

The Council champions strategies that prepare Idahoans for careers that meet employers' needs. Though the council does not have any pending legislation we support these initiatives, as well as policies that support college credit for work-based learning.

Idaho State Board of Education:

- **Literacy:** Support legislation to consolidate the current statutory requirements for literacy intervention into a single chapter and to update provisions in alignment with the Task Force recommendation to focus on the importance of having every student reading at grade level by the end of grade three. (draft language)

State Department of Education:

- **Educator Compensation:** The 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 Idaho's veteran educators. Dedicated teachers are essential to ensuring that our students have the educational opportunities they deserve. Idaho continues to struggle with a teacher shortage, and the fear and confusion caused by the pandemic have likely aggravated that shortage. It is essential to continue to make good on the promise to improve teachers' salaries and reward and retain the experienced teachers who are invaluable to our students.
- **Classified Staff and Administrator Salaries:** Superintendent Ybarra's budget request includes \$4.5 million for a 2 percent increase in classified staff's pay and a 1 percent increase for administrators. Teachers are essential, but so are the classified staff who keep our schools running and support students. They are a critical part of our educational system.
- **Literacy:** Next year's budget request includes ongoing funding to continue the state's focus and support for K-3 literacy. The interruptions to in-person instruction and a decline in kindergarten enrollment increase the importance of literacy intervention programs and support for struggling readers. Districts and charter schools will likely need additional funds and resources for literacy intervention programs in grades K-3 in coming years.
- **Social-emotional Support for Students, Educators and Staff:** The Coronavirus pandemic has created high levels of stress and anxiety for students as well as their teachers and support staff. Superintendent Ybarra will continue to advocate for behavioral and mental health support for all those who attend and work in Idaho's public schools. This includes spending authority to administer the numerous grants the State Department of Education has received for mental and behavioral health and suicide awareness and prevention efforts.
- **Mastery-based Education:** Superintendent Ybarra's budget request seeks to restore the holdback of \$50,000 to continue expanding mastery-based education. The program continues to add new schools and districts across the state who want to offer a student-centered, competency-based instructional approach. In Fiscal Year 2021, 31 new schools joined the Idaho Mastery Education Network.