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Critchfield Submits Annual Public Schools and Department of Education Budget Proposals

(BOISE) – Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield today submitted her annual budget proposals for K-12 public education in Idaho and for its administrative body, the Idaho Department of Education. The proposals are due each year to the Governor’s Budget Office and Legislative Services Office by September 1.

The K-12 budget represents most of the dollars used to fund public education statewide and is one of the state’s largest allocations of public money. This year’s budget proposal includes funding for a top education priority: addressing the gap between the funding that public schools receive for special education and the actual costs of educating the state’s highest need students by providing \$50 million for special education block grants to be distributed to districts and charters based on special education student populations and expenses.

“We’re not giving up on our commitment to providing appropriate and student-centered support to our classrooms,” said Critchfield. “We want to ensure that what districts and charters receive reflects the *actual* costs they are responsible for when it comes to supporting all students, while reducing reliance on local supplemental levies to pay for operational costs and more.”

The 2027 fiscal year budget request includes an 8.9 percent General Fund increase, or \$246 million in total. Required health insurance and change in employee compensation increases make up nearly half of the request, at 4 percent, with required statutory adjustments comprising another 3.1 percent. Statutory adjustments include mission-critical areas such as the educator career ladder, transportation and other areas as required by Idaho law.

The 2027 budget request also provides local education agencies with additional resources to support district-run driver education programs and school bus safety measures, further reducing pressures on operational funding and the reliance on taxpayers through local levies.

“This year’s budget shows that spending adaptability and improvements are still achievable in tight fiscal environments,” said Critchfield. “Our 2027 request works to maximize the public school appropriation by adjusting budgetary language to increase flexibility in how local school boards use their dollars to support the most important thing that these funds represent – Idaho’s students.”

The Department of Education budget is maintenance-only and complies with the Governor’s 3 percent holdback for fiscal year 2026. Unused fund balances will also be deposited into the Public Education Stabilization Fund (PSEF) to help offset potential budget shortfalls.

“This recommendation gives Idaho’s districts and charters the financial tools and local control they need to support student achievement while remaining responsive to fiscal responsibility goals statewide,” said Critchfield. “This proposal drives at giving local leaders the opportunity to make decisions that are right for their students, families and communities.”

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