Financial support for K-12 education grows 10.5-percent during pandemic

Friday September 11, 2020

Boise, Idaho – Governor Brad Little announced today Idaho public schools and families will receive even more financial support, making Idaho one of the only states in the country to significantly increase funding for K-12 education during the global pandemic.

“Idaho was just recognized for leading all 50 states in our economic momentum. That’s the reason we’re able to make these investments in education during the pandemic while other states face 20- to 40-percent budget cuts, including cuts to education,” Governor Little said.

Governor Little is directing $99 million in relief funds to ensure schools are fully funded and prepared to educate Idaho’s children during the pandemic. The funds restore the budgets school districts set for the academic year, on top of $122 million already provided to K-12 education this year, including more than $60 million for safe reopening.

All told, funds for K-12 education this year increased 10.5-percent to reopen our schools and minimize learning hurdles caused by the pandemic.

Over the summer, Governor Little worked with the Trump Administration and Idaho’s Congressional Delegation, emphasizing the need for more flexibility in the allocation of relief dollars, including for public schools. The U.S. Treasury updated guidance last week giving states more authority to use federal coronavirus relief funds for COVID-related needs in public school budgets. Idaho seized the opportunity and acted within days to support our schools.

Governor Little also announced $50 million will go directly to Idaho families as part of the new “Strong Families, Strong Students” initiative. The initiative helps ensure parents are less likely to exit the workforce or expend household resources for their children to receive the education they deserve.

“When parents have to step in to provide instruction and equipment due to school-related closures, we see them pushed out of the work force – something that strains our economic rebound,” Governor Little said.

Under the new Strong Families, Strong Students initiative, eligible Idaho families could receive $1,500 per eligible student with a maximum award of $3,500 per family. Families can use the funds to purchase eligible educational materials, devices, and services.

The State Board of Education will administer the initiative and finalize eligibility criteria. Families can begin applying in October, and additional details will be provided in the coming weeks.

The Governor asked the Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee to fund both proposals at its next meeting.

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