Idaho directing millions of dollars to the safe reopening of schools

Thursday August 6, 2020

Boise, Idaho – Governor Brad Little emphasized once again today the importance of getting Idaho students back into schools for in-person instruction while highlighting the millions of dollars the state has directed to schools for safe reopening.

“The unprecedented amount of money we’re directing to the safe reopening of schools is helping to make schools safe places to teach and learn, and it should provide parents and teachers the confidence to return our students to the classroom for in-person instruction,” Governor Little said. “When students are out of the classroom for too long the achievement gap widens, threatening the progress of all students and our economic prosperity.”

Resources the State of Idaho is directing to the safe reopening of schools include:

- $10 million for additional masks, gloves, sanitizer, and plexiglass for Idaho schools
- $48 million will help bridge the “digital divide” and equip schools with the computers, connectivity, and other resources to ensure successful remote learning
- $21 million toward COVID-19 testing for teachers and school staff
- $3 million to increase testing lab turnaround time and capacity – as well as lab upgrades – to help get test results for teachers and school staff as quickly as possible
- $3 million to leverage Idaho pharmacies in testing efforts to help quickly produce testing results for teachers, school staff, and families in rural Idaho, where the majority of Idaho school districts are located

Governor Little also announced Idaho will remain in Stage 4 of the **Idaho Rebounds plan** (https://rebound.idaho.gov/stages-of-reopening/) for another two weeks.

“We are in a much different place now than we were in March. Our economy is open. Many parents have returned to their places of work. We have increased our capacity for testing, contact tracing, and PPE for healthcare workers and businesses,” Governor Little said.

The Governor noted that statewide, Idaho has sufficient healthcare workers, PPE, ventilators, and ICU beds. He said we are meeting the demands for testing our healthcare workers statewide. He said we are seeing downward trends in overall case counts as well as our percent-positivity rate, and emergency room visits from those with COVID-like symptoms are on the decline.

The Governor added overall hospital admissions statewide to the list of metrics used to examine Idaho’s situation every two weeks.

“We do need to bring down the number of hospital admissions statewide, but even in some of the hot spots we are starting to see the benefits of the measures that local health officials and mayors have implemented to reduce the rate of spread and preserve hospital capacity,” Governor Little added. “Thank you, Idahoans, for your actions to protect yourselves and your neighbors. If we continue to practice preventive measures then we will be able to send our kids back to school where they deserve to be, we will keep our citizens safe, and we will continue to rebound our economy.”

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