

A PUBLICATION OF THE IDAHO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

winter  
2021

# SLATE

magazine

## Looking Ahead to 2021 in K-12 Education

p.10

*By Idaho Governor Brad Little*

### In This Issue:

- Priorities For The New Year
- Student Mental Health
- ISBA Student Poetry Contest
- Navigating The Social Media Sea

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## WINTER / 2021

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## MISSION:

Provide leadership and services to local school boards for the benefit of students and for the advocacy of public education.

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# SLATE

## magazine

Subscription to the SLATE, published four times per year, is by membership to the Idaho School Boards Association. The material contained herein is for informational purposes only and may be quite divergent in point of view and/or controversial in nature. It is the belief of the Association that the democratic process functions best through discussions which challenge and stimulate thinking on the part of the reader. Therefore, this material does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Association or its members.

## 2021 ISBA CALENDAR

Jan - March	Legislative Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Idaho State Capitol - Boise, ID</li></ul>
February 13	Executive Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Via Zoom</li></ul>
February 15	Day On The Hill <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Via Zoom</li></ul>
April 8-10	NSBA Annual Conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Virtual</li></ul>
April 16-17	Executive Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Via Zoom</li></ul>
September 10-11	Executive Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Via Zoom</li></ul>
November 17-19	ISBA Annual Convention <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boise Centre - Boise, ID</li></ul>

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# 2020-2021 ISBA Executive Board:

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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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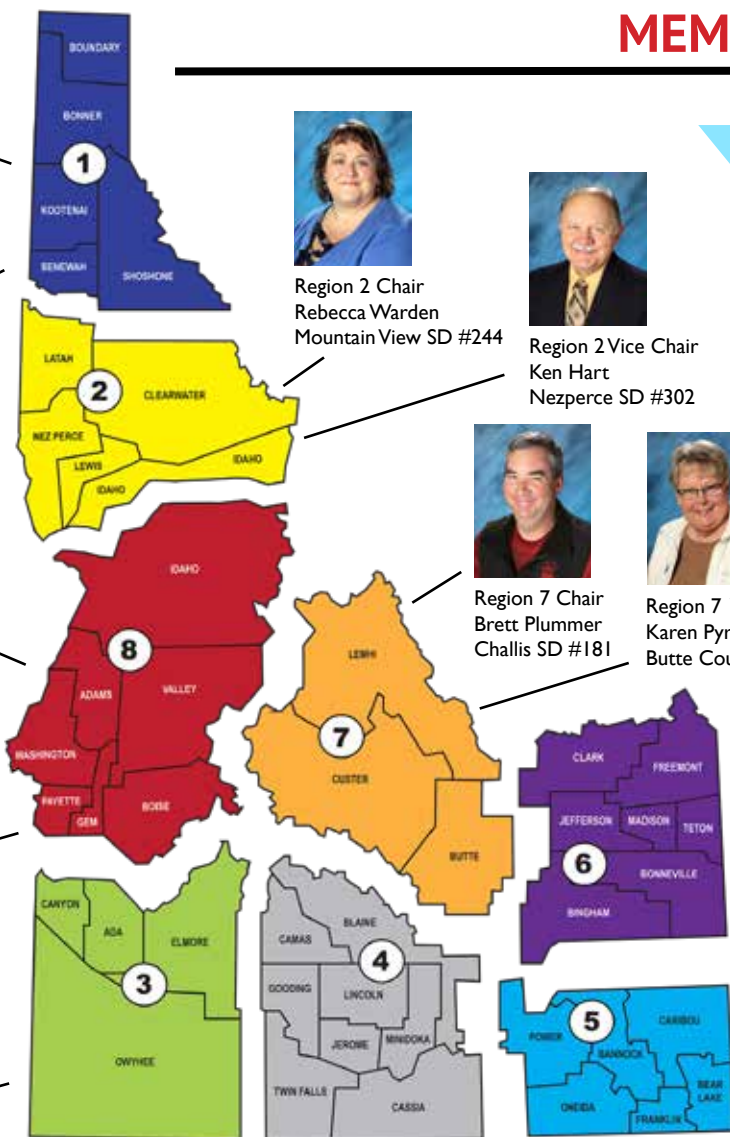
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By Jody Hendrickx  
ISBA President

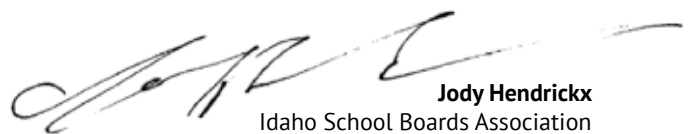


My name is Jody Hendrickx, and I am honored to serve as the 2020-2021 Idaho School Boards Association President. I also serve as the Board Chair for the St. Maries Joint School District Board of Trustees, having been elected in 2013. I have been on the ISBA Executive Committee since 2014, and served on Governor Little's Education Task Force, Our Kids, Idaho's Future, in 2019. In November of 2020, I was honored to be recognized as ISBA Board Chair of the Year.

My Lumberjack Pride runs deep! Both my wife, Cara (Class of '91), and I (Class of '90) are graduates of St. Maries High School. We have two children, our daughter Tayva and our son Caelan. Tayva, is also a graduate of St. Maries High School (Class of '18), and my son, Caelan, will graduate from St. Maries High School this spring. For 20 years I have owned Hendrickx Logging, Inc. I am also an active member of the Associated Logging Contractors, Inc.

While I am proud of the work that I do as a business owner, advocating for children is my priority. I have coached youth sports, teach Hunter's Education classes, and take part in various other community organizations. I continue to advocate for funding for full day/every day kindergarten, as I believe that kindergarten is the foundation for all education. I believe we must provide children with the time they need for a solid start in their education. I also advocate for increased work force training in our high schools. I believe that it is important to partner with business and industry to give students the experiences necessary to have a broad range of options when they graduate.

Looking back at the issues that drove me to declare my candidacy for school board trustee in 2013, I can say that I have grown and changed over the years. I now understand so much more about school governance. However, I am proud to say that the one thing that has not changed is my desire to be a voice for education.



**Jody Hendrickx**  
Idaho School Boards Association



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**Sharon Mast, Clerk of the Board  
Boise School District, ID**





By Sherri Ybarra  
Idaho Superintendent of  
Public Instruction

# Priorities For The New Year:

# 2021

## Restored Funding, Renewed Commitment to the People & Programs of Idaho Education

In a time of change and challenges, what remains constant is the vital need for Idaho's K-12 students to get the educational opportunities they deserve and need to succeed after graduation.

We don't know how long this pandemic will drag on. But now is the time to restore school funding, put people first, and rededicate ourselves to the priorities and programs – from early literacy to mastery-based education – that will help boost student achievement and future success. And we need to keep our focus on improving mental and emotional health – both for students and for the teachers and staff who work so hard to help them succeed.

As we enter a new year and new legislative session, this is a crucial time for Idaho school boards, educators, students, and families.

**Restore the holdbacks:** We need to restore the 5 percent in school funding that was held back from this school year's appropriations as a mid-pandemic precaution. Those cuts involve critical investments in education, and I will work with the Governor and legislators to make sure the reductions are fully restored as soon as state general fund revenue allows.

My first priority is to make sure Idaho school districts and charter schools have the ongoing resources to sustain their operations, as well as the support and flexibility to make decisions based on local needs and conditions. My FY 2022 budget request leaves some reductions in place for professional development, technology, and IT staffing that can be supported through \$43 million in one-time federal CARES funding, but that pandemic relief money is available only through Sept. 30, 2022, and those funds must be restored in future years to sustain district operations.

*continued on next page...*



**Teacher and staff pay:** We continue to struggle with a teacher shortage in Idaho, and the fear and confusion caused by COVID-19 have further aggravated that shortage. If this pandemic's disruption of Idaho lives and school schedules has shown us anything, it is that we must continue to make good on our promise to improve teachers' salaries and to reward and retain the experienced educators who are invaluable to our students. My budget request includes \$21.7 million to restore funding for the career ladder for instructional and pupil support staff and implements the Advanced Professional rung to improve pay for veteran educators.

Classified staff members also are vital to school and student success. I have requested a 2 percent pay increase for classified staff and a 1 percent boost for administrators.

**Social-emotional support for students and staff:** Coronavirus poses not only a threat to Idahoans' physical wellbeing, but also to our mental and emotional health, creating high levels of stress and anxiety. Social-emotional learning has been a priority for my department and schools throughout Idaho for several years, with numerous programs geared to foster students' emotional wellness and to detect and address warning signs.

We can't afford to take our foot off the pedal now. It is abundantly clear that we must be vigilant about the social-emotional health of educators, as well as the children they serve. With extra duties, curriculum disruptions and loss of personal contact, this pandemic has taken a huge toll on teachers and staff. Their continued commitment and effort are essential in meeting Idaho's education goals.

I will continue to advocate for behavioral and mental health support for all who study and work in Idaho's public schools. This includes securing and administering the numerous grants the State Department of Education has received for mental and behavioral health and suicide awareness and prevention.

**Respect for school boards' challenges:** Shifting between in-person learning, distance learning, and hybrid approaches is hard, it's frustrating, and it can often leave school trustees wedged between the objectives of health agencies, educators, and parents. They are faced with decisions and conflicts they never imagined while running for office.

As a longtime teacher, I believe that our children, especially young learners and those with special needs, are best served by in-person, classroom learning. Most experts, educators, and parents agree – IF we can make those classrooms safe for all involved. That is the crux of the issue, and each local district and charter school must make its own decisions, in concert with local health authorities, to establish the rules that best keep local children, educators, staff, and families safe.

I am proud to partner with the Idaho School Boards Association for the restoration of the budget holdback, change "use it or lose it" rules on personnel funding to allow flexibility for districts, and oppose diverting public dollars to private or parochial schools. As we return to more normal conditions, we must establish policies that help districts manage the impact of growth within their boundaries.

### It is also important to sustain key initiatives.

**Mastery-based education:** As we work to regain ground lost during the pandemic, we must continue our investment in mastery-based programs, which foster individualized, self-directed learning. This has proven to be a critical skill as students transition from classroom interaction to more independent work at home. I seek to restore the holdback of \$50,000 to continue expanding the Idaho Mastery Education Network. In this fiscal year, 31 new schools joined the network.

**Early literacy:** My 2022 budget request also includes ongoing funding to continue the state's focus and support for K-3 literacy -- making sure Idaho kids learn to read in the early grades so they can read to learn and improve their opportunities into adulthood. Because of the disruptions caused by COVID, districts and charter schools will likely need additional funds and resources in coming years for literacy intervention programs in grades K-3. This year, we have also seen families delay enrolling their kindergarten students, causing potential strain on the system when students start first grade without the necessary learning foundation.

Reading is essential to student success, and so is the ability to use and understand mathematics. My 2022 budget request restores \$100,000 to the Idaho Math Initiative, which aims to increase students' math scores.

As we face the challenges to come, our saving grace will be our shared commitment to our children, their learning, and their futures. With committed, caring parents, educators, and school boards across the state, we can and will rebound and thrive.

### For more information:

Check out the State Department of Education's [Legislative Priorities page](#), the [2022 Revised Budget Request](#) and the [2022 Revised Budget Summary](#).



By Brad Little  
Governor of Idaho

# Looking Ahead to 2021 in K-12 Education



The year 2020 was a significant one in our state's history. While we continue to experience some of the toughest times of this pandemic, there are reasons to be hopeful for 2021.

I want to express my deep appreciation for our school leaders — our trustees, boards of directors, superintendents, and charter school directors. Thank you.

You bear an immense responsibility, balancing the health and safety of students, teachers, and school staff with the constitutional responsibility to educate our students. You have done so with a sincere passion for supporting our students.



I know you signed up to handle many challenges in your leadership role, but no one could have expected to lead during a once-in-a-century pandemic. Throughout this challenging time, you have demonstrated incredible leadership in doing the heavy lifting of delivering education in these times. I know it has not been easy.

The pandemic has shown the importance of K-12 public education and the significance of our schools to our communities and our broader economy.

How we address the landscape after COVID-19 is my focus for K-12 policy and the budget. In addition to our efforts on supporting schools through the remainder of this school year, we need to be thinking strategically beyond the pandemic.

The primary issue is the learning loss that has occurred with the disruptions in schooling. Various studies estimate the learning loss during the pandemic could range from a few months for students that were already on-track to more than a year's worth of lost learning for our neediest students.

It is important that every effort is taken to ensure this school year is not a permanent system-wide challenge for the next decade or more for Idaho's students.



Though I am worried for all students, I am particularly worried about our youngest students and those preparing to graduate from high school soon and move into the wider world.

In the past two years as Governor, my number one education priority has been early literacy. Thanks to the hard work of school leaders across Idaho and additional state literacy dollars deployed last year, we were making significant progress on our early literacy goals. The pandemic has interrupted that trajectory and poses a potential significant setback in ensuring all our young students are on track to read by the end of the third grade. For students on the other side of the K-12 continuum, the pandemic poses a significant challenge to our high school students in having the academic foundation they need to be college and career ready. We must act.

From a budget position, Idaho starts from a stronger place than other neighboring states to address learning loss and other system-wide consequences to K-12 resulting from the pandemic.

Idaho is one of the only states that significantly increased funding for K-12 education during the pandemic, and I intend to continue this momentum.

While many states are facing 20- to 40-percent budget cuts, including cuts to public education, Idaho was one of the few states to put more money into K-12.

I have committed \$99 million of federal funds to offset early year state funding reductions to K-12 education. School districts and charter schools also received an additional \$43 million directly from the CARES Act, based on their Title I populations. We also committed significant funding toward supporting blended learning in our schools, the technology needed for that effort, and the Idaho Digital Learning Academy—around \$33 million. We have also provided around \$30 million in federal funds for the safe reopening of schools, specifically for PPE and testing capacity.

Recognizing the important role parents and guardians have in supporting our students, we committed \$50 million of federal funds to the Strong Families, Strong Students initiative. This initiative provides families additional financial support to ensure parents can help meet the educational needs of their students at home. The initiative also provides a more solid foundation for our schools in providing a thorough and uniform education through the end of this school year.

Though the future is uncertain, I know Idaho is faring far better than others states right now.

Due to the dedication of public servants like you, I believe we are well-positioned to make a strong comeback in 2021.



## IDAHO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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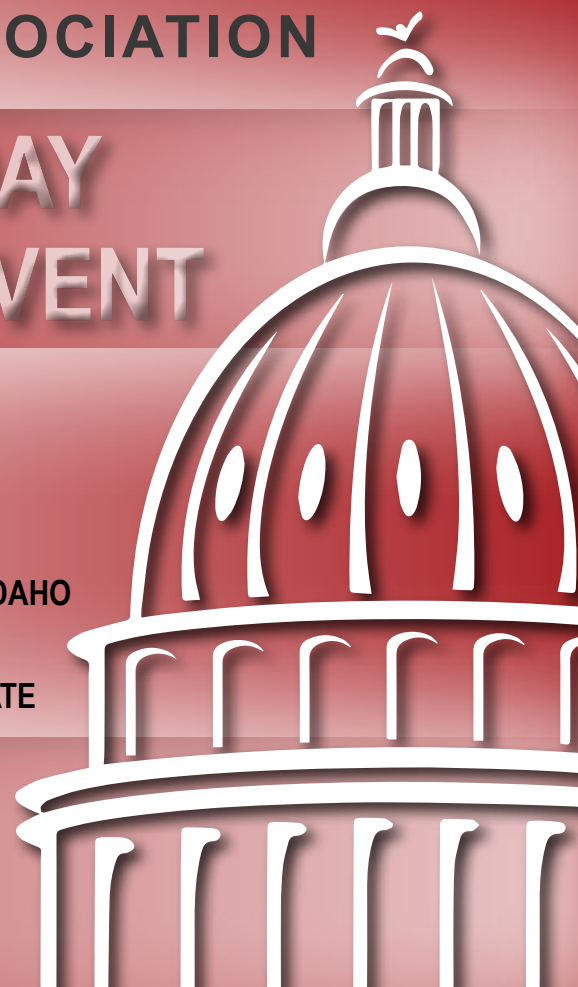
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**By Debbie Critchfield**  
President, Idaho State  
Board of Education

# Student Mental Health is a Top Priority for All of Us

Our students have always dealt with a lot of pressures, and this stress is only exacerbated by the public health crisis. They feel isolated taking classes online, lack motivation, and carry a sense of loss. They miss their friends and in-person interactions with their teachers. Many worry they are falling behind in their education and what the future may hold for them.

According to Active Minds, the nation's leading nonprofit mental health awareness organization, 89 percent of young adults are experiencing stress as result of COVID. That's 9 out of 10 of our high school and college students! In my view, this is more than an Idaho problem, it's a national crisis.

In December, the State Board of Education convened a virtual Idaho Student Mental Health Summit, in response to repeated statewide conversations, to begin work on recommendations. We must consider how to better support our students and help them stay on track during the pandemic and beyond.

"We know that we have significant behavioral health issues in Idaho," Governor Brad Little said during his Summit opening remarks. "We want ideas that are going to move the needle. How do we find these kids that need help and what can we do in the entirety of behavioral health?"

Keynote speaker Alison Malmon, executive director and founder of Active Minds, told Summit participants that we first need to rid ourselves of the stigma that, unfortunately, is often associated with mental health. Alison formed Active Minds 17 years ago after her older brother Brian, died by suicide when he was a senior in college.

"We need to get young adults trained and educated and learning more about mental health so that students like Brian know that it is not their fault, that help is available, and that they feel comfortable seeking help," Malmon said. "Open up a dialog at your school, encourage your students to organize, encourage them to use their experiences as well as their pain and successes to mobilize and help those around them."

The Summit included a panel discussion with counselors and psychologists working both at the secondary and postsecondary level.

"Our schools are places of hope and growth and increasing opportunity for students to access school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and support staff that will help students experience social and emotional wellness in addition to academic success," said Chris Manley, president-elect of the Idaho School Counselors Association and a counselor at Whittier Elementary in Boise.

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Dr. Megan Rides at the Door, director of the National Native Children's Trauma Center at the University of Montana said we need to enlist others too.

"We know in our rural and tribal communities, they have less access to mental health assistance, so one of our main strategies has been to ask who else can we enlist? What other school staff or community members can we employ to help students practice relaxation and emotional regulation skills," Dr. Rides at the Door said. "It's really about creating quality connections and finding ways for students to have someone they think they can reach out to and talk about their problems."

I encourage educators to make time to watch a recording of the Summit on the State Board's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7j4VGGyNzPa6g6a-zVTHnA>

As stated in the headline, student mental health is a priority, and Governor Little has tasked us to come up with a list of recommendations in the coming months. We are still getting organized, but if you have ideas you would like to share, please email me at [board@osbe.idaho.gov](mailto:board@osbe.idaho.gov)

On behalf of the State Board, I thank school board members, administrators, educators, support staff, and of course parents for all you have done and continue to do for our students during this incredibly difficult time. Don't let this be the last conversation you have on this topic today, or any day.



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By Dane Higdem  
Moreton & Company

# Electrical System Failures Can Result in Fire. Is Your Fire System Ready to Respond?

This article looks at preventative maintenance on two critical systems in your school, electrical and fire detection, and fire suppression systems.

A principal cause of fires in school buildings is malfunction of electrical equipment. The most common causes of electrical failures are loose connections, overloads, insulation deterioration, and excessive moisture. A properly designed and implemented preventive maintenance program will help to correct routine maintenance problems and reduce the chances of an electrical system malfunction.

A good preventive maintenance program provides for inspection and testing to be done on a scheduled basis. An effective program will help to extend the service life of your electrical and fire system equipment by allowing maintenance staff to find and repair/replace worn, deteriorating, or malfunctioning equipment. To maximize the effectiveness of your program, it should be customized for each of your facilities and managed by qualified personnel.

## ELECTRICAL:

Your electrical preventive maintenance program should have guidelines that include defined periodic inspections:

### *Semi-annual*

- Cycle all infrequently operated circuit breakers to loosen up the mechanisms and to avoid having them stick in the closed position if needed.

- De-energize the equipment before starting your inspection! Inspect all electrical panels. Check for fuse/breaker tampering, corrosion, missing covers, missing knockouts, unidentified switches/circuits, and loose or missing connectors that expose bare wires.
- De-energize it first! Clean all electrical panels and other electrical equipment, using a vacuum or low pressure compressed air.

### *Annual*

- Inspect all panels that contain copper contacts for oxide film build up.
- Inspect major circuit breaker panels. Be certain that all bolts, nuts, pins, rods, levers, and links are in place and properly tightened.
- Check for proper grounding
- Inspect cable runs for damaged seals, insulation, etc. especially important where moisture may enter.
- Check to ensure electrical loading is within design capability and capacity.

You may also want to perform an infrared (IR) video thermographic survey. Thermography works on the principle that electrical equipment normally gives off heat. Electrical equipment that is overloaded or malfunctioning will typically give off excess heat that can be detected with the use of infrared scanning equipment.

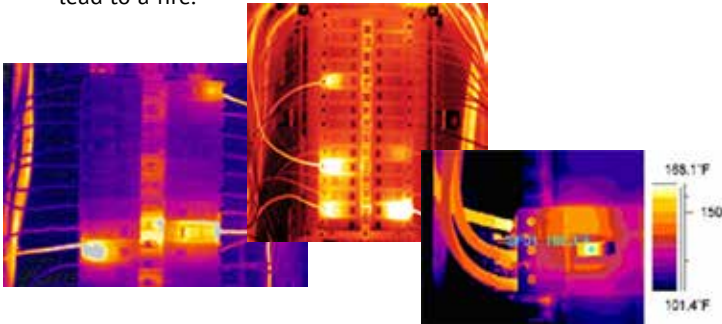
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A thermal camera is used to gather information by observing and recording images of differential patterns of heat to detect a potential electrical problem. Infrared thermography can identify temperature changes early by showing differences in temperatures in breakers, wires and receptacles. Detection of temperature differences allows repairs to be made before they cause a failure, fire or other serious damage. When used as a preventative maintenance process, thermography may be able to detect problems before costly equipment is damaged.

Examples of problems detected with an infrared camera are: Loose fuse clip assemblies, phase imbalance, harmonic feedback, maladjusted bolt-lock switches, loose disconnect knives/receivers, overload conditions, faulty breakers, and emergency transfer switches.

In addition to reducing fire hazards in our schools, infrared thermography can accurately diagnosis the problem, resulting in time needed to make the repairs. **The following three pictures show IR thermographs of circuits, wires, and breakers** that are failing and are at unsafe temperatures that could easily lead to a fire.



The cost of IR cameras has reduced significantly over the last few years which would allow schools to obtain a camera and add IR thermography to the periodic maintenance checklist.

## FIRE SYSTEM:

Automatic fire sprinkler systems are critical to the reduction of fire events on school campuses. Fire sprinkler systems are extremely effective in controlling fires, with most fires extinguished by one or two activated sprinkler heads.

Unfortunately, uncontrolled large fires continue to occur in buildings equipped with fire sprinkler systems when the system is compromised due to an undetected closure of the systems control valves. School maintenance personnel should take an aggressive approach in establishing proper fire sprinkler testing, inspection, and impairment procedures to ensure the systems operational reliability. Each school equipped with fire sprinkler protection should have the system serviced and inspected on at least an annual basis by a licensed fire sprinkler contractor.

All sprinkler system supply valves should be located in secured sprinkler riser rooms and fitted with electronic supervision (tamper detection) for the supply valves that will activate the school fire alarm if closed. For those systems that have control valves that are located outside of secured riser rooms, the water supply valves should be locked in the open position by way of keyed padlocks.

For systems with water supply valves that are not equipped with electronic supervision, weekly visual inspections should be made to ensure that the valves remain in the open position and are securely locked. For systems equipped with electronic supervision, and supply valves that are properly secured in the open position, monthly visual inspections should be completed and documented. Best safety practice is to perform the visual inspection of the sprinkler systems water supply valves at the same time the portable fire extinguishers are inspected. All visual inspections should be documented with the date and initials of the inspector.

There are times when it may be necessary to disable sprinkler fire suppression systems and/or fire alarm systems on campus. The probability of a fire causing major damage is increased whenever a system, alarm, or device is impaired. Impairment is defined as a shutdown (in whole or in part) of a fire protection system. Fire protection systems include sprinkler systems, standpipe/hose systems, fire pumps, fire protection water supplies, fire mains, fire alarm systems, and special extinguishing systems.

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.

The ISBA Insurance Program Property Insurance Carrier requests that schools implement a fire sprinkler impairment procedure that includes notification to the insurance carrier and alarm company if the system is monitored for any fire sprinkler impairment that will last longer than eight (8) hours. When a fire protection system is removed from service for maintenance or repairs that is expected to last longer than eight (8) hours Moreton & Company should be notified of the impairment by calling 1(800)341-6789. Morton & Company can also assist in establishing a sprinkler impairment program for your school.

If someone forgets to reopen an impaired fire sprinkler supply valve, and a fire breaks out, the results could be devastating to the district and the community.

The goal is to ensure that all schools equipped with fire sprinkler systems, maintain those systems so that they are always fully operational, to protect the students and campus from accidental fires.

If you would like to learn more about Infrared (IR) video thermographic surveys, automatic sprinkler please contact:

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## Statistic of the Quarter

**Of 164 Idaho school districts and charter schools that aren't doing classes solely online, 70 require facemasks while 44 encourage that they be worn. <sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> According to Idaho Ed News, a majority of school districts and charter schools that conduct in-person classes are either requiring or encouraging the wearing of face masks. Masks are required in a plurality of districts and charter schools.



**By April Hoy**  
Research & Policy  
Specialist



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**By Misty Swanson**  
ISBA Chief Deputy



ISBA receives phone calls, emails, and other communication from our members sharing how you are keeping your schools open and continuing on with providing ample learning opportunities for your students. Like you, COVID-19 has not stopped ISBA from continuing the work we do. We quickly learned to change direction and find ways to continue the work we have always done, just in new ways. As we conclude 2020, here is a year-end wrap-up of some of the ways ISBA worked through the pandemic.

### Participation in Working Groups

ISBA staff members serve on a variety of committees, working groups, advisory councils, and more. Throughout 2020, we continued our participation, and actually increased the number of committees we represented ISBA on. We quickly became experts at online meetings. Here are just a few that we served on:

- **Education Stakeholders** – met with representatives of the State Board of Education, State Department of Education, Office of the Governor, Idaho Association of School Administrators, Idaho Education Association, Idaho Charter School Commission, and more. These meetings are critical to sharing the issues and finding solutions as the education community.
- **City Club and Boise Chamber of Commerce** – participated in webinars, meetings, and as part of the Boise Chamber's Education and Workforce Committee. These meetings provide excellent information and ISBA mutually benefits by providing a report about both the positive undertakings and challenges that our members are facing.
- **National School Boards Association** – participated in various work-alike groups as well as the NSBA Pacific Region. The NSBA work-alike groups help our staff grow ideas, bounce topic ideas off one another, and find what other states are doing as they respond to the coronavirus pandemic.
- **Idaho Vaccine Advisory Committee** – served on the Committee as a voice for Idaho's public schools. This committee helped determine the schedule for distributing the vaccine, and ISBA was able to successfully advocate that public school staff remain a top priority.
- **Governor's Emergency Task Force** – provided input and resources to the Task Force as Governor Little and the Task Force navigated the changes occurring within Idaho's public schools due to COVID-19.
- **Digital Divide Committee** – provided input and resources to the Committee as they improved connectivity and access to devices for students and developed strategies to implement a blended learning model.

*continued on next page...*



**Legislative Region Meeting** – the ISBA Executive Board and staff participated in a region meeting with legislators around the state. 25 legislators attended this meeting held in November via Zoom. The Executive Board members shared ideas and concerns from around the state. We also shared the resolutions that were recently passed by the ISBA membership during the Business Session.

**Professional Development** – the Professional Development department has stayed busy delivering a variety of professional development opportunities to board members and district/charter staff around the state. The staff and consultants are equipped to provide trainings online or in-person. They have seen such a high-demand for trainings that even a pandemic hasn't slowed them down. Some of the most popular topics have been Roles and Responsibilities, Superintendent Evaluation, Board Norms, Handling Patron Input and Concerns as a Board Member, Building a Communication that Works, Effective Board Meetings, Budget Reports Every Board Member Should See, and many more. To learn more about receiving professional development for your district or charter, please contact the ISBA Office.

**Executive Board Meetings** – realizing the business of ISBA must continue on, the ISBA Executive Board held its meetings as planned with one in April and one in September. Both of the meetings were held via Zoom and very high attendance. In April, the Board reviews the Association's budget, conducts an annual review of the Executive Director, holds Association committee meetings, etc. In September, the Board works on the Association's annual audit, reviews submitted resolutions and bylaw changes, holds Association committee meetings, etc. The Executive Board meetings are held following Robert's Rules of Order and are structured in a similar way to school board meetings with discussion items and action items on the agenda. It is important to ISBA that our own Executive Board follows the same meeting guidelines as they do on their local boards, where appropriate.

**Annual Convention** – I hope you had the opportunity to attend the virtual ISBA Annual Convention in November. We had a record-number of attendees registered with over 800. The Whova app allowed for us to record the workshops so participants could attend as many of the workshops as they liked. I hope you had the opportunity to watch any additional workshops you were interested in and learn as much as possible. If there is a workshop that you weren't able to attend and you were unable to watch the recording, please reach out. I can try sending you a link to the individual workshop.

**NSBA Delegate Assembly** – ISBA is a member of the National School Boards Association ("NSBA"). The NSBA, along with its members, lead the national conversation regarding public education and advocate for public policies, governance, and effectiveness of school boards. Similar to ISBA's Business Session, the NSBA meets annually to vote on its legislative platform at an event called the Delegate Assembly. ISBA has two voting delegates who vote on behalf of Idaho's school districts and charter schools. ISBA's now President, Jody Hendrickx, and Immediate Past President, Wally Hedrick, participated in the virtual Delegate Assembly.

**COVID-19 Recommendations and Guidance** – you most likely heard from ISBA numerous times over the past several months, via email, as we provided guidance and recommendations related to COVID-19 and your schools. You can find the past emails and pieces of information on the ISBA website here: <https://www.idsba.org/coronavirus-covid-19/>. We hope this information provided you with guidance and information as you made critical decisions for your schools.

While so many things have changed in the past several months, I hope this gives you some insight into the work that ISBA has continued to do on your behalf and in support of your board. ISBA truly values our members and the important work you all do. While the past few months have most likely had significant challenges, we appreciate all that you are doing for your local districts and charters.





# SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH SERVICE

The ISBA Superintendent Search Service provides the Board with a variety of expertise including pre- and post-search services; a network of regional and national candidates; assistance navigating Idaho Open Meeting Laws; and being a point of contact for the Board, staff, and candidates.

**ISBA works with the Board to identify the best process for them, using a flexible and customized approach that fits the District's culture. Our role is to assist the Board in making the best decision possible in selecting its next leader.**



## About the Service:

The ISBA launched this service five years ago and has completed 30+ full and partial superintendent searches for Idaho school districts ranging in size from 151 students to 14,500.

Please Contact Misty at 208-854-1476 or [misty@idsba.org](mailto:misty@idsba.org) for any of your Superintendent Search needs.





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**By Quinn Perry**  
Policy &  
Government Affairs  
Director

# Breaking Down Tax Policy

When I started working at the ISBA three years ago, I imagined walking into a Tax Committee hearing would be like walking into a courtroom full of Harvard law professors – speaking language I do not understand, using complicated formulas and – math, which is probably the scariest of all. Instead, what I have learned is that tax policy discussions are significantly less complicated when it's nailed down to what everyone wants out of good tax policy – public schools that provide a quality education to kids and for our local units of government to provide the services we expect such as clean drinking water, stable roads, police, and fire and justice systems. We want our businesses and local economies to thrive and government to do all of this without creating an excessive burden on our taxpayers. It is my hope with this article that ISBA members will feel compelled to talk tax policy with lawmakers in the coming weeks as we look to the 2021 Legislative Session.

## What Happened in 2006 and why it is Relevant Now

Many of you have been around longer than I have and remember the Special Session of 2006. However, for those that were not around (or were like me and barely out of high school!), similar to 2020, elected officials in 2006 heard from their constituents that their rising property taxes were becoming unsustainable. Then-Governor Jim Risch convened a special session where only one bill was on the agenda – HB1. This bill removed one of the “three legged stools” of school funding – the Maintenance & Operations levy. At the time, ISBA and other stakeholders argued vehemently that the state revenues were subject to the ups and downs of the economy. Less than 2 years later, the United States experienced “The Great Recession of 2008.” According to the Center on Budget Policy & Priorities, Idaho’s cut to public schools was among the deepest in the nation. Prior to 2006, 59 of 115 school districts collected supplemental property tax levies. As of today: 93 do.

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We know – and want to deeply acknowledge – the legislature’s commitment to increased funding to public schools over the last seven years, particularly as it relates to teacher salaries, has been historic. However, the State’s public school budget only recently reached its pre-2009 levels adjusted for inflation. Since 2008, school districts have relied on supplemental levies to pay for just basic operations when the intent of those levies was to provide supplemental services that the community wanted to see happen.

## Property Tax Interim Committee – What They Are Talking About

### Transparency

So far, the Property Tax Interim Committee has turned much of its attention to transparency of local government budgets. Unlike school districts and charter schools, cities, counties, and highway districts do not have statutory requirements to post their monthly expenditures in an easily accessible way for their patrons; for the record, fiscal affairs are a public record. Here are some takeaways on Transparency:

- The committee is prepared to ask for nearly \$1.7 million for implementation and ongoing expenses for the State Controller’s Office to implement a uniform reporting system for local government budgets and post this information to the Transparent Idaho website – [www.transparent.idaho.gov](http://www.transparent.idaho.gov).
- In the proposed draft – which may evolve between now and January – the State Department of Education would send the Controller’s office the data for school districts and charter schools, which would then be uploaded to the Transparent Idaho system.
- ISBA, along with other local government associations, are supportive of more transparency.
- If the taxing district (i.e. the school district) had any funds exceeding the provisions in the bill, these would have to be used for property tax relief by offsetting any budget increases in the following year, (excluding funds approved by voters for specific purposes).
- While we are still researching the potential implications of this draft as it relates to schools, I can tell you that it has the real ability to harm cities, counties, and highway districts that must save to prepare for large infrastructure projects like bridges, fire stations, roads, etc. It is likely it would have an impact on school districts that are saving any excess funds to prepare for a facility bond or other critical infrastructure for a school district.

## Caps on Non-School Taxing District Budgets

While I know it does not directly impact schools, it is important to discuss what other local government partners are facing in the 2021 session as it relates to property taxes.

## Fund Reserves (a.k.a. Fund Balances)

Ironically, in the downturn of the economy, there was a lot of disapproval of school districts that had not adequately saved or prepared for a financial downturn. That conversation has changed with a draft bill recently released in this committee that would put limitations on “reserve funds.”

- The first limitation would require that no taxing district keep more than three months of ordinary and operating expenses held as “unassigned” funds, and would allow a separate “rainy day” fund that may hold up to one month of ordinary administrative and ordinary expenses.

- This draft bill would cap budgets at their highest level of the past three years plus the change in the consumer price index (CPI) or 3% (whichever is less) and limit increases from new construction. If the total property tax budget including everything would rise by more than 4%, two-thirds approval from voters would be required. Does this sound familiar?
- Broken down in layman’s terms, this change could put detrimental financial strain on local governments that not only provide critical services to our communities, but are also required to provide a list services longer than I can fit in this article.
- It is relevant to schools because we know many school districts and charter schools partner with local governments on land partnerships, school resource officers, and more and a decrease in property tax revenue is akin to increased costs on those areas in which we all collaborate, and because schools mutually benefit from good roads and adequate infrastructure in our communities.

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## Other Possible Avenues for Property Tax Relief

### Homeowners Exemption

In 2016, the Idaho Legislature passed a bill that ultimately ended up having ramifications for Idaho homeowners because it changed the way the homeowner exemption worked. Before 2016, each homeowner got an exemption on 50% of their home value, up to a floating amount tied to the Idaho Housing Price Index.

- For instance, if your house was assessed at \$200,000, you could get the maximum exemption and pay tax on only \$100,000 of the value, assuming \$100,000 was that year's index amount. If property values rose across the state, the index amount rose too. Because of the way Idaho's property tax system worked, the business and agricultural sectors made up the difference. After 2016, the exemption was capped at a straight \$100,000. So, if property values are rising in your area and your house used to be worth \$200,000 – but with the booming real estate market – went up in value to \$400,000 your exemption remains at \$100,000. This means you are now paying tax on \$300,000 value. That means much more cash out of your pockets to pay property taxes. While homeowners are paying more and more in property taxes, commercial landowners are not seeing the same significant increases.
- Despite bipartisan efforts in the legislature to bring back the index, the proposal has remained stagnant.

### Increase Circuit Breaker & Disabled Veteran Relief

The state will provide relief under the Circuit Breaker program – which was created to help people who are elderly, disabled, or widowed with their property taxes.

- The maximum amount for that program is \$1,320 per recipient, per year; and it was last increased in 2006.
- The qualifying income amount is capped at \$31,820. The maximum relief for disabled veterans is \$1,320 per year, with no income limit.
- A simple change, such as removing Social Security Income, would allow more Idahoans to qualify for these benefits.
- Because the state funds the exemption, it is not a tax shift and is unlikely to create an undue burden from the state's perspective. Ultimately it would benefit those who need it most.

### Impact Fees for School Facilities

While it was discussed initially in the context of property tax relief, there was no formal vote on impact fees by the Property Tax Interim Committee.

- The use of impact fee revenue for school construction and remodels would enhance a school's capacity and would relieve pressure on property taxpayers that currently bear the entire burden of school facility construction through general obligation bonds.
- ISBA is continuing to collaborate with a multitude of stakeholders to achieve this.

## What's Next?

ISBA has long sought to have stable, predictable, and fair sources of income to meet the ever-increasing needs of Idaho's students. Solutions have long eluded the legislature, but we are ever hopeful that we can have a fruitful conversation that would lead to an overhaul of the educational funding system and meet the needs of all students. I hope that I have helped school board members and other school leaders gain the confidence to spearhead discussions about property taxes in our state and in your communities and school districts.

### Some good information to chew on:

- In 2008, Idaho tried to lure a nuclear company to Eastern Idaho during the Great Recession by saying if it invested at least \$1 billion into Idaho within seven years, the State would cap its property tax value at \$400 million permanently. Meanwhile, that French nuclear company passed on Idaho, but Micron reached that threshold in 2011. In 2019, Micron paid \$4.75 million in property taxes – only 23% of what it would owe if it were based on the \$1.86 billion assessed value, which it rose to last year.
- All taxes Idaho collects from internet sales are put into a "tax relief fund" which, as of November 1st, contained \$125 million, (\$83.56 million from FY20 and \$41.44 million so far in FY21). It is growing at a rate of approximately \$10 million/month, but is shielded from the general fund, most of which is allocated to public schools.

# ISBA STUDENT Poetry CONTEST

- Open to grades 6 - 12
- Entries must be received by 2/13/21
- Email poem to [mika@idsba.org](mailto:mika@idsba.org)
- Poems must be 250 words or less
- Include name, grade, & school district
- Winners will be featured in ISBA's Spring SLATE Magazine



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# A CONVENTION LIKE NO OTHER!



ISBA hopes all those who attended the 2020 ISBA Virtual Convention found great value and inspiration from this event. It was our intention to provide you all with new ideas and solutions to share with your district or charter school. It was a tremendous undertaking and uncharted territory for our staff. There are so many people to thank, and without them this event would not have been possible. It truly was a team effort.

Although we would have all preferred to meet in person to learn, network, share, improve, and to have fun, we fully understand that this was the best decision we could have made for the health and safety of our association. Thank you all very much for your patience and support during this unprecedented time!!!

## See You Next Year in Boise!!!







*NSBA Executive Director, Anna Maria Chávez, greets attendees to kick off the 2020 ISBA Annual Convention.*



*Daniel Coleman with Quest CPAs presents his workshop on "Understanding Audited Financial Statements".*



*ISBA Chief Deputy Misty Swanson discusses "The Important Process of Hiring Your Next Superintendent".*



*ISBA President, Wally Hedrick, presents Jody Hendrickx from St. Maries SD, with the Board Chair of the Year Award.*

# THANK YOU IDLA

Thank You to the **Idaho Digital Learning Alliance (IDLA)**! IDLA was the Education Technology Partner for the ISBA Convention. As the ISBA staff navigated unknown territory in planning an online Convention, IDLA was a constant partner in providing technology advice and assistance so we could provide the best learning opportunity possible. The expertise and guidance they provided was amazing! We appreciate IDLA for their longtime education partnership with ISBA as well as the great work they provide to Idaho school districts and charter schools. Thank you, IDLA, for all that you do!

**Idaho Digital Learning Alliance**

**Phone:** (208) 342-0207

**Email:** idla@idla@k12.id.us

**Website:** www.idahodigitallearning.org



# THANK YOU PSI

Thank you to **Production Services International (PSI)**! PSI provided phenomenal video assistance to allow ISBA's general sessions to run seamlessly. They provided video recorders, microphones, an HDMI stream switcher, and video technology expertise to ISBA. Equally as impressive, they provide services to Idaho's schools! With an office based in Idaho, they have installed audio/visual equipment in various schools in the state. If your district or charter would like to explore the wide variety of ways PSI can help you, please contact them.

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# BOARD MEMBER profile WILLY SCHMITT

West Jefferson School District



**Willy Schmitt**  
Vice Chair,  
West Jefferson  
School District #253

ISBA Executive Board  
Region 6 Vice Chair

Raised on a family farm in Montevieu, Idaho, Willy Schmitt is no stranger to giving back to his community by supporting the education systems around him. Willy graduated from West Jefferson High School in 1979 and now serves as the Vice Chair of the West Jefferson School Board and the Chairman of the West Jefferson Education Foundation. Willy initially joined the school board to help the district with conflicts within the community, improve employee quality, and increase training to help West Jefferson become a better district. Willy has stayed active for eight years – becoming a key figure and positive role model within the West Jefferson community. His passion has blossomed as he took on the additional responsibility of becoming an alternate on the ISBA Executive Board and eventually his region's Vice Chair.

In his various roles within the West Jefferson School Board over the last eight years, Willy has helped with countless fundraisers that meet requests from

teachers to help with classroom needs, student field trips for area college visits, novels for the high school English class, a camera for the high school yearbook class, picnic tables for the outdoor dining area, and even pioneer costumes for the fourth grade Idaho History play.

Willy believes all educators should be acknowledged for their commitment and contribution to the communities around them. He urges all people to not be afraid to volunteer as he believes our children need all the assistance and guidance we can provide them so they, too, can become involved members of their communities.

Beyond his support of education within his community and state, Willy enjoys restoring and driving classic cars, snowmobiling, and attending school activities and sports events alongside his wife, Terry.

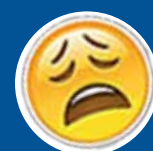
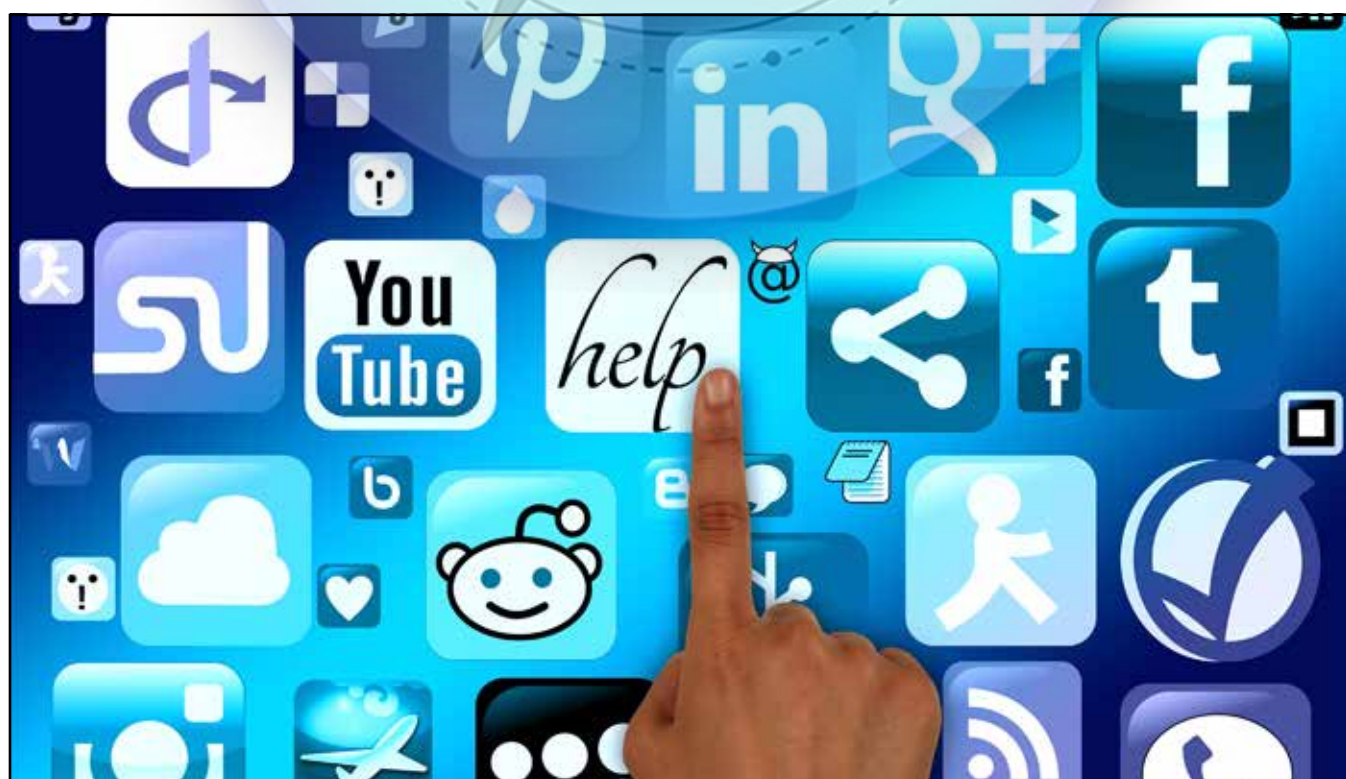




# NAVIGATING THE SOCIAL MEDIA SEA

## Tips for School District Leaders Communicating Online

*by Beth Trimble, Kristin Zastoupil, Ian Halperin, and Megan Overman*



School public relations professionals bemoan media headlines such as “ISD educator faces charges.” Often the offense was not district-related, so why attach the person to the school district? Rarely do you hear “Manufacturing worker faces DUI charges” or “Pet food store employee arrested.” So why are educators almost always singled out?

The answer is simple: The standards are different for those of us in education. Certified educators have the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, which provides detailed guidelines for behavior, toward our students and colleagues as well as parents and members of the community. The Educator’s Code of Ethics applies to us wherever we go—the classroom, grocery store, vacation, and on social media. Similarly, Policy BBF(LOCAL) establishes high ethical standards of conduct for members of the school board.

## Expectations

Standards in the Code of Ethics are fairly detailed; what varies are community expectations across the state. Local school leaders must know the expectations of their communities. When it comes to social media, this may include the types of posts, frequency, reply time, even how a post looks—graphics, text, photos, links, etc.

Expectations can extend beyond the district’s own social media channels to other public community pages, such as “parents of” pages, local mom groups, or community talk groups. Is the district expected to dispel rumors on public social media groups? How is that managed? Who has the authority to comment or post on the district’s behalf? While this can seem daunting, districts usually choose one of two avenues: post and comment only on district channels, or monitor and correct/comment if necessary on public groups.

This article discusses both options. However, regardless of which option your district prefers, the choice should be communicated to all individuals who would be involved in social media management and response.

## Proactive Planning

With that in mind, let’s review a few tools of the social media platforms that should serve as guides for any district. If your district does not have a social media strategic communications plan, we highly recommend you add that tool to your toolbox. At a minimum, social media goals should be part of your district’s communication and strategic plans. Outcomes should be outlined through goals with measures for both the short and long term. Your district should have in place a public Rules of Engagement/Terms of Use for your social platform(s). Facebook has the best avenue for posting these community expectations on your channel.

Additionally, the district’s Acceptable Use Policy should cover additional details about the use of district resources, technology safety, and consequences for inappropriate use. (See Policies BBI, CQ, and DH). Finally, Board Operating Procedures should have a section that covers board member expectations in the digital world as well as other communications avenues. Each of these tools should be reviewed annually and concurrently to ensure consistency by both the school board and administration, with any changes detailed to all employees.

## Responding via Social Media

### Q: Should you respond?

**A:** Many Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) members agree that a district administrator should respond to public concerns, rumors, negative posts, or other social media issues. Collaborative working relationships between the board, superintendent, and office of communications can ensure that messaging is consistent, timely, and legal.

“Most boards have clear expectations on how, who, and when members can respond to questions and concerns,” said Wylie ISD Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations Ian Halperin. “Generally, the board president is charged with making any official replies on behalf of the entire board. The same expectations should apply to social media, as well.”

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For instance, ignoring the rumor of a weapon on campus can cause a widespread reaction from frightened parents and may cause confusion in the community. Allowing the communications professional the authority to utilize social media, along with district notification systems, to push out the correct information is vital to a district's rapid recovery. A district employee or even board member without all the accurate facts could complicate the process if they negatively respond to a parent, share additional false information, or even illegally discuss the situation if it was under investigation.

**Q: Where should you respond?**

**A:** There may be a situation that requires a joint statement from the board and the district; if so, this is when it would be most appropriate to respond on official district platforms and pages.

On nondistrict pages, such as a parent group or community talk group, the district's response should be consistent. For example, in Red Oak ISD, the head of communications is a member of a social media talk group. When conversations turn to district matters, she routinely responds with accurate district information while redirecting individuals to the district channel or website for updates.

"In Red Oak ISD, while we prefer individuals choose to follow the district feed and our channels for the most up-to-date content, we also choose to meet people where they are," stated Red Oak ISD Executive Director of Communications Beth Trimble. "We try to be very open and transparent about issues in the district, and our community expects that trust from us. I even have people who will tag me in conversations in external group posts."

Many other districts forgo the above two options of choosing to post only on the official channels and rely instead on their parents and community supporters to correct misinformation, often sharing or reposting the same content from the district to outside groups and pages.

**Q: How should you respond to negative comments?**

**A:** How does a district deal with negative posters and "trolls?" These individuals constantly criticize the district and bring up negative matters from the past on every post. The best advice is to address them offline, not in a public Facebook feed where you could be accused of "hiding behind the keyboard." With a little research, you can easily find a publicly listed phone number. Or you can use the private-messaging function of the online platform to continue a private or "offline" conversation

that is not in public view. Invite them to a conversation. Listen to their issues. Often, after being heard, they can become your biggest advocates.

"In Forney ISD, we really take a grassroots approach when starting out with social media critics by picking up the phone and calling," said Forney ISD Executive Director of Marketing & Communications Kristin Zastoupil. "It takes about three months of top leadership calling to ask people about their experiences and reminding them that our doors are open and our phones are available to change the social media tide. If they have issues they need addressing, we don't respond online unless it's to redirect them to contact us. We call and try to take the conversation to a one-on-one. It humanizes our district and our team, and people feel more open to contact us via phone, e-mail, or in person in the future."

The important thing to remember is once you have addressed an issue with the facts: move on. There is no need to continue reiterating or dispelling rumors over and over. State the facts on your page and other groups if you prefer, then let it go, even if you have nay-sayers who want to continue to dislike the facts.

## Employees and the First Amendment

The First Amendment of the Constitution states that Congress shall make no law limiting freedom with respect to religion, expression, peaceful assembly, or right of citizens to petition the government. It is a common misconception that the First Amendment prohibits anyone from limiting free speech, including private, nongovernmental entities. It also does not address any consequences to free speech. For district employees, free speech on social media or other public platforms is an extension of that individual's self-expression.

Unfettered speech by district employees on their personal pages can lead down a slippery slope, however, if their speech were to violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), be considered less than professional by the community and district, or involved illegal conduct. A teacher posting a vacation picture smoking marijuana in Colorado—where it is allowed by state law—is still violating federal law if the THC content of the marijuana is more than 0.3 percent. But of bigger concern is the fact that he or she is a teacher, held to higher standards by the community as an educator of our youth. With one vacation post, the person's ability to do his or her job has now been compromised since many parents would not want that educator to teach their children.

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Posting students' work with comments about their inabilities, "liking" marginalizing jokes, degrading a person for his or her views, or sharing pictures depicting alcohol use or dangerous activities could all be questioned by the public, regardless of a teacher's abilities in the classroom.

"Anyone working in education is held to a higher standard in the court of public opinion because parents trust them with their children and communities trust them to educate the future," said Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Director of Communications Megan Overman. "While educators and elected board members do have rights as individuals on their personal social media pages, we all have to remember that those lines can blur very quickly when our actions step outside the expectations of our communities."

Following established procedures and being careful to only consider job-related information, many human resource departments conduct online searches as part of the applicant review process. Candidates for educator positions—and board candidates—would be wise to self-evaluate what their social media sites say about them.

## Other Legal Implications

Finally, districts must be aware of other legal issues that arise when using social media.

Nearly all information of a school district is potentially subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act, and districts have separate legal obligations related to records retention under the Local Government Records Act. There are often two avenues of thought regarding the district's social media content. In an abundance of caution, some districts choose to back up all social media content, often through a third-party vendor. Other districts take a riskier approach, asserting that the content is on a public platform and, therefore, is already available to the public. Districts should work with their public information officer and legal counsel to determine what steps they should take with regard to the district's social media content to ensure compliance with public information and records retention laws.

Districts should also establish their own Rules of Engagement to set expectations for public comments on district-controlled social media platforms. To have the best argument in the event of a First Amendment claim on social media, we recommend (and have been advised by counsel) to never delete a comment on your page unless it violates your Rules of Engagement, which should include the prohibition of:

- Obscene or vulgar words
- Endorsement of actions endangering others
- Promotion of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Violation of intellectual property rights, privacy rights, or rights of others
- Defamatory statements or threats
- Statements that advocate lawless or disruptive action or incite such action
- Hate speech or scurrilous attacks on a person or group creating hostility or violence
- Speech that interferes with school activities or operation

If you must delete something, screenshot it first and keep it in a file with the poster's name and date. You will also need to notify the poster of a Rules of Engagement violation warning, which you should also document, and that a subsequent violation will lead to a ban from the page. Any second offender or continuing offenses should be notified and banned, as well.

Deletions are easier as a Rules of Engagement violation, but should you ever hide a comment? Hiding a comment allows the poster and the poster's online friends to view the comment, but not the rest of the public. Just because you may not like someone's comment, if it doesn't violate your Rules of Engagement, seriously consider the potential legal consequences before hiding a post. Comments from all points of view should make an organization better. Showing the public that you are willing to listen can go a long way.

## Final Words

Social media can be an excellent tool for school district communications. Sharing the stories about your students, staff, and schools on multiple platforms can reach a wider audience on the device everyone is carrying in their hands. With a collaborative plan and desired outcomes, you can drive up your audience, engage your community, and sell the amazing product of your school system.

As with all well-executed communications strategies, know your community standards, set the expectations, and communicate them to all individuals involved. And be proactive. Being the credible source of information—in good times and bad—will help you build trust and digital relationships with your community.

**Beth Trimble** of Red Oak ISD, **Kristin Zastoupil** of Forney ISD, **Ian Halperin** of Wylie ISD, and **Megan Overman** of Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD are members of the Texas School Public Relations Association.



# 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS

## To Enhance Membership Value & Benefits

### POLICY UPDATE SERVICES

#### 89 District subscribers, 30 Charter School Subscribers

- **2020 Winter:** 33 Policies
- **2020 Spring:** 37 policies
- **2020 Summer:** 38 policies, including a series of "Emergency" Policies
- **2020 Mid-Summer:** Title IX Policies and Procedures to ALL ISBA Members
- **2020 Fall:** 16 policies
- **Hours answering policy questions for policy update members:** 1, 920

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

- **Tracked:** 64 bills in the 2020 session
  - **35** education bills
  - **7** property tax or election bills
  - **12** public works or commerce bills
  - **10** Finance Bills
- **Passed:** 3 Bills Based on ISBA Resolutions (Excision, Increased Reimbursements to Drivers Ed, and Advanced Professional Rung of the Career Ladder)
- **Killed:** One Bill on ISBA Resolution (Usurping Local Control on Firearms in Schools)
- **200 Hours** in Committee Hearings from January 6 to March 16
- **1 Extraordinary Special Session** – Advocated for Liability Immunity

### BUSINESS AFFILIATES

ISBA's Business Affiliates provide phenomenal services and products to assist Idaho's schools. Many of these companies offer exclusive prices for ISBA members.

- **Districts and Charters** received services or products from various affiliates
- **9 Business Affiliates**
- **32 school districts and charter schools** use an ISBA-endorsed board meeting management system

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## SUPERINTENDENT SEARCHES

- **Assisted 15 school districts** this year with superintendent searches
- **Completed 36 superintendent searches** in the past six years
- **The ISBA Superintendent Search Service** provided the Boards with a variety of expertise including pre- and post-search services; a network of regional and national candidates; assistance navigating Idaho Open Meeting Laws; and being a point of contact for the Board, staff, and candidates.

## BUYBOARD BUYING CONSORTIUM

- **40 BuyBoard members** in Idaho
- **23 BuyBoard vendors** who were utilized, with a total spend of \$1.3 million in products and services purchased
- **To date for the fiscal year** beginning 9/1/2020, current purchase volume is \$4.5 million in products and services purchased

## LEGAL SERVICES

### AJH – Anderson, Julian, Hull

- **\$53,459.35** - Total legal services benefit received by school districts and charters:
- **Of that amount, \$15,973.11** - spent on COVID related legal advice
- **628.5** - Total number of hours for AJH this year

## MEMBER EVENTS, COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH

- **25 Events** Held in 2020
- **Day on the Hill** - February 2020, held in Boise, 204 attendees
- **Executive Board Meetings** - held via Zoom,
  - April 2020 - 22 attendees
  - September 2020 - 20 attendees
- **COVID-19 ISBA & Public Health District Town Hall**,
  - August 2020 - 200 attendees
- **COVID-19 Legal Q&A Town Hall**
  - August 2020 - 245 attendees
- **Fall Region Meetings** - September 2020, held via Zoom - 9 regions participated
- **Convention Region Meetings** - November 2020, held via Zoom - 9 regions participated
- **Annual Convention** - November 2020, held via Zoom,
  - 818 attendees
- **Executive Board Region Update with Legislators** - November 2020, held via Zoom,
  - 25 legislators and 13 Board Members
- **161 email blasts** - Sent out since January 3, 2020
- **238 Facebook posts** - Starting January 1st and ending December 2020
- **10 Issues** of Capitol Notes
- **4 Issues** of SLATE Magazine





**By Donna Eggers**

Public Information Officer,  
Idaho Commission for  
Libraries

# LiLiSchools.org

## A New Research Option For Students

The <https://www.lilischools.org> site offers K through 12 students and parents educational and research content in a targeted, streamlined learning environment. The site is free to Idahoans via any internet connection and is available 24/7.

The lilischools.org landing page provides clear choices leading only to grade-appropriate databases.

The information is separated by grade level, K through 4th, 5th through 8th, and 9th through 12th. Age-appropriate tools and information are together in one place and include such resources as: Ebsco's Explora Primary, Middle, and Secondary; NovelList K-8; and World Book Kids, Discover, Student, and Advanced.

The content found on the array of databases is informative and engaging. For example, World Book Kids includes many photos, separated by category, such as: arts, living things, places, and science and mathematics. There is also a section just on animals, which kids of all ages enjoy. Another example is Explora for Middle Schools, where it is easy for students to learn about such topics as: business and government, current issues, geography, and history.

Another powerful tool is Ebsco's LearningExpress Library, which includes a wealth of resources for students and adults, including career preparation, college admissions test preparation, the popular software skills center, and the school center, which has skill-building resources for classroom and homework success. The LearningExpress resources work with Common Core State Standards.

Although a more scaled-down option than the <https://lili.org> site, <https://lilischools.org> is particularly helpful for novice researchers who may be overwhelmed by the abundance of resources on lili.org.

Additionally, lilischools.org could be a useful resource for parents concerned about their students accessing unfiltered internet content away from school.

For an educational resource that is engaging and easy to use, check out <https://lilischools.org>.

Both <https://lilischools.org> and <https://lili.org> are provided by the Idaho Commission for Libraries.

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[liliforschools.org](https://liliforschools.org)





# E-BOOKS STATEWIDE

freely available through Idaho  
public & school libraries  
to support K-12 students

<https://libraries.idaho.gov/idea/>



**Sora**  
The student reading app

**OverDrive**

## A New IDEA For Idahoans

The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) recently launched its Idaho Digital E-Book Alliance (IDEA), through which e-books and e-audio titles are made available at no cost to public and school libraries.

The ICfL and OverDrive have contracted to create a collection that will be made available to libraries with existing OverDrive service through agreements with public libraries and school districts/libraries.

The collection will also be made available to the estimated 280,000 Idahoans living outside of a public library service area.

As another way to continue its strong support of student learning, the ICfL designed the IDEA collection so that approximately 75 percent of the content is comprised of children's, juvenile, and teen titles.

Students may obtain access to, and borrow items from, the IDEA collection at the school district level via the OverDrive Sora app. Authentication happens through the district's Student Information System (SIS). OverDrive does not collect data or have students create accounts. Students will not need a special library card to check out materials.

To establish the IDEA collection, the ICfL utilized more than \$200,000 in federal funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the Library Services and Technology Act.

State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White said, "Almost a quarter of Idaho's small and/or rural public libraries are currently unable to offer e-books, and more than 90 percent of Idaho's schools lack access to e-books. This gap in service has left a high percentage of Idahoans with few options for educational and recreational materials during the pandemic. We are happy to help fill that void with the IDEA collection."

For much more on the Idaho Digital E-Book Alliance, please visit: <https://libraries.idaho.gov/idea/>.



# Why Your Annual Wellness Visit is Important

**Keep your health in check with important screenings**

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, many elective services were postponed, as well as annual wellness visits. Now that **primary care provider (PCP)** offices are open for routine care again, make sure that you reschedule your wellness visit or other important care that you may have delayed. A wellness visit gives you an important look into your overall health, and you should have one every year – especially if you are older than 50.



## Your PCP Is There For You

Your PCP is your partner in health and it's important that you build a relationship so that you can both be looking out for your health. Your PCP will also want to make sure that you can have access to preventive care in a safe environment. PCP offices are accepting appointments for preventive care such as wellness visits, and have put safety protocols in place <sup>1</sup> to make sure that you can stay healthy. When you're scheduling preventive care, ask about the office's protocols so that you know how to prepare.

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## Check In On Your Overall Health

An annual wellness visit is also the time to discuss care such as cholesterol screening <sup>2</sup>, A1c levels testing <sup>3</sup>, and other screenings and tests to identify potential chronic diseases early. You might also talk to your PCP about small changes that you can make that might reduce your chance of getting diseases and some cancers. Things like diet <sup>4</sup> and exercise <sup>5</sup> can play a role in helping you stay healthy and lower your risk of some diseases. Leading a healthy life is one of the best ways to keep yourself from getting sick. <sup>6</sup>

## Make Sure You Get Important Preventive Screenings

According to a report by Epic Health Research Network <sup>7</sup>, screenings for breast and cervical cancer fell by 94% and screenings for colon cancer fell by 86% in March 2020 when compared to screening volumes between January 2017 – January 2020. The pandemic hasn't changed the importance of getting preventive care and services. Talk to your PCP about what is best for you. There are even some cancer screening tests <sup>8</sup> that can be done from the comfort of your own home.

## Get Routine Vaccines

Staying up to date on immunizations is an easy way to keep yourself and others healthy. Vaccines have helped keep many diseases from becoming commonplace<sup>9</sup>, and it is just as important to get vaccinated now as it was before. Immunizations rates have fallen<sup>10</sup> during the COVID-19 pandemic, which increases the risk of outbreaks of preventable diseases while we're all also trying to deal with the surge of COVID-19. Make sure that you and your family are current on your vaccines.

## Preventive Care Check List

Practicing preventive care is important for your overall health. As mentioned above, it can help you identify health problems early – making them easier to treat – and keep your friends, family, and neighbors healthy by keeping disease rates low with vaccines.

In addition to having an annual wellness visit, here are some commonly recommended preventive tests and screenings:

- **Annual flu shot**
- **A1c testing**
- **Microalbumin testing**
- **Diabetic retinal eye exam**
- **Cholesterol screening**
- **Depression screening**
- **Booster immunizations to protect against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough**
- **Colorectal cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer and cervical cancer screenings**

## Schedule An Appointment

Call your PCP today to schedule your annual wellness visit. When you have a better picture of your health, you can make changes to improve your overall health.

### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/steps-to-prepare.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/steps-to-prepare.html)

<sup>2</sup> [heart.org/en/health-topics/cholesterol/how-to-get-your-cholesterol-tested](https://heart.org/en/health-topics/cholesterol/how-to-get-your-cholesterol-tested)

<sup>3</sup> [mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/a1c-test/about/pac-20384643](https://mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/a1c-test/about/pac-20384643)

<sup>4</sup> [cdc.gov/nutrition/about-nutrition/why-it-matters.html](https://cdc.gov/nutrition/about-nutrition/why-it-matters.html)

<sup>5</sup> [cdc.gov/physicalactivity/about-physical-activity/why-it-matters.html](https://cdc.gov/physicalactivity/about-physical-activity/why-it-matters.html)

<sup>6</sup> [health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/how-to-boost-your-immune-system](https://health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/how-to-boost-your-immune-system)

<sup>7</sup> [ehrn.org/wp-content/uploads/Preventive-Cancer-Screenings-during-COVID-19-Pandemic.pdf](https://ehrn.org/wp-content/uploads/Preventive-Cancer-Screenings-during-COVID-19-Pandemic.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [healthgrades.com/right-care/cancer/6-at-home-cancer-screening-tests](https://healthgrades.com/right-care/cancer/6-at-home-cancer-screening-tests)

<sup>9</sup> [cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/why.htm](https://cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/why.htm)

<sup>10</sup> [nytimes.com/2020/04/23/health/coronavirus-measles-vaccines.html](https://nytimes.com/2020/04/23/health/coronavirus-measles-vaccines.html)





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# Talent Pipeline Management<sup>®</sup>

## A Force For Idaho's Future



**By Sharon N. Hawkins**  
Communications Director,  
Idaho Association of  
Commerce & Industry

It was 2017, and the Board of Directors for the Idaho Association of Commerce & Industry (IACI) – Employers Advocating Economic Opportunity in Idaho – was convened for its quarterly board meeting. These busy corporate executives of Idaho's major employers were trying to juggle the various policy issues at hand for the state's largest and oldest business association, while keeping tabs on their responsibilities at each of their own companies. One specific agenda item caused them all to look up with renewed focus and rapidly become engaged on the topic.



That topic was Workforce Development. With the recession finally behind them, employers had been experiencing a shortage of properly trained and skilled employees to fulfill the needs of their growing businesses. It was not a problem any were easily resolving themselves, and these executives concurred that it was the number one priority for employers statewide. Thus solidified IACI's developing partnership with the Idaho Workforce Development Council and, ultimately, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (Chamber).

The newly reorganized Idaho Workforce Development Council (WDC) under the Office of the Governor was tasked as a new industry-driven Council to champion the development and implementation of a fresh approach to a statewide, strategic workforce development plan. The plan is to alleviate the existing disconnect with education providers in meeting industries' workforce needs. The WDC is focused on better coordination and assistance to match education and training to Idaho job opportunities, and to prospective employees to provide better line-of-sight between education/training and careers.

The critical interest by the state's business community in improving workforce development and the new focus and mission of the WDC perfectly aligned for a partnership on this key issue. IACI's subsequent research on potential programs to assist the state in this endeavor, and its prior relationship with the Chamber, led IACI to the Chamber's already successful Talent Pipeline Management Academy<sup>®</sup> (TPM). Idaho was now poised to head in a new, innovative direction.

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With the support and approval of a Workforce Training Grant from the WDC, IACI began the implementation of a statewide TPM program for Idaho in June 2020. Employers need to fill higher-level jobs, improve employee retention rates, and decrease the time required for an employee to reach full productivity. For these challenges, upskilling strategies are critical, but there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Like with any business strategy, leaders must first accurately diagnose the problem before jumping to conclusions or solutions. The TPM approach promotes just that via a structured process that results in evidence-based decision-making.

TPM is a unique industry-led workforce development strategy launched by the Chamber in 2014 that applies supply chain management principles to talent. TPM builds the capacity of the business community to better manage career pathways so that students and workers have better employment training and opportunities, and employers get access to the skilled workforce they need. The TPM process has already been successfully working across the country for industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, construction, utilities, and information technology. More than 250 TPM practitioners have graduated from

the TPM Academy across the country, a customized TPM “train-the-trainer model”, with a focus on creating and improving external hiring pipelines, as well as upskilling of current employees.

In June 2020, IACI and the WDC convened the first class of Idaho's TPM Academy with 30 participants from across the state. Participants were invited from the six regions of Idaho and are employed by Career-Technical Education, local community colleges, workforce training centers or are already involved in economic development or workforce development efforts in their communities. The new TPM training will build on their already excellent skills and experience by prompting a paradigm shift in the way Idaho businesses and education providers train our workforce now and into the future.

Even through the many challenges of Covid-19 restrictions, IACI and the Chamber were able to provide the full training for its 30-person TPM Academy class between June and December 2020. Idaho's first TPM class has officially graduated and begins the exciting process of developing employer cohorts in each of their local communities to develop and incorporate successful hiring and training strategies.

These employer cohorts will be created in industries such as construction, manufacturing, health care, mining, technology, cybersecurity, hospitality, welding/electronics, utilities, and more. The employer cohorts will work together with guidance from the TPM coordinator to make use of available local education resources, as well as create new pipelines of training and skilled talent for their communities. Career-technical education, certifications, apprenticeships, and related opportunities will allow Idaho to ‘home grow’ the employees of the future, to enable our own successes.

As part of IACI's education and workforce priorities, and the Governor's statewide education goals, we believe the TPM program is a key vehicle to strengthen Idaho's economic rebound. We are excited to send our TPM graduates back out into their local communities with their newly honed skills. They will directly engage employers in a unique way to articulate the skills their employees need to be successful, for the benefit of the entire state. The seeds of the TPM program have been planted, and we are anxious to see the great talent pipeline results that will now grow successfully throughout Idaho! We look forward to your support of this innovative approach in your communities.



# The STEM Diploma: Little Known Legislation That Could Be Critical For Idaho's Future Economic Prosperity



**By John McFarlane**  
Partnerships Coordinator,  
Idaho STEM Action Center  
Office of the Governor

In 2019, there were over 7,000 unfilled STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) jobs in Idaho - jobs that, on average, pay twice what non-STEM jobs do. Employment in STEM fields in Idaho is highly diverse and includes high tech, healthcare, agriculture, advanced manufacturing, natural resource management, and broadcast media, to name a few. Employers need team members who are critical thinkers, creative problem solvers and skilled collaborators in order to be able to thrive in a constantly changing business environment. Building on children's natural curiosity, educators are working to help their students develop these skills as early as preschool. Ultimately, students who continue to pursue STEM in high school can receive special recognition by earning Idaho's STEM diploma.

Signed into law in 2018, IC 33-523 seeks to address industry needs while honoring graduating seniors who have pursued more rigorous STEM coursework. Specifically, students who earn eight credits in mathematics, eight credits in science, and an additional five credits in STEM courses of their choice, are eligible for the STEM diploma. In 2019, the first year for which data are available, 1458

students throughout Idaho met this criteria. In 2020, that number ballooned to 2440 - an increase of 60%. Unfortunately, only a fraction of those students received a STEM diploma, largely due to a lack of awareness on the part of many districts.

In response to this low rate of participation, Idaho STEM Action Center is working with industry partners, post-secondary institutions, and other state agencies throughout Idaho to raise awareness of the STEM diploma. Idaho STEM Action Center recognizes the need to develop incentives to encourage students to pursue STEM careers. It is estimated that in ten years, 80% of all jobs in Idaho will require STEM skills. Giving students the opportunity to earn a STEM diploma not only affords them a competitive advantage, but also provides industry and higher ed with important information regarding a student's qualifications that can impact his/her placement and potential career path. Additionally, doing so will help to fill the STEM career pipeline with skilled young people, support our state's continued economic prosperity, and ensure that Idaho's youth can find challenging, rewarding and lucrative employment right here in the Gem State.



**IDAHO**  
**STEM**  
ACTION CENTER



**By Karen Echeverria**  
ISBA Executive Director

# Here We Are ...

Here we are, nine months later and it is still hard for me to believe that we are still dealing with this pandemic. The even harder part to try and comprehend is that we still have some time to go before we will see the end of it. I'm so proud of the way that all of you have dealt with the mess that was laid in your lap. I know that it hasn't been easy and that you are getting beat up at every turn. I hope you all know that we are here to help if we can. Never hesitate to reach out.

## Vaccines

As part of our continued work on your behalf, I have been serving on the Governor's Vaccine Advisory Council. As I'm sure you have all heard repeatedly on the news, the vaccines are here. The big question is when and how many. The job of the Committee is to determine who will get the vaccine first, second, third, and so on. As you can imagine my focus has been on getting teachers and all support staff moved up on the list. As I'm sure you all know, the Committee, with the help of the Governor, did move teachers up on the list. It is somewhat overwhelming to learn about the massive undertaking that will be needed to get everyone vaccinated.

The first group of individuals to receive the vaccine are hospital workers and staff, followed by residents and employees at long term care facilities, and then all first responders. Once those individuals are vaccinated, school employees will be next on the list. No matter what, given the number of people in the world that will need to be vaccinated, it will take months before everyone is vaccinated.

While it will not occur as quickly as any of us hope, there is room for optimism. It is now really just a matter of time.

## Census and Rezone

While we deal the effects of COVID, time and other events march on. For those of you that have been around for a few years, you know that the census means more than funding for states. Once Idaho receives their census data, school districts will be required to look at the populations in all of their trustee zones and possibly redraw their trustee zone lines.



ISBA assisted districts with this process ten years ago and we hope to do so again this time. The SDE is ultimately responsible for this effort and we contracted with them last time and are currently in the process of working on a contract with them again.

There are several steps in the process and several deadlines that will need to be met. The first of those could come as early as April of this year. Don't worry, we will notify you about all those dates and times. I'm just writing now to give you a head's up and for you to start thinking about it.

## Choosing a New Executive Director

As you all know, this is my last year with ISBA. Immediate Past President, Wally Hedrick, will Chair a committee that will do the initial work related to selecting my replacement. As I mentioned in my last article, that committee consists of several of ISBA's Past Presidents. The ultimate decision will rest with the Board.

Like with everything, COVID will make this process slightly more difficult when it comes to interviews. However, the Board plans to begin the process in May. The Committee will work to shorten the list and do initial interviews. They will then work with the full ISBA Executive Board to make the final decision. The current plan is to make that decision at a Special Board meeting in July.

While the decision will be made in July, the new Executive Director will not start until sometime in the fall. I will remain on staff until December 31 and act as a supervisor/mentor to the new Director until that time.

We will keep you all updated on this process.

Once again, I wanted to take a minute and acknowledge the monumental work that all of you have been doing during this pandemic. We know that you are the only elected officials who have had to make difficult decisions about whether or not to keep buildings open. Not only do those decisions impact students and staff in your buildings, they impact families and businesses. Please know that your work is not going unnoticed. Again, thank you for all that you do.



## ISBA BUSINESS AFFILIATES

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Moreton & Company provides property and liability insurance as well as risk management services to members through the ISBA endorsed insurance plan. Moreton & Company also provides consulting service for employee benefits and self-funded workers compensation plans.

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### Blue Cross of Idaho

Our philosophy remains much as it was when we began in 1945: To help our members have the access they need to quality healthcare services while providing them financial peace of mind. We work closely with healthcare providers, hospitals and partners across the state to ensure that those goals are met. We will continue to stand by our members and give them the tools they need to take control of their healthcare journey, while continuing to provide the kind of superior personal customer service our members have come to expect.

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## ISBA DIAMOND BUSINESS PARTNERS



### Zions Public Finance, Inc.

Zions Public Finance is a leading municipal advisor to Idaho school districts. Having worked in Idaho since 1994, Zions has helped to finance hundreds of millions of dollars in bonds for both large and small districts throughout the state. Throughout the financing process, Zions maintains a fiduciary duty to its advisory clients, providing recommendations made in the best interests of each district.

Christian Anderson  
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Piper Sandler is a broker-dealer with a Boise office that specializes in Idaho school bonds. Piper Sandler's Idaho based bankers have completed over 80 financings totaling \$1.35 billion for Idaho school districts in the past 10 years. Piper Sandler offers financial expertise and transactional experience, as well as client services with tailored solutions.



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