



SHERRI YBARRA
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SUPERINTENDENT YBARRA RECOMMENDS HISTORIC \$87.3 MILLION BUDGET

(Boise) Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra presented her FY 16 budget recommendation before the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee Thursday morning requesting a historic \$87.3 million budget for education. Ybarra also stressed the need to increase the amount of discretionary money available to local school districts.

Although much of the budget was inherited from her predecessor, because it had to be submitted at the end of last year, before she took office, Ybarra made some modifications. “In the effort to address the unique challenges school districts face,” Ybarra told the committee, “we are proposing just over \$18.7 million dollars be moved from mandated, non-discretionary lines of the budget, to the operational category of the budget -- without restriction -- thus allowing local authorities, who know their needs best, the option of deciding where to allocate their resources.”

The new superintendent noted the budget “represents my vision for college and career readiness in Idaho education, and indicates the direction I intend to take this department over the next four years.”

In terms of the state Department of Education, Ybarra emphasized a fundamental change in her vision for the role of the department. “I am dedicated to creating conditions under which the Department of Education’s policies will be driven by the needs of the districts –from the bottom up, not the top down,” she said, adding that she fully embraced the concept of local control.

“I believe that the state is not, and should not be, the only source of ideas,” she said. “There are 115 school districts and 48 charter schools, all of whom have, within their ranks, innovative teachers and administrators whose ideas we must help grow so they can flourish throughout the entire spectrum of Idaho education. We can do that best by empowering them with increased locally controlled discretionary resources that would allow them to put their ideas into practice, while meeting local needs and conditions.”

She also told the lawmakers that research states overcrowding in K-3 classrooms impacts a student’s performance throughout their school career. Lost opportunities to learn at that level is time a child never gets back, she said, which is why she will be rolling out a proposal during this session of the legislature to place a statutory limit on classroom sizes in the critical kindergarten through third grades.

She said she was working on modifications to the state’s No Child Left Behind waiver “to resolve numerous issues concerning federal mandates and testing that are burdening our school districts and hindering their ability to affect student achievement and outcomes.”



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She also said that while she endorses a proposed career ladder pay scale for teachers, she strongly urged the legislators to adopt an experimental pilot program, involving nine school districts and one charter school from across the state, before moving forward with the full program. Such a pilot program, she said, would allow “those districts to determine the sustainability and actual costs for full implementation over the next four years,” once again stressing the importance of local control in the educational process.

“That is what I will be working on over the next few weeks in the pursuit of a fiscally sound, accountable and innovative path forward for education,” the new superintendent said.

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