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Critchfield, Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee Discuss K-12 Budget Proposal

(BOISE) – The Idaho Legislature’s Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC) heard presentations on the annual K-12 public schools and Idaho Department of Education budgets today, including highlights from Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield.

Critchfield touted the K-12 budget request that totals \$2.78 billion and represents a modest 2.9 percent increase in state general fund money for Idaho’s public schools. Among other things, the budget proposal includes components that would modernize the state’s 30-year-old school funding formula and align the K-12 budget with strategic goals by incentivizing student outcomes and funding schools based on the types of students they have.

In addition, in what Critchfield called “unfinished business,” the request includes a supplemental allocation from the legislature that would allow the state to distribute to local schools money set aside by 2022’s [House Bill 1](#). Currently, a portion of the money approved by lawmakers during that year’s special legislative session cannot reach schools because of the state’s return to a seat time-based funding formula rather than one that focuses on enrollment. The supplemental request submitted in the budget is for \$161.7 million. The actual figure could change as the department continues to receive updated data from local schools.

“The legislature appropriated \$380 million that schools were not able to completely access, so we’re seeking this money as a one-time supplemental, along with an ongoing fix so that we’re not in the same position again next year,” Critchfield said. “I’d like to reiterate something that I have said throughout this process: dollars that were appropriated for public schools should be accessible and usable by our public schools.”

Both the K-12 budget request and the Department of Education’s operations budget request align with the department’s four strategic goals:

- Ensuring that Idaho students are reading at grade level by third grade;
- ensuring that all Idaho students are learning at grade level for math;

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- preparing kids for life as well as college and career; and
- positioning Idaho to attract and retain teachers.

JFAC will set both budgets in the coming weeks and forward them to the House and Senate floors for votes by their respective bodies.

The Idaho Department of Education's full JFAC presentation is available to stream now on the Idaho in Session digital media archive page:

<https://iso.legislature.idaho.gov/MediaArchive/MainMenu.do>.

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