



EdTrends

TRENDS IN IDAHO PUBLIC EDUCATION

EDITION 4

PRODUCED BY IDAHO EDUCATION NEWS
APRIL 2021

IDAHO EDNEWS: WE ARE A NONPROFIT NEWS SOURCE THAT PROVIDES STATEWIDE AWARENESS OF CRITICAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT IDAHO'S CHILDREN AND THEIR FUTURE.

We are independent. We take no positions on how to achieve better schools. And our funders have no influence on our editorial decisions.

We are award-winning journalists.

We dig into the data and shine a light on the truth.

We demand transparency.

We hold leaders and educators accountable for taxpayer dollars and student achievement.

Why this matters

Idahoans need accurate news and data because:

A worldwide pandemic disrupted public education in 2020. School buildings closed. Achievement tests were canceled and graduation requirements waived. Teaching and learning moved online.

Families struggled to educate their kids at home while trying to work. Teachers struggled as they tried to communicate with their students over email or texting.

Idaho education is just starting to wake up from its COVID-19 coma, and parents are searching for options. The information in this book will help families, taxpayers and educators make data-based decisions toward improving public education for all kids.



*Jennifer Swindell,
Managing Editor of Idaho Education News*



PLEASE NOTE:

This is the fourth edition of Idaho EdTrends. This book has the most recent, publicly available data on Idaho public schools and charters.

Some data went unchanged because COVID-19 forced the cancellation of schools and traditional testing.

For more details, go to IdahoEdNews.org. For much more data, go to IdahoEdTrends.org.

Some school results are redacted in compliance with Idaho's student privacy law.

**THIS BOOK WILL
HELP YOU BETTER
UNDERSTAND
HOW IDAHO
EDUCATES ABOUT
307,400 KIDS
AND SPENDS MORE
THAN \$2 BILLION IN
TAXPAYER DOLLARS
EACH YEAR.**

What's inside

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82.1% OF IDAHO SENIORS GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 2020.

ONLY 38% OF THE 2020 GRADUATING SENIORS CONTINUED THEIR EDUCATION.

Student Achievement

Idaho begins testing children when they enter kindergarten and continues testing them into high school.

That was the habit until 2020 — a year when most tests were canceled after schools shut their doors to slow a worldwide pandemic. Schools had to bounce between in-person learning and online instruction, so expectations were lowered and some learning just didn't happen.

New President Joe Biden says educators nationwide must resume giving standardized tests this spring because it's urgent to understand the impact of COVID-19 on learning.

But his administration relieved the pressure associated with high-stakes testing by declaring schools won't be held accountable for the results. He also said states could give shorter, remote or delayed versions of the exams.

Idaho plans to have some 170,000 students take the Idaho Standards Achievement Test this spring, before May 28, in traditional fashion, except this year's version of the ISAT will be 30 to 40 minutes shorter. It's expected the results will be troubling, but important measures to quantify learning loss.

"You can't fix a problem you don't understand," State Board of Education member Kurt Liebich said to EdNews' senior reporter Kevin Richert.

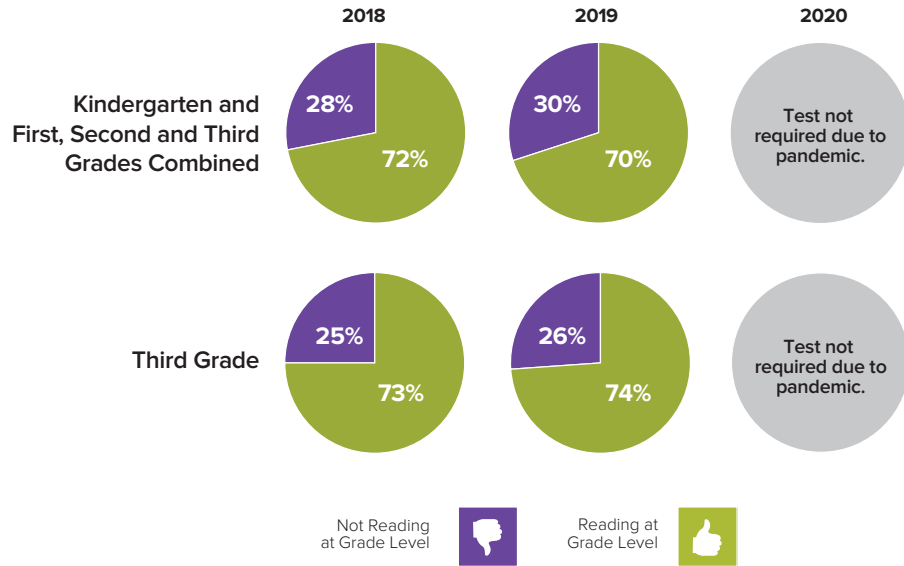
State education leaders say they'll use the test scores to help direct how to spend federal stimulus dollars, targeting the money toward training teachers and helping kids catch up.

Idaho's youngest children — those in kindergarten, first, second and third grades — will take the Idaho Reading Indicator this spring. These same children took the reading tests in the fall, and the fall results will be compared against the upcoming spring results for growth. Again, educators are expecting troubling scores.

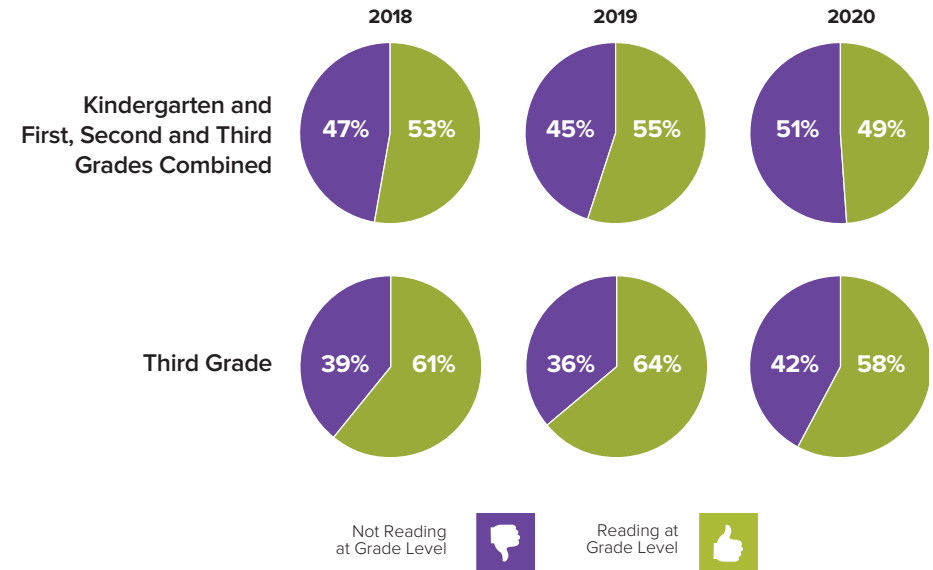
"It's likely that there are going to be gaps everywhere," Liebich said.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

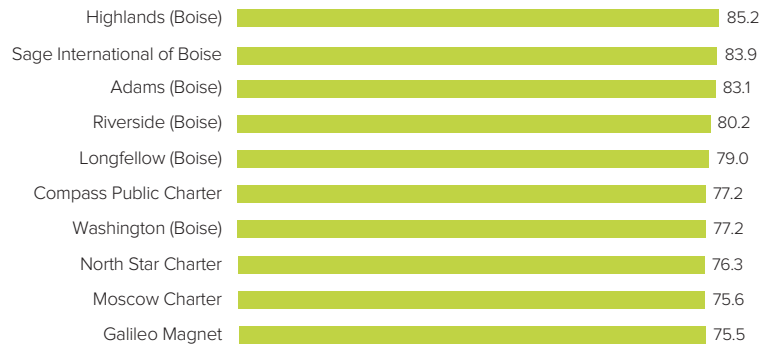
Spring Reading Scores



Fall Reading Scores



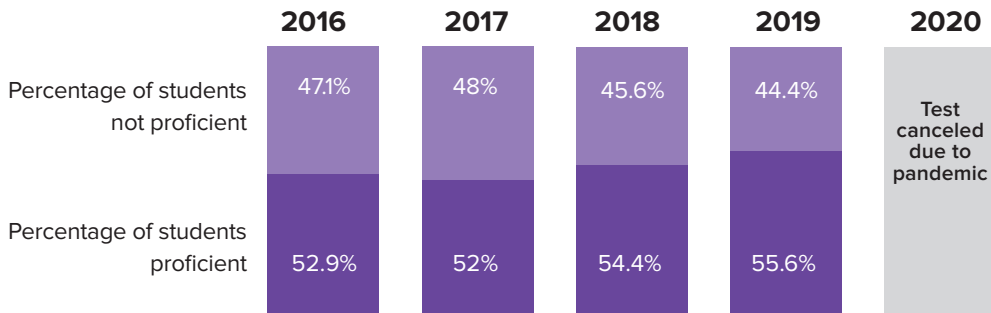
Idaho's Best Fall of 2020 Reading Scores (percentage reading at grade level)



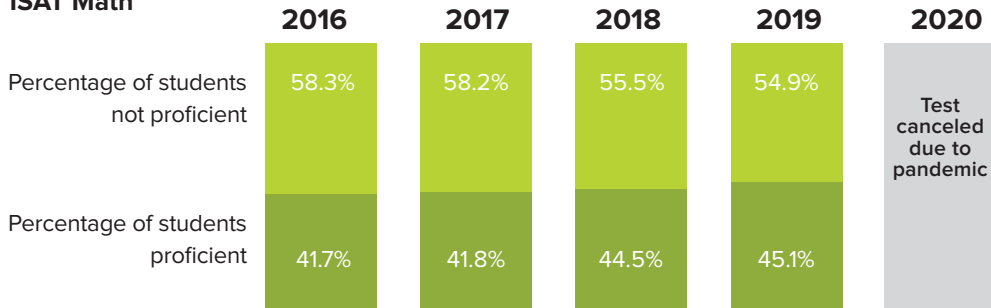
The 2020 spring reading tests were canceled due to the spread of coronavirus. Children returned to school in the fall of 2020 and most in kindergarten, First, Second and Third grades took the twice-annual exams. Scores were dismal and fell well below the previous fall performances.

IDAHO'S STANDARDIZED TEST

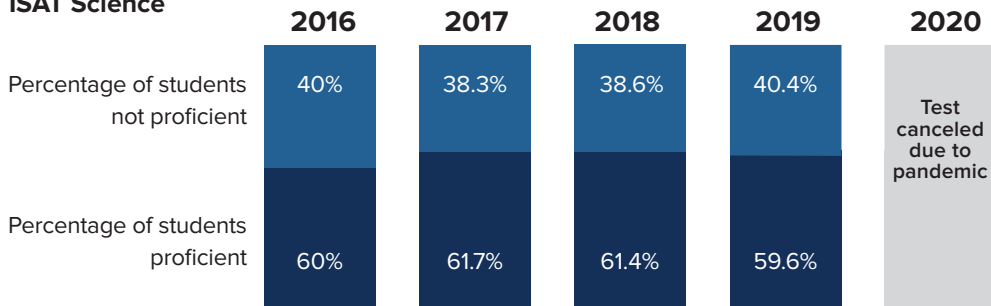
ISAT English Language Arts



ISAT Math



ISAT Science



STANDARDIZED TESTING FOR 2021

Schools must administer federally required standardized tests this year, according to President Joe Biden. His administration is ordering the return of testing — tests were canceled in 2020 because of the pandemic. But in 2021, the administration has promised schools won't be held accountable for the results — and states could give shorter, remote or delayed versions of the exams.

Idaho plans to have some 170,000 students take the Idaho Standards Achievement Test. They will take the test in April and May, and it will be 30 to 40 minutes shorter. Teachers will eventually get data on students who haven't been tested in two years.

Before the pandemic, Idaho was starting to make gains in test scores in English Language Arts and Math. Results slipped in Science.

This spring's assessments likely won't show growth but will provide a snapshot into student proficiency.



The ISAT is delivered to all students in grades three-eight and grade 10. Federal law requires at least 95% of students be given the exam. Idaho has seen no significant growth on its standardized test results. Students did not take the tests in 2020. Those tests were canceled due to the pandemic.

NATIONAL COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM: SAT

Graduating Class of 2020

Idaho's class of 2020 was less prepared for college and the workforce than graduates from the previous year, according to results from the SAT.

SAT data released by The College Board shows Idaho's most recent group of seniors scored lower overall and met fewer college readiness benchmarks than the class of 2019. The results mark the third year in a row of declining performance on the test.

Seniors graduating in 2020 had an average composite score of 984 out of 1600 possible points on the SAT. That's nine points down from the year before. The dip follows a national trend. The U.S. average was 1051 points in 2020, down eight points from the 2019 average.

The Idaho test results don't show signs of improvement as Idaho struggles to increase the number of students continuing their education beyond high school.

Only 57% of 2020 graduates met the college and career readiness benchmark in reading and writing, compared with 60% in 2019.

Some 34% of 2020 graduates met the math benchmark.

About 32% of students met benchmarks in both math and language sections, down from 33% the year before. And 40% of students met neither benchmark.

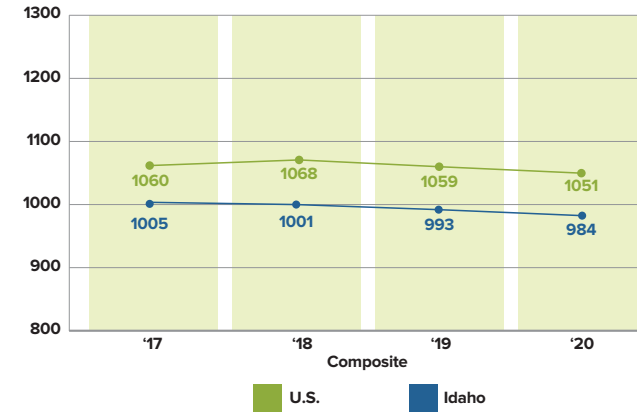
The SAT is an important test to education leaders as they require all students to take a college placement test in order to graduate from high school. Nearly 100% of the 2020 seniors took the SAT at some point in their high school career. Taxpayers invest about \$1 million a year to pay for all juniors to take the test.



Students are considered college- and career-ready when their SAT scores meet both the math (530) and the evidence-based reading and writing (480) benchmarks. Most Idaho students fail to meet both benchmarks.

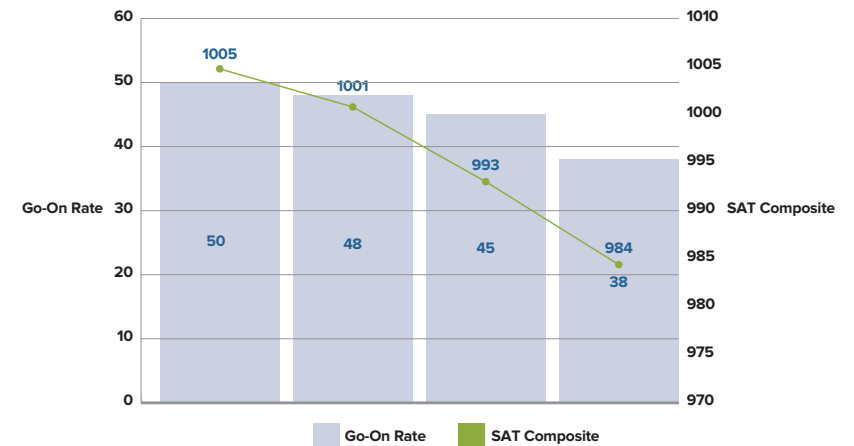
SAT Composite Scores

Highest Possible Score: 1600



SAT Composite Scores Compared to Idaho's Postsecondary Go-On Rate

Idaho's scores on the SAT have dropped over the years as has the number of high school graduates who chose to continue their education.



GRADUATION RATES

Idaho's High School Graduation Rate Shows Improvement

Idaho's high school graduation rate increased in 2020 and improvements were seen across the board, including increases for Hispanic/Latino students and students with disabilities.

For the class of 2020, the four-year graduation rate was 82.1%, compared with 80.7% the previous year. Some graduation requirements were suspended during the pandemic, such as senior projects.

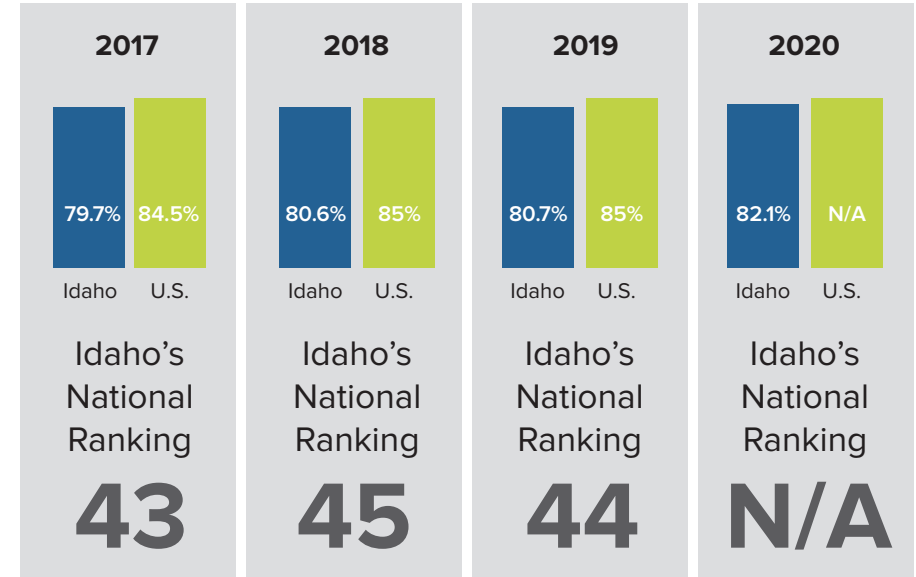
For Hispanic/Latino students, the graduation rate increased by nearly 2 percentage points to 75.7%.

Graduation rates for other at-risk groups increased as well:

- For students with disabilities, the graduation rate was 59.0%, up 3 percentage points.
- For migrant students, the graduation rate was 70.3%, up 6 percentage points.

The graduation rate for English Language Learners was 64.6%, down nearly 10 percentage points.

Overall, Idaho's high school graduation rate fell well short of the state's goal. For the class of 2020, the state's goal was 89.9%.



High Schools with 100% Graduation Rate, 2020

American Heritage	Liberty Charter
Basin Alternative	Meridian Technical Charter
Camas County	Mullan
Cambridge	Murtaugh
Carey Public	Nezperce
Clark County	North Idaho Stem Charter
Culdesac	North Star Charter
Idaho Fine Arts Academy	Oakley
Kendrick	Rockland
Kootenai	Vision Charter
Leadore	West Jefferson

Grad Rates for Idaho's 10 Largest Districts

Coeur d'Alene	91.5%
Pocatello	91.1%
Oneida	91.0%
Bonneville	89.3%
West Ada	87.5%
Vallivue	86.5%
Twin Falls	80.4%
Boise Independent	80.0%
Nampa	79.9%
Idaho Falls	78.4%



Graduation rates are determined by the number of students who graduate in four years divided by the number of students who started ninth grade. Students who transfer and enroll in another school are not counted.

GO-ON RATES

Idaho's Go-On Rate Drops Amid Pandemic

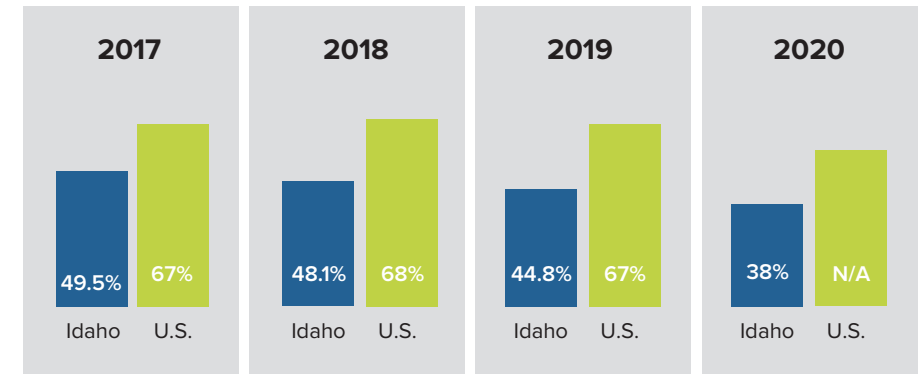
Only 38% of Idaho's 2020 high school graduates continued their education in the fall. That translates into a 7 percentage point drop in the state's "immediate," spring-to-fall go-on rate, and pencils out to a difference of about 1,400 students.

When Idaho's "Go-On Rates" fell sharply last fall, they decreased in every demographic group. These demographics are important because Idaho's Hispanic and American Indian college graduation numbers are among the worst in the nation.

Across the board, the go-on rates are discouraging.

Ethnicity	Class of 2019	Class of 2020
White	46%	39%
Hispanic	40%	34%
American Indian	37%	35%
Black	50%	44%
Asian	61%	59%
Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	36%	22%
Multiracial	49%	41%

Idaho's Go-On Rate Compared with U.S. Go-On Rate



Idaho's Top Go-On High Schools:

Prairie (Cottonwood School District)	86.4%
Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy	80.9%
Genesee (Genesee School District)	78.6%
North Star Charter (Eagle)	77.3%
Meridian Medical Arts Charter	74.3%
Cambridge (Cambridge School District)	71.4%
Liberty Charter (Nampa School District)	66.7%
Renaissance High School (West Ada School District)	61.5%

Again in 2020, alternative high schools and virtual charters account for the state's lowest go-on rates. This year, Idaho had 14 high schools with a 0% go-on rate.



The go-on rate is the percentage of students entering a post-secondary education program in the fall after high school graduation. Young adults who do not go on to some form of higher education, and instead go on religious missions or join the military, are not counted.

DEGREE ATTAINMENT

College Degree or Certificate Attainment Data Has Improved

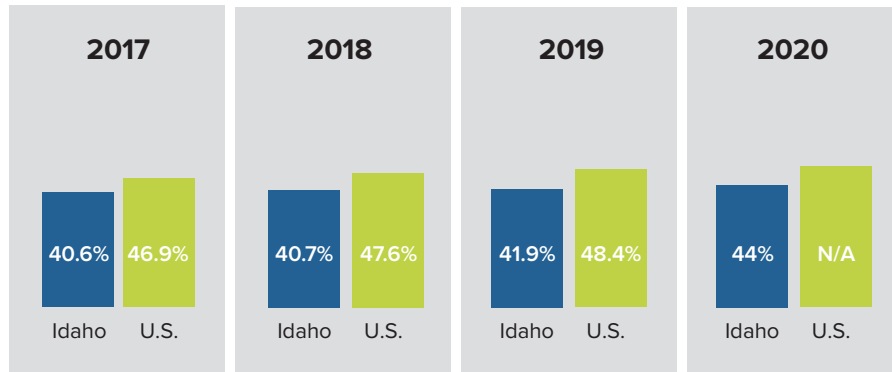
About 44% of Idaho’s young adults hold a college degree or professional certificate, according to newly released U.S. Census Bureau numbers.

Idaho’s postsecondary completion rate had been stagnant for three straight years before the slight uptick in the past two years.

The numbers haven’t moved much — despite two gubernatorial task forces, more than \$133 million in new state spending and an ongoing drive from education, political and business leaders.

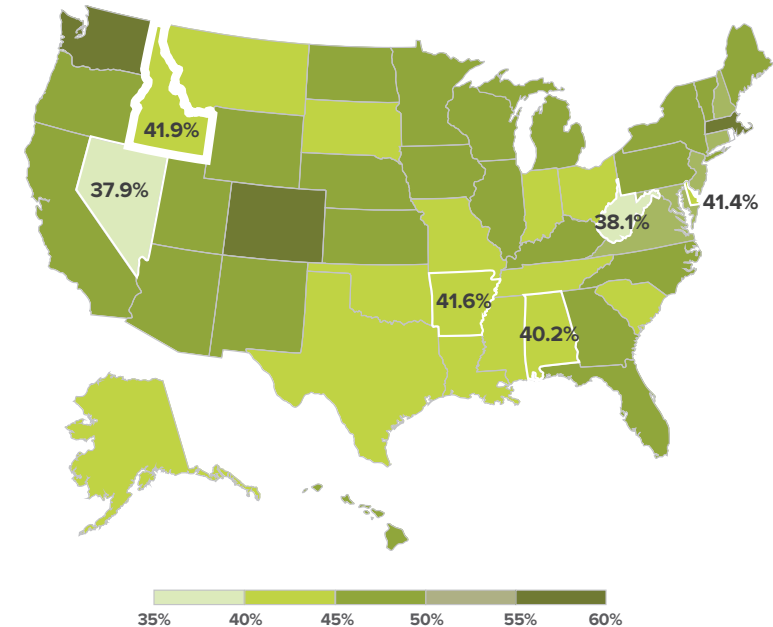
Idaho leaders want 60% of the state’s 25- to 34-year-olds to obtain a degree or certificate. They say high school graduates need to continue their education in order to prepare for a modern job market, and help Idaho compete in a changing economy.

Idaho’s Degree Attainment Rate Compared with U.S. Degree Attainment Rate



National Lumina Report Puts Idaho Near the Bottom

The Lumina Foundation, an Indianapolis, Indiana-based foundation, is pushing a national 60% goal, with a 2025 target date that mirrors Idaho’s goal. Lumina tracks Idaho’s college attainment rate at about 41.9% because it considers all adults. Idaho’s goal is focused only on 25- to 34-year-olds. Nationally, Lumina’s postsecondary completion rate comes in at 48.4%. Idaho’s 41.9% rate is good enough to beat only five other states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Nevada and West Virginia.



**IDAHO HAS
MISSED ALL OF ITS
GRADUATION RATE
TARGETS, AS WELL
AS TARGETS IN
MATH AND
ENGLISH, OVER
THE PAST
SEVERAL YEARS.**

Idaho's Report Card

Idaho has failed to meet any of its own yearly achievement goals and is sliding further away from reaching long-term 2022 goals.

The goals were determined by the State Department of Education as part of Idaho's five-year plan to comply with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. The goals were vetted through public meetings and approved by the State Board of Education, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra and then-Gov. Butch Otter.

The goals call for improving test scores and closing achievement gaps over six years. The idea is to increase the percentage of students scoring proficient by one-third by 2022.

Idaho has failed to meet the 2018 and 2019 targets in math, English and high school graduation rates. Idaho also is behind at meeting its goals for degree attainment and reading proficiency for third grade students.

Idaho students did not take most achievement tests in 2020. The state has not changed the yearly or long-term targets.

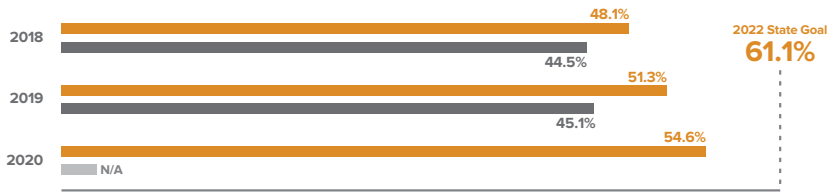
IDAHO'S REPORT CARD

Idaho Has Not Met 2020 Academic Achievement Targets

These targets were identified by the State Department of Education as part of Idaho's compliance plan for the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

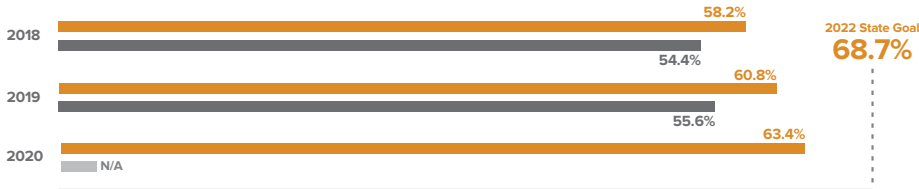
Math

Most students do not score at grade level on standardized math tests.



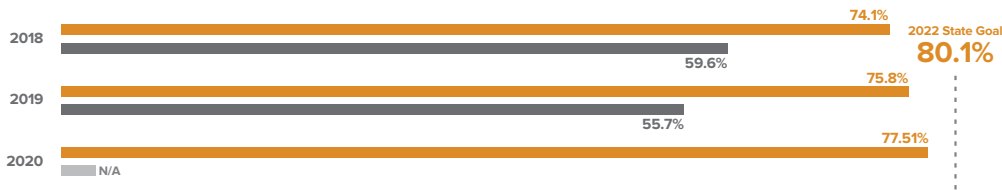
English Language Arts

Student proficiency in English has improved but lags well behind goals.



Progress for English Proficiency

This indicator focuses on English learners and measures their progress.



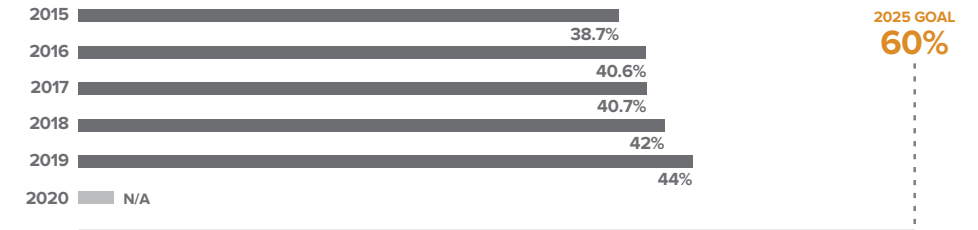
High School Graduation Rate

More students are graduating, but the percentage is well short of the goal.



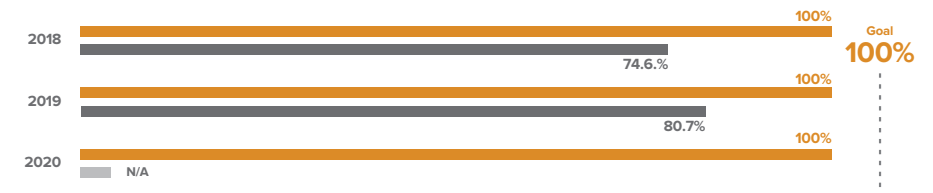
Post-Secondary Degree/Certificate Attainment

Degree attainment has improved but falls well short of the goal.



Third Grade Reading Proficiency

Idaho law states that “every student read at or above grade level by the end of grade 3.”



ENROLLMENT IN IDAHO'S K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS 307,428, A LOSS OF ABOUT 4,500 STUDENTS FROM THE YEAR BEFORE.

THE 1.6% DROP IS IDAHO'S FIRST OVERALL ENROLLMENT DECREASE IN DECADES.

Enrollment and Demographics

Enrollment in Idaho's K-12 public schools is down by nearly 4,500 students from last school year, despite unprecedented growth at virtual schools.

In all, 105 districts and charter schools lost students, numbers from the State Department of Education show. The 1.6% drop from last year — Idaho's first overall enrollment decline in decades — accompanies an unprecedented influx of students at virtual schools and newly created remote learning programs in districts scrambling to provide flexibility for families during the coronavirus pandemic.

During the 2019-20 school year, Idaho capped off a nearly 30-year growth rally with 312,000 students. This year's decline brings the number to 307,428.

Idaho's largest school districts saw the biggest enrollment drops.

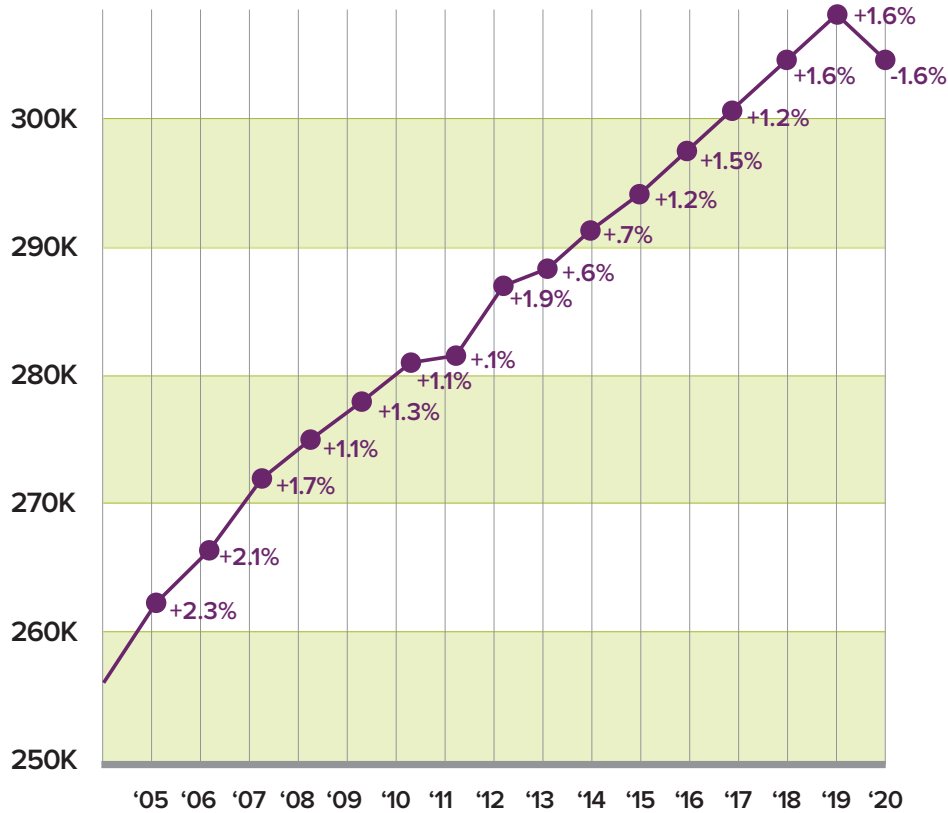
West Ada lost 2,584 students (6.4%) during the coronavirus-disrupted school year.

Coeur d'Alene lost 1,031 students, or 9.3% of its population, and Boise lost 1,627 students, or 6.4% of its population.

Idaho's public charter schools saw an increase of 5,118 students, thanks largely to enrollment hikes at various virtual schools and the creation of five new charter schools.

ENROLLMENT

Student Enrollment Over Time

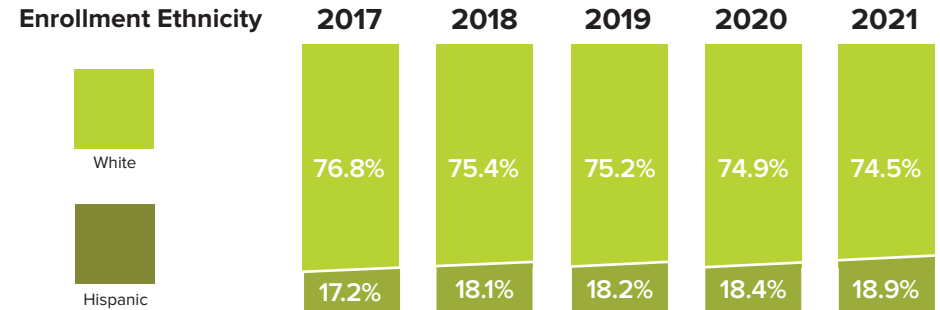


Virtual Schools in Districts and Charters Saw the Most Growth

For the fourth straight year, the Oneida School District's Idaho Home Learning Academy led Idaho in student growth, adding some 4,500 new students. The unprecedented influx took the district's enrollment from 3,329 to 7,818 since last year alone — a 134.8% increase.

Families have flocked to virtual schools during the pandemic. Here's a closer look at the five top-growing charters from last year, which were all virtual:

School	2019-20 Enrollment	2020-21 Enrollment	Increase / % Growth
Idaho Virtual Academy	1,736	3,818	2,082 / +120
Inspire Virtual Charter	1,048	1,830	782 / +75
iSucceed Charter High	657	978	321 / +49
Gem Prep Online	322	575	253 / +79
Idaho College/ Career Readiness Charter	159	293	134 / +84



- 1.6%

Idaho's annual enrollment growth has hovered around 1.3% until this year, when enrollment dropped for the first time in 30 years.



Enrollment changes every day. The latest numbers from November 2020 are a snapshot in time.

ENROLLMENT

Idaho Is Expected to Get More Public Charter Schools

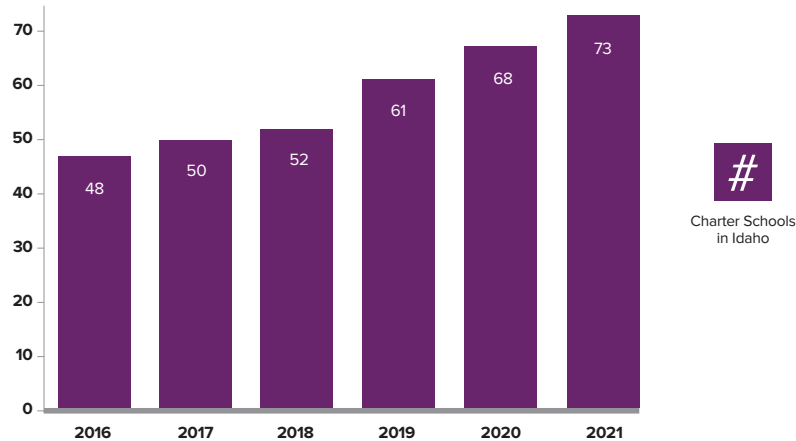
Charter schools became increasingly more popular during the global pandemic when Idaho families flocked to more polished online instruction models or a more nimble and smaller learning environment.

Enrollment at new schools also drove this year's growth among charters. Five first-year charters added a combined 852 kids from last year.

Also, 29 of 52 existing brick-and-mortar charters added students from last year, with several aided by federal and private grants earmarked to expand Idaho's charter sector.

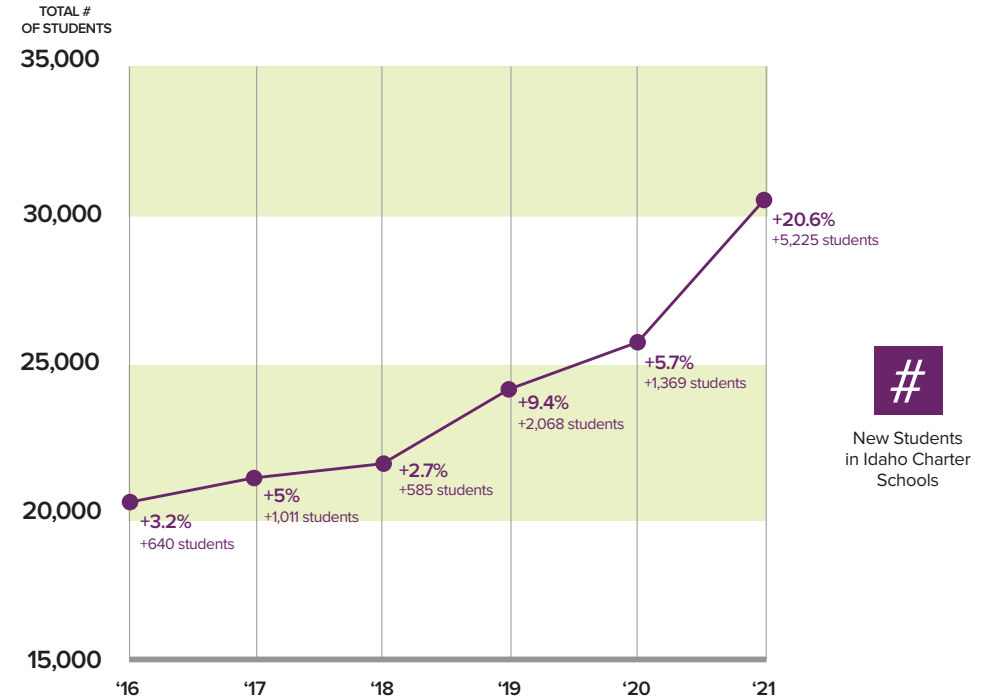
Idaho's first public charter opened its doors 23 years ago with 168 kids. Today, more than 30,598 kids and their families have made the choice to move from the neighborhood school to a public charter school.

Charter School Growth Over Time



Public charter schools — funded with public dollars — tout a range of educational niches, from college prep and the arts to science, medicine and online learning.

Charter Student Enrollment Growth Over Time



Charter schools absorbed most all of Idaho's K-12 growth in the 2020-21 school year and now account for 10% of the student population. The charter school population increased by 20.6%, the first double-digit increase in the past six years.

**AVERAGE PAY FOR:
\$50,794
TEACHERS**

**\$82,500
PRINCIPALS**

**\$110,000
SUPERINTENDENTS**

**AT MINIMUM, EVERY
TEACHER IN IDAHO
MAKES \$40,000.**

Budgets and Salaries

Idaho education will see substantial financial increases in the next school year.

Lawmakers have increased state funding to K-12 public education by more than \$100 million in each of the past five years, and this next school year will see continued increases.

Idaho lawmakers will put more than \$2 billion of state general fund tax dollars into K-12 for the first time in Idaho's history. General fund spending will increase by \$73.6 million, or 3.7%.

But an infusion of federal coronavirus stimulus dollars will boost the education budget even more. When federal dollars and dedicated funds are added to the mix, K-12 spending would increase by \$309.8 million, or 13.2%.

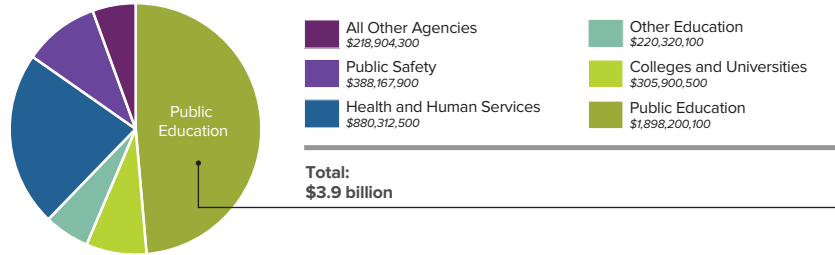
Teacher pay was stalled last school year, though many districts handed out bonuses with federal stimulus funds to compensate, and the minimum teacher salary was increased to \$40,000.

But the 2021-22 K-12 school budget fully funds another year of teacher pay raises under the career ladder plan. Gov. Brad Little recommended \$44.9 million for teacher pay, emphasizing the need to provide pay raises for veteran teachers.

Also over the past two years, about 2,000 veteran teachers earned master teacher premiums, which are worth \$12,000 over three years.

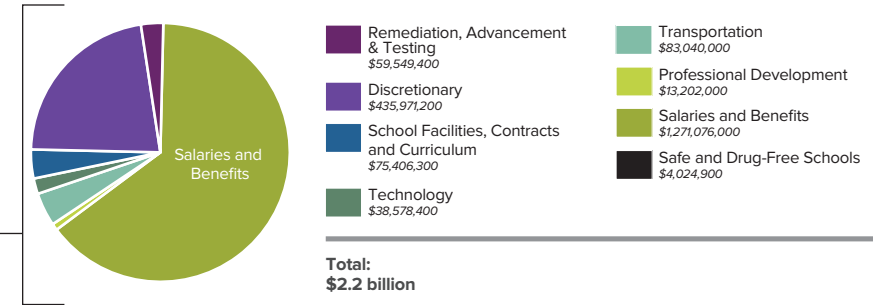
BUDGETS

Idaho's 2020-21 General Fund Budget



K-12 public education receives 49% — or half — of state tax collections. The amount jumps to 63% when higher education is included.

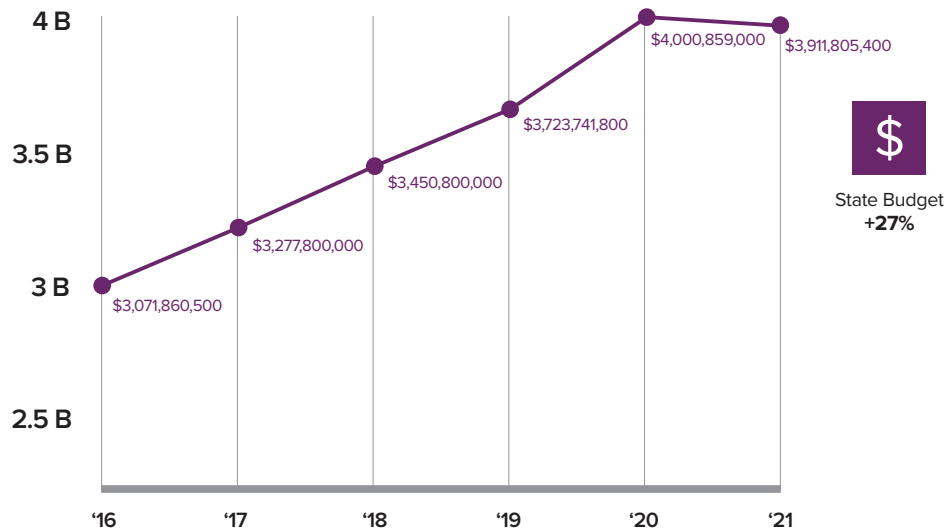
Idaho's 2020-21 K-12 Public Schools Budget



Idaho received an additional \$173 million in federal stimulus money in 2020 and will get another **\$440 million in 2021**.

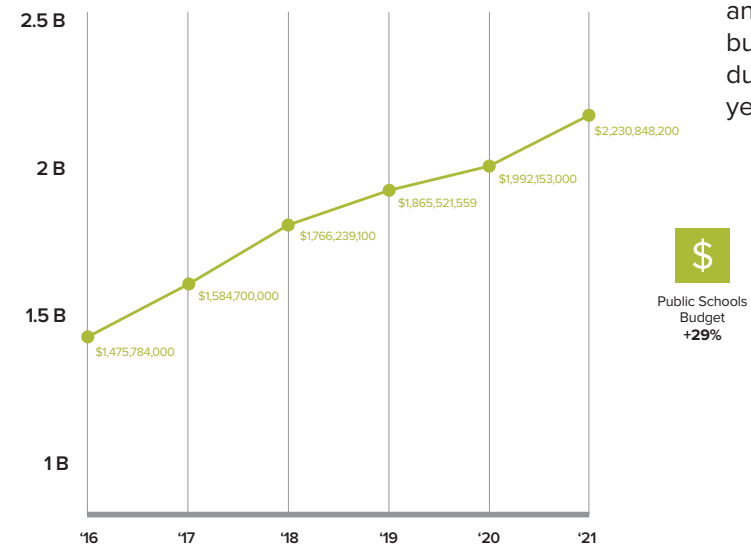
General Fund Budget Over Time

IN BILLIONS



K-12 Public Schools Budget Growth Over Time

IN BILLIONS



The overall state budget grew by 27% and the public schools budget grew by 29% during the last five-year period.

BUDGETS

Local Voters Continue to Support Their Schools

Idaho's supplemental school tax levy bill set another record in 2020-21 — and has increased by nearly \$100 million over the past decade.

Idaho property owners will pay out nearly \$217 million in supplemental tax levies this year — setting another record for the fourth successive school year.

The supplemental tax levy bill was \$214 million a year ago.

And this year, as in previous years, the vast majority of Idaho's 115 school districts will rely on supplemental levies. This year, 92 districts will collect a supplemental levy that is the same as last year — from \$20 million in Coeur d'Alene to \$75,000 in Mackay.

District officials and trustees have long maintained that voter-approved levies are no longer “supplemental.” Instead, they say, the funding is needed to fill in budget gaps and pay for essential needs, such as staff salaries and benefits, classroom computers and school safety upgrades.

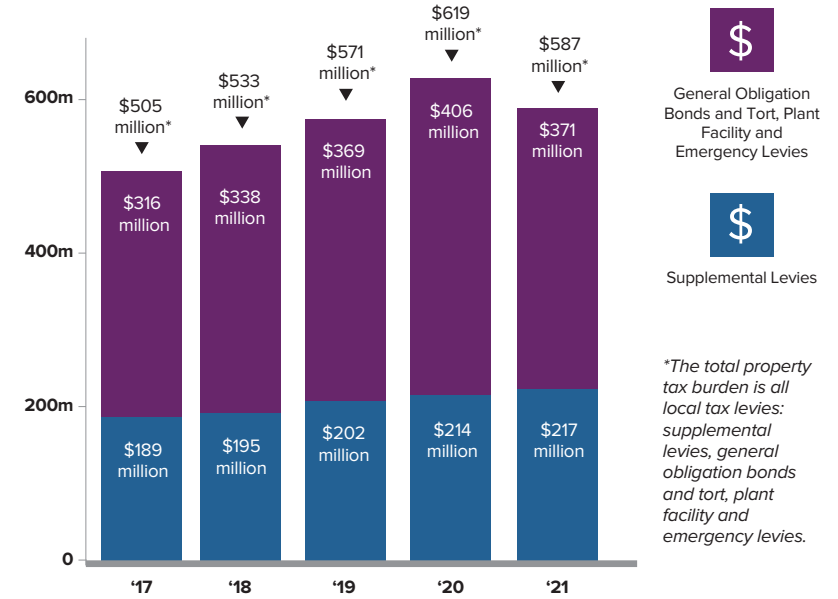
Either way, the levy bill has only grown over time — even after the recession, and despite state budgets that have increased K-12 spending by \$100 million a year for the past five years.

Districts with Highest Levy Rates

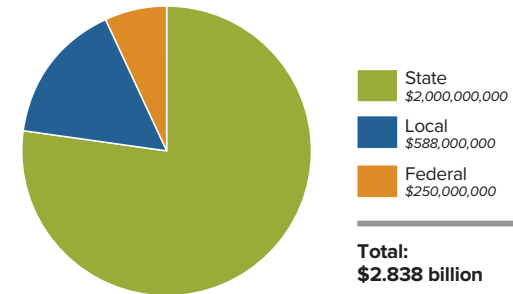
Per \$100,000 taxable value

Mullan	\$839
Moscow	\$682
Wallace	\$640
Troy	\$633
Lewiston	\$631
Aberdeen	\$616
Kendrick	\$603
Richfield	\$574
Potlatch	\$565
Genesee	\$538

Local Property Taxes for K-12 Public Education



State, Local and Federal Funds Combined



SALARIES

Teacher Pay Has Been on a Five-Year Rise

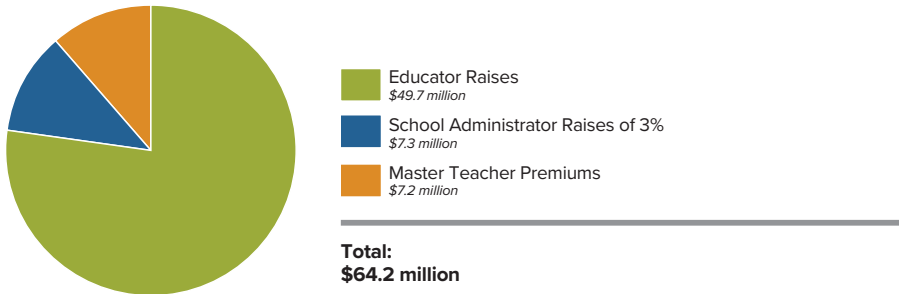
The five-year law aimed at boosting teacher pay in Idaho has helped push average statewide salaries to \$50,794 and the minimum teacher wage to \$40,000.

The average statewide salary is up \$7,486, or nearly 17%, over the past five years when average salaries were \$44,000.

The pay hikes have garnered sturdy support in the Statehouse, sailing through the Legislature every year.

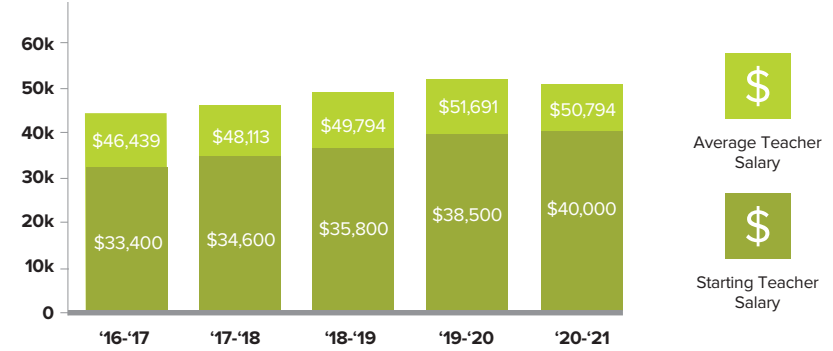
Here's the 2020-21 School Year Investment:

- \$49.7 million to pay for the fifth consecutive year of educator raises
- \$7.3 million to give school administrators a 3% raise
- \$7.2 million to pay for master teacher premiums



Idaho administrators — superintendents and principals — typically are contracted to work 210-240 days. Teachers are contracted to work, on average, 180 days. But buildings were closed in the Spring of 2020 and some in the Fall of 2020 because of the coronavirus. Missed days were not required to be made up.

Teacher Salaries' Growth Over Time



Average Salaries in Some of the State's Largest Districts:

West Ada, Idaho's largest district, increased salaries from \$46,000 in 2014-15 to \$53,000 this school year, a 14% jump.

Average salaries in the Boise district rose from \$52,000 in 2014-15 to \$62,000 in 2020-21, a nearly 20% increase.

Bonneville, East Idaho's largest school district, increased salaries from \$40,000 to \$48,000, an almost 20% increase.

Salaries in the Coeur d'Alene district jumped from \$50,000 in 2014-15 to \$57,000 this year, a 14% hike.

The Blaine County School District topped the average salary tally five years ago at \$72,000. The district's \$74,000 still leads the pack.



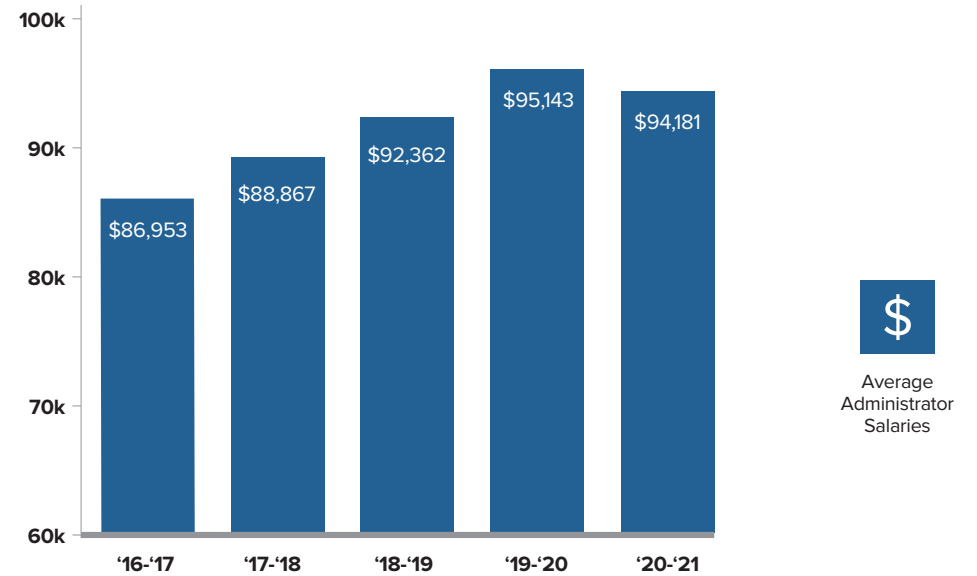
About 94% of Idaho's veteran teachers who applied for master teacher premiums — bonuses — received them. The state approved nearly 2,000 applicants over two years. The three-year renewable awards are worth \$12,000. The program will be phased out after this year.

SALARIES

Top Administrators (2020-21)

District	Name	Contract salary
Blaine County	Gwen Carol Holmes	\$180,200
Boise	Coby Dennis	\$177,395
West Ada	Mary Ann Ranells	\$177,021
Coeur d'Alene	Steven Cook	\$160,000
Caldwell	N. Shalene French	\$158,018
Lake Pend Oreille	Tom Albertson	\$156,958
Bonneville	Scott Woolstenhulme	\$155,000
Blaine County	Angela Martinez	\$154,916
Boise	Lisa Roberts	\$153,060
Nampa	Paula Kellerer	\$152,967
Vallivue	Pat Charlton	\$150,447
Idaho Falls	George Boland	\$149,811
North Idaho Stem Charter	Scott Thompson	\$148,820
Governor Brad Little		\$138,302
Superintendent of Schools Sherri Ybarra		\$117,556
Idaho Average Teacher Salary		\$50,794
Highest Average Blaine County		\$74,182

Administrator Salaries' Growth Over Time



From Idaho's Largest Districts

Top 10 Avg. Administrator Salaries

Boise Independent	\$102,397
Lewiston	\$97,977
Bonneville	\$96,949
Post Falls	\$95,557
West Ada	\$91,930
Jefferson County	\$89,874
Idaho Falls	\$89,664
Vallivue	\$89,650
Coeur d'Alene	\$89,295
Caldwell	\$88,945

Bottom 10 Avg. Administrator Salaries

Pocatello	\$88,028
Lakeland	\$85,307
Madison	\$85,245
Twin Falls	\$84,766
Minidoka	\$83,492
Nampa	\$81,132
Cassia County	\$78,970
Kuna Joint	\$76,883
Jerome	\$73,229
Oneida	\$59,739



The national average salary for school superintendents and administrators is **\$154,000**. The national average salary for school principals is about \$100,000.

ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

ANSWERS WILL
ENSURE YOUR
CHILD IS IN THE
BEST LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT
FOR THEIR NEEDS.

Questions for School Leaders

Most parents choose to send their children to the neighborhood school. It's convenient and transportation is provided. It's safe and easy.

But today, there are choices. Traditional schools often have open enrollment, and charter schools are popping up in Idaho at a record pace.

Plus, during the pandemic, parents looked for other options for their children as schools shut doors and moved learning online.

To help parents research, we created **IdahoEdTrends.org**, a place to explore and compare data on every public school in Idaho.

We also created these questions to ask of school leaders. Superintendents, principals and trustees should be able to answer these questions about the schools they lead. And, as parents, you should be able to learn about the environment where your child spends most of their learning years.

With answers to these questions, you will learn about teaching philosophies, what is measured and why, and spending priorities.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

To learn more about your school and district, ask these questions of school leaders:

School Philosophy

- How do you reward your students for good behavior and academic achievement?
- Does this school have a particular educational philosophy or mission?
- What are the school's greatest accomplishments?
- What are some of the biggest challenges?

Achievement

- How will feedback/progress be communicated to students and parents during distance learning?
- How long will it take for teachers to respond to questions my child may have about the lessons or assessments?
- How are your student subgroups performing? Are you meeting established annual goals and objectives?
- Since students did not take standardized tests in 2020, how will growth be measured on Idaho's standardized tests this year?
- What type of assessments are you using to evaluate teacher instruction?
- What credible evidence do you look for that shows assurances students are learning?

Transparency

- How are board minutes made available to the public?
- Do you fully comply with Idaho's transparency requirements (posting expenditures, teacher contracts, budgets, master agreements and continuous improvement plans to the district website)?
- How do you use parent surveys to make school decisions?
- How do you encourage parental involvement in your school beyond parent-teacher conferences?

Teacher Quality

- Are all your teachers certified to teach in their current teaching assignment?
- Do teachers in similar content and grade level classes use the same assessments to ensure equity in teaching and learning?
- When teachers are observed in a classroom, what strategies do you examine to measure teacher effectiveness?
- During times when teaching, and learning occur online only, how will teachers be evaluated?
- What professional development opportunities do teachers have? Do all your teachers attend and participate in professional development activities?
- In what ways do teachers collaborate? What strategies do you use with your staff to encourage collaboration and maintain high expectations?
- How is the effectiveness of professional trainings measured and monitored?
- Since we have no testing data from 2020, what tools are you using to measure student achievement and teacher effectiveness?
- What exceptionally effective practice(s) are you using that could be shared with other schools?

Leadership

- How do you maintain your substitute teacher pool? How will lessons be communicated to the substitute?
- When decisions are made about policy, curriculum and budgeting, are those decisions aligned with your Strategic Plan? Are they data driven?
- Is student achievement a primary focus in your Strategic Plan? Are the goals in your Strategic Plan measurable with qualitative and quantitative data?
- How often do you discuss your district's/charter's progress toward meeting the goals of your Strategic Plan?
- Who makes the decisions to change the learning/instructional model or close the school?
- How do you engage the community? What is your strategy for involving patrons in districtwide decisions?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Charter School Specific

- Do you have a lottery (and how does it work) or waiting list to enroll in your school?
- My child requires special services. Will they have priority in your selection lottery?
- Are you planning for future growth, and what is your maximum number of students?
- If you do not offer extracurricular activities, are students allowed to participate with the traditional school in the area?
- Are students allowed to dual enroll with the traditional school(s) in the area for programs this school may not offer?

Safety

- What is your face-covering philosophy or policy?
- Will students or adults be disciplined for not following face-covering requirements? How will this rule be enforced?
- Where do I find your school's operational plan and protocols if there are positive cases of COVID-19 at school?
- Is bullying a problem at the school? What is the school's anti-bullying policy?
- What are the procedures to prevent online bullying while using a district device?

Student Resources

- How is technology used to support teaching and learning at this school?
- How do the arts fit into the curriculum? Is there a school choir, band, orchestra or drama program?
- What extracurricular opportunities (sports, clubs, community service, competitions) are available for students?
- What kinds of library/media resources are available to students?

- How does this school support students who have academic, social or emotional difficulties?
- Do students have a voice on committees or surveys that make decisions for their education?
- Does the school have a program for gifted students?
- What strategies are used to teach students who are not fluent in English?
- What services are offered at your school to support the emotional and mental needs of my child?

Special Education

- My child is in special education. How are you making the needed accommodations when distance learning is in place?
- I have a child in the extended resource classroom. How will services be provided for him/her?
- During the time of distance learning, how will teachers be evaluated?
- My child is receiving Title I services. How will he/she get the help they need if school is all online?

NOTES:

NOTES:



Go to IdahoEdNews.org

For daily and exclusive reporting
on Idaho's public schools and districts



Go to IdahoEdTrends.org

To explore and compare data on all
of Idaho's public schools

*Information in this report is from the IdahoEdNews.org and
IdahoEdTrends.org websites managed by the staff of Idaho Education News.*

*Data for this book was collected from districts and charters, the State Department of Education,
State Board of Education and the National Clearing House. Idaho Education News staff mined the data
and reported on the findings. Complete news stories can be found at IdahoEdNews.org. More data can
be explored at IdahoEdTrends.org. Both websites are free of paywalls and advertising thanks to
generous funding provided by the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation.*