Idaho State Board of Education

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# BOARD APPROVES CRITERIA FOR SCHOOLS TO RESUME NORMAL OPERATIONS

The Idaho State Board of Education today approved minimum criteria for public school districts and charter schools to use in deciding whether to resume normal operations prior to the end of the current school year.

The criteria were created in consultation with state and public health and school officials around the state, and Governor Brad Little's K-12 Emergency Council. It provides a process for school districts and charter schools who have limited or no confirmed coronavirus cases in their local area to bring students back on campus once state or local restrictions are lifted.

"These criteria are the result of a tremendous amount of input from stakeholders, including superintendents in the various regions, the teachers association, the school administrators association and the school boards association," Board Member Dr. Linda Clark said. "I think it is a very strong document that will provide appropriate guidance for our districts that wish to reopen."

**Idaho State Board of Education Minimum Re-entry Criteria:**

1. No statewide or local social distancing restrictions, including stay-home orders or extensive closures of businesses are in place.

a. Exceptions to the soft closure should continue to be considered for staff and student needs, on a case by case basis as determined at the local level (e.g. small groups of students that can be distanced in a way that meets the social distancing criteria for the purpose of proctoring exams or working one-on-one with special education students, as long as the school district or charter school has sufficient capacity to maintain hygiene and sanitation).

2. The peak of the state infection curve has passed, as determined by the State Department of Health and Welfare, and a minimum 14 days have passed from the identified peak. In those instances where local community spread has occurred, the local infection curve will be evaluated for determining the 14 consecutive days. School districts and charter schools located in counties that have experienced no community spread at the time state restrictions are lifted may have the 14 consecutive days criteria waived with approval by the local public health district.

3. Approval by the local public health district, after review of school district and charter school cleaning and disinfection protocols.

4. Re-entry plan approved by the local board of trustees identifying minimum school protocols (see list below).

**Required Minimum School Protocols:**

a. Cleaning and disinfection protocols.
b. Identify a plan for vulnerable staff and students with special emphasis on people over age 60 and those who are medically vulnerable.
c. Identify and plan for staff duties which require close contact.
d. Absenteeism plan for staff and students whose parents do not feel comfortable returning their student to school and for students who show symptoms of the coronavirus.
e. Communications plan for informing parents and staff of the school district and charter school response plans, protocols, and policies to manage the impact of the coronavirus.

f. Verify point of contact of each school district and charter school for effective communication and collaboration with the local public health officials.
g. Reopening plans are reviewed in consultation with local public health officials.

These re-entry criteria are subject to change in order to adapt to changing circumstances. Additional criteria will be developed for a fall start of the school year, based on conditions at the time.

The State Board voted unanimously to approve the criteria.

Other Board actions include:

- Formally approved requests by Idaho's four-year institutions to freeze resident undergraduate tuition and fees at current rates in academic year 2020-21.

- Approved requests by Idaho State University and Lewis-Clark State College to increase nonresident tuition by 2 percent in academic year 2020-21.

- Approved a policy change delegating alcohol consumption decisions at student athletic events to institution presidents.

- The Board also voted to extend Board President Debbie Critchfield's term as president through April 2021. Board member Andrew Scoggin will serve as Board vice president and Board member Kurt Liebich will act as Board secretary.

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