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**Media Contact:**

Scott Phillips

Stakeholder Communications Officer

208-332-6816

[sphillips@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:sphillips@sde.idaho.gov)

## **Idaho's innovative mastery network expands, looks to the future**

(BOISE) – Idaho's shift to a mastery-based learning model is going strong, with new schools and school districts joining the Idaho Mastery Education Network. After the 2019 Legislature approved a bill to lift the cap on participation in the mastery-based network, the number of participants more than doubled. Today, more than a quarter of Idaho's school districts and 12 percent of the state's charter schools are working on new, innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

"All types of schools -- big and small, rural and urban, alternative and traditional – from all regions of our state are embracing this student-centered, personalized approach," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra, who established the mastery network in 2015 during her first year as leader of Idaho's K-12 system. "More importantly, thousands of Idaho students are learning in ways that work best for them, mastering topics and competencies at their own pace."

"Mastery-based education which incorporates project and inquiry-based learning is a game changer for student learning." Superintendent Ybarra said. "It's also a perfect fit for a local-control state like Idaho, with each school's program tailored to the needs of its students."

Superintendent Ybarra's 2021 public schools budget request, which she will present to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee Jan. 23, calls for a \$500,000 increase in IMEN funding to continue the momentum, providing professional development, supports and networking for member schools.

More growth is expected. Any Idaho public school district or charter school may participate in the network by applying to the State Department of Education. The SDE works with member schools as they move from exploration to planning and design, implementation and sustaining their programs.

Collaboration among participants is a major component of the mastery education network, which meets regularly to share experiences and best practices.

“Our goal is to build a truly student-centered experience, helping students build on foundational knowledge to apply it to real-world problems and projects,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “It’s been wonderful to see students’ skills and confidence grow in a mastery environment.”

Learn more about SDE’s mastery education efforts at <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/mastery-ed/>.

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Attached: [A map and list showing all members of the Idaho Mastery Education Network](#) across Idaho. Please note that several school districts are listed under both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 because one or more additional schools from the district joined IMEN for the second cohort.