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## **Weigh in on amendments to Idaho's new education accountability plan**

(BOISE) – Midway through the first school year under Idaho's new accountability plan, it's time to look at ways to maximize its effectiveness in helping at-risk students and recognizing success.

"It was a major accomplishment to establish this plan, get stakeholder buy-in and federal approval, then embark on this analysis and improvement effort," Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. "But our work is not over. Now that we've had a chance to see our processes in practice, we can add elements and fine-tune elements to make the plan even stronger. And, as always, educator and stakeholder feedback is essential."

Proposed amendments to the plan are posted on the [State Department of Education's website](http://State Department of Education's website), and members of the public have several ways to weigh in, SDE Director of Assessment and Accountability Karlynn Laraway said.

Interested parents and other stakeholders are invited to offer comments via email at [ESSA@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:ESSA@sde.idaho.gov). Also, a public meeting and webinar are scheduled for the fourth week in January:

- Meeting at 2 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 22, State Department of Education
- Webinar at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 23. [Sign up here.](#)

Comments will be accepted until Friday, Feb. 1. Staff will consider the feedback, refine the amendments and present them to the State Board of Education Feb. 14. Idaho's amended Consolidated State Plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education by March 1 as part of a nationwide amendment window. Once the U.S. Department of Education approves Idaho's amendments, the changes can take effect.

Here's a summary of the proposed amendments:

- Update the process for identifying schools for comprehensive support and improvement to reflect a three-year weighted average of student performance on key metrics for all schools.
- Add a detailed description of the methodology in which schools are included in the accountability system
- Update English learner proficiency and exit criteria and establish new expectations of progress toward English language proficiency based on the new criteria.
- Add exit criteria for English learners with disabilities and those taking the ACCESS alternate assessment.
- Update long-term and interim progress goals for students making progress toward English language proficiency based on the new criteria.
- Establish a baseline and set long-term and interim progress goals for a five-year cohort graduation rate for high schools.
- Change the measure for identifying alternative high schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement when their graduation rate is less than 67 percent. The new measure will use a three-year average of the five-year cohort graduation rate.
- Exclude schools from identification for Targeted Support and Improvement when the subgroup meets or exceeds interim progress goals for a particular measure.
- Technical corrections throughout the document to align and reflect specific changes above.

Amendments were developed with help from the State Board of Education’s Accountability Oversight Committee. Participation by Idaho school district officials was particularly helpful, Laraway said, because they have seen how the approaches of the accountability plan work within their schools and classrooms.

Under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), every U.S. state was required to submit a Consolidated Plan. Through Idaho’s new accountability system, the State Department of Education provides coaching, professional development and other supports to help elevate student performance in schools identified as underperforming or with low graduation rates. The new system also celebrates schools for top performance and for reaching goals to improve performance, with information readily available on [a redesigned state report card](#).

“This system is designed to identify the biggest needs in Idaho schools, work collaboratively on improvement plans, and effectively use available federal funds to help local schools and students succeed,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “Our goal in amending this plan is to enhance its effectiveness.”

And improvements won’t end there, Laraway said: “We are going to continually monitor our accountability system to see what’s working and what needs to be improved.”

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