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## **Paula Mason Appointed Executive Director for Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind**

(BOISE) – The Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind (IESDB) Board announced today that Paula Mason has been named Executive Director after filling the role on an interim basis following long-time Director Brian Darcy’s departure in June of last year.

Mason’s appointment comes in the wake of a year-long search for an administrator who combines a track record of providing effective support for student success with the specialized education and skills needed to lead daily operations at one of a handful of schools nationwide offering residential services for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or low-vision.

As Director, Mason will transition from her interim leadership position for IESDB, the agency that provides statewide services for students who are blind/low vision or deaf/hard of hearing, including those with co-occurring conditions. She will also head up the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind, whose residential campus in Gooding has served students in pre-K through grade 12 since 1906. The school proudly calls itself the “Hogwarts of Idaho” for its unique residential setup and close-knit community of faculty, staff, and learners. It is the only school called out for establishment in the state constitution.

In her nearly two decades serving Idaho schools and students in various leadership roles, Mason has built a reputation as an administrator willing to put the time and effort in to ensure that success is within reach for everyone around her. She graduated from Idaho State University with a bachelor’s degree in elementary education before going on to earn her master’s degree in education of the deaf/hard of hearing and her specialist degree in educational leadership. She began her teaching career in the Twin Falls School District in 1998 before taking a role at the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind in 1999. Since then, Mason has served the school and organization in both teaching and administrative roles, including Post-secondary Transition Coordinator and Director of Outreach.

**Debbie Critchfield, Superintendent of Public Instruction**

Her leadership position at IESDB represents one of the most unique education roles in Idaho – and beyond. She plans to make the most of the opportunity to make a direct, daily difference for students and the wider deaf and blind community statewide. For Mason, the opportunities that come with this important role are significant.

“It is an honor to serve as Director of Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind,” she said. “This role carries both responsibility and purpose. I will continue to work alongside families, educators, and communities to ensure every student who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or low vision has real access to a high-quality education, meaningful communication, and the tools they need to thrive. I’m committed to listening closely, learning continuously, and working across Idaho to strengthen services and expand what’s possible for every student.”

“Not only does Paula have a track record of serving some of Idaho’s most vulnerable students with skill and compassion, she has also spent years fostering trusted relationships with parents, the community, and state partners,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield. “Ultimately, Paula brought everything to the table we needed to hire with confidence, and I’m pleased that she’ll continue to serve her students and community in this leadership role.”

More than anything, Mason says she’s excited to continue to serve a community she cares for deeply with dedication, passion, and strong leadership skills.

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**Debbie Critchfield, Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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