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## **Superintendent Ybarra supports Gov. Little's FY 2021 education agenda**

(BOISE) – Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra is, once again, pleased that Gov. Brad Little has made education a top priority. In his annual State of the State address Monday, the governor laid out his agenda for education, which aligns with Superintendent Ybarra’s continued commitment to supporting Idaho schools and students to achieve.

Gov. Little’s education agenda includes many of the superintendent’s priorities for fiscal 2021 and addresses the recommendations of his “Our Kids, Idaho’s Future” education task force, on which she served.

“I greatly appreciate the governor’s focus on continuing to invest in Idaho’s public schools,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “I look forward to working with both the governor and the Legislature on the details of this strong roadmap to improved outcomes for Idaho students.”

The superintendent is scheduled to make her Fiscal Year 2021 budget presentation to the Legislature’s Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee on Thursday, Jan. 23. Her budget request for next year totals \$1.99 billion, including \$100 million in new General Fund spending, a 5.3 percent increase over the current year’s appropriation. Of that \$100 million requested increase, \$38 million is required spending under state statute, and \$12 million represents increased costs for health insurance and operations.

Like the governor’s agenda, the superintendent’s budget request emphasizes improving pay for Idaho’s veteran teachers with a plan to build on the success of the career ladder for teacher pay.

“While the first five years of the career ladder focused on boosting pay for new and early career educators, more must be done to reward experienced teachers, recognizing their value and encouraging them to stay in Idaho schools despite higher pay in other states,” Superintendent Ybarra said.

Her request also supports the governor’s focus on funding literacy intervention programs to support struggling readers. Maintaining the current \$26 million funding level will provide districts with financial stability for literacy intervention programs in grades K-3.

Superintendent Ybarra is encouraged that the governor supports her request for targeting \$1 million to develop and implement professional development for educators and school staff to identify and better respond to students' needs, including how to de-escalate unsafe situations and how to coordinate resources from state, local and nonprofit groups to support students.

"Ensuring that those working with our students have some training to address social-emotional issues is vital to helping children develop the self-awareness, problem-solving and impulse control needed to overcome challenges and thrive in school, work and community life," the superintendent said.

Superintendent Ybarra's budget request again seeks \$500,000 to continue expanding mastery-based education in Idaho, boosting the funding from \$1.4 million to \$1.9 million. Last year's successful legislation to lift the cap on the number of participants in the Idaho Mastery Education Network has resulted in dozens of new schools joining this important work. This is a generational shift to an instructional model that promotes deeper learning through helping students develop critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration skills that will serve them well in the workforce.

In summary, the superintendent is greatly encouraged by the governor's strong support for public schools.

"I recognize that our Constitution requires that Idaho have a balanced budget," Superintendent Ybarra said. "We also have a constitutional requirement to fund our public schools. I appreciate the governor's task in striking that balance, and I look forward to working with him and with legislators to ensure that our students and educators have the support and resources they need to achieve."

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