not genuinely average in size! In ergonomics, we observe the worker in their environment, with their tools, completing their job. Whenever possible, we use items designed within a range to fit the tool or the environment (such as an adjustable chair) to the worker to provide maximum comfort.

An essential factor in ergonomics is the neutral posture. This posture is the human body standing, with the arms hanging gently to the sides with the shoulders relaxed. Neutral posture allows for reduced muscle activity and stress, and reduced muscle fatigue. The figure shows a person holding an object in the "power zone," close to the body. Working in the danger zone, above and below the power zone, requiring reaching or bending, can lead to injuries.

Contributing factors to overexertion injuries include:

- Awkward posture (such as twisting)
- Repetitive motion
- Excessive Force
- Pressure points (such as elbows on an armrest on a chair)



What can we do?

School Districts may find that providing a proactive approach to ergonomics will reduce injuries and increase job satisfaction. No one likes to be in pain at work! Creating an ergonomics-based program will include the following elements:

1. Recognition - Identifying & Discovering Risks
2. Evaluation - Measuring Risks
3. Controls - Methods to Prevent or Reduce Risks
4. Follow-up - Effectiveness of Controls

Recognition: You may find it helpful to review your accident logs for the school district. Any trends related to overexertion will provide insight into your working environment. SIF can provide trend reports of your injuries, and your local safety services consultant can review these with you and offer specific safety recommendations. An inspection of your workplace and discussion with employees, such as through a safety committee, will highlight potential problem areas. Train your employees about ergonomic concepts and the importance of injury and near-miss as well as hazard reporting.

Evaluation: Conducting an ergonomic assessment is essential in ensuring that the proper controls are in place for an employee or even a department. An evaluation may consider the specific work process, like stocking or removing items in the school's kitchen. Does an employee have to reach for commonly used and heavier items frequently? Can those be placed in the power zone? Or, during an ergonomic evaluation of a workstation, you may find that employees have to turn their heads to view the computer screens constantly. Perhaps the employee would benefit from a primary screen (creating a more neutral posture), and a secondary screen to the side used less often. SIF can teach your supervisors to conduct these evaluations.

Controls: Once we've identified a problem, it's time to find an appropriate control. The following figure demonstrates the foundation of hazard control in the safety and health industry. Eliminating hazards is the most effective while providing personal protective equipment (PPE) is the least effective. It would be best to focus on eliminating, substituting, or engineering out the hazard in ergonomics. Using our earlier example, can heavier items be stored in the power zone rather than having to reach or bend? Can employees use a dolly or cart to move material rather than carry it? For work station evaluation, can armrests be safely removed (some employees may use them to get up and sit down safely) to reduce the temptation to rest or lean on them? Removing armrests will reduce the pinch point on the elbow and reduce the awkward posture of leaning on the armrests.



Follow-up: Every accident should have an investigation to determine the root cause. It is vital to track and correct ergonomic-based accidents. Your Safety Committee will be valuable in maintaining an effective program and tracking potential problem areas. Once controls are implemented, check back with employees to ensure effectiveness.

By Lea Duffin, Safety Services Manager, SIF,
Idaho Workers' Compensation. Email: lea.duffin@idahosif.org



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By Erin Werra / Skyward / School Management Software
 Writer at Skyward's Advancing K12 blog



Adaptation. If there is one word to describe life since spring 2020, perhaps that is it. COVID changed many things. Perhaps most notably in education, it served as a digital accelerator, forcing schools to quickly align their technology with their changing instructional and business needs.

Though much of life will return to normal, some of these pandemic-era changes are here to stay. Let's take a look at what's sticking around from COVID in schools.

1. New Student Online Enrollment

Pandemic or not, families move into new districts and schools. The paperwork used to require the sacrifice of a tree or two, as well as in-person visits to the school office—but not anymore.

Skyward's New Student Online Enrollment cut down on trips to the main office to drop off proof of residency and identifying documentation. Guardians of new students can submit scanned copies of documents securely online. The enrollment process then flows into scheduling, fees, and any other registration tasks (which you can create with custom forms in Skyward).

2. Whole Child Education

Whole child education has stepped into the spotlight in ways we've never seen before.

Schools embraced strategies to promote physical wellness, from masking and sanitizing to delivering meals to students learning from home. Mental health (of both students and staff) has also become a bigger part of the conversation. People are being encouraged to advocate for their own health—making decisions that are best for them and their circumstances.

3. Arena Scheduling

Arena scheduling works from any location with an internet connection, a major reason for its recent increase in popularity. When students select their own courses and build their own schedules, they not only take on some of the burden of scheduling, but also learn valuable lessons about time management and responsibility. Plus, they get a preview of what scheduling will be like in post-secondary education.

4. Virtual Parent-Teacher Conferences

For districts conducting virtual parent-teacher conferences, the experience has been a home run. One Skyward district even reported a 100 percent participation rate in its elementary school—100 percent!

Virtual parent-teacher conferences offer the benefits of traditional in-person conferences, plus greater convenience for parents and greater safety for schools by keeping unnecessary visitors out of the building.

5. Flexible Learning Spaces

School used to refer to a building. Now it encompasses an array of still-evolving settings.

In-building classrooms underwent some pretty momentous changes during the 2020 school year. Classrooms created more space for students to spread out and room dividers (clear, to ensure a nice line of sight) were put in place. It drives home the concept that flexible seating is not just for show: the ability to create different zones and spaces within a classroom has made a difference for teaching in person.

Out-of-building classrooms also emerged (weather permitting). They've not only served as ways to prevent the spread of disease but have also given teachers and kids a chance to integrate more movement into class.

Finally, the way school districts consider expanding building space has changed. Improving existing school buildings and converting existing real estate (think vacant big box stores) has served existing needs without waiting for new construction funds to be allocated by referendum. The environmental impacts of these decisions are worth noting too.

6. Paperless Processes

Speaking of environmental impacts, throughout the pandemic, many districts have moved paper processes online. Online forms save paper and ensure your materials are accessible from anywhere. Staff and families alike benefit from these touchless options.

Hiring new candidates remotely also became smoother and faster. For districts who moved the entire process online with Skyward's Fast Track, candidates can now submit everything over the web, saving both time and paper, while still maintaining compliance.

Accounts payable and invoices also presented an opportunity to move payments online without losing the so-called paper trail. ePayables, online purchase orders, and online accounts payable are all housed within Skyward's ERP.

7. Online PD Options

With some educators working from home, the prevalence of online PD increased. Let's take a look at some of your options in Skyward:

Professional Development Center: The primary platform for Skyward's remote training, the PDC is a self-paced program featuring courses of various levels with simulations, videos, and knowledge checks.

Skyward Academy: The Skyward Academy offers dozens of 1–3-hour sessions each month on common processes and appropriately timed themes.

SkyDoc/Help Center: Videos, recorded webinars, tutorials, and other multimedia resources live in SkyDoc and the Help Center.

Skyward Community (Qmlativ only): The Skyward Community is a networking platform for Qmlativ users to share ideas, improve processes, and connect with other users and the Skyward team.

Quick Hits: This series of 2-minute-or-less videos is designed to help you work smarter in Skyward.

Family Access & Employee Access Toolkits: The Family Access Toolkit and Employee Access Toolkit include Power-Up videos, print resources, and troubleshooting tips to help district employees, students, and families achieve more with these portals.

8. Focus on Health and Hygiene

Schools have prioritized handwashing and sanitizing surfaces. Influenza numbers have trended down, possibly thanks to this increase in hygiene and the adoption of mask wearing. In addition, students and staff who present any symptoms of illness have been required to stay out of school and work/study from home, making schools healthier places to be.

9. Hybrid and Virtual Learning

Not everyone learns the same. In-person, online, and hybrid learning options add a lot of logistics to school districts, but going forward these options can be game-changers for families.

That's probably why a survey of over 375 school districts and charter schools showed 20% already plan to offer virtual school options after the pandemic ends. Even though remote learning was not the golden ticket for every family, some students thrived in an environment that placed more emphasis on individual study and less on social structures. And others, especially those living with chronic illnesses, benefited from the ability to stay safe and feel included, even if not physically able to attend in person.

A lot has changed since spring 2020. Decision-making was forced to occur at a rapid pace. But that pace also revealed lessons we can take forward into a post-pandemic world.

We've learned we can change a lot—and make smart decisions—in less time than we thought we needed. We've learned to be agile, and that if something doesn't work, we can simply pivot and try again. And we've learned we're more flexible than we thought, and hopefully more resilient too.

Erin Werra is a writer at Skyward's Advancing K12 blog. She spent years learning and tutoring at public schools and universities, then went on to scrutinize the inner workings of leadership, practice, learning data, social-emotional learning, and edtech in K12 schools. In addition to observing education trends, she volunteers as an adult literacy tutor and helps students gain job-seeking skills.

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