

**Snake River School Board of Trustees
Held at Snake River Community Library
924 W. Highway 39, Blackfoot, ID 83221
Wednesday, January 22, 2026**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Lon Harrington called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Other board members present were Josh Sorensen, Larin Mortimer, Carol Hepworth, and Toni Ibarra. Also attending were Superintendent Mark Kress and Board Clerk Terisa Coombs.

2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Larin Mortimer opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Carol Hepworth and seconded by Toni Ibarra to approve the agenda as presented. All board members present voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

4. PATRON FORUM

There were no comments in the Patron Forum.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Trustee Zones 1, 4, and 5 Oath of Office

Board Clerk, Terisa Coombs, administered the Oath of Office to Lon Harrington (Zone 1), Josh Sorensen (Zone 4), and Toni Ibarra (Zone 5).

b. Board Reorganization

Elections for board officers were conducted.

As chairman of the Snake River School District 52 Board of Trustees, Lon Harrington declared the Board of Trustees as dissolved and asked the Board to proceed with reorganization for 2026.

As Superintendent of Snake River School District 52, Mark Kress declared the office of Chairman of the Board open and asked for nominations.

Carol Hepworth moved to retain Lon Harrington as Chairman and Larin Mortimer seconded; With no further nominations being made, Josh Sorensen moved to cease nominations. Lon Harrington was elected as Chairman by a 5-0 vote.

Larin Mortimer nominated Josh Sorensen as Vice-Chairman and Toni Ibarra seconded; With no further nominations being made, Lon Harrington moved to cease nominations. Josh Sorensen was elected as Vice-Chairman by a 5-0 vote.

Larin Mortimer nominated Toni Ibarra as Treasurer and Carol Hepworth seconded. With no further nominations being made, Lon Harrington moved to cease nominations. Toni Ibarra was elected as Treasurer by a 5-0 vote.

It was moved by Carol Hepworth and seconded by Larin Mortimer that Terisa Coombs serve as Board Clerk and the district's Custodian of Records. All the board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

It was moved by Toni Ibarra and seconded by Carol Hepworth that Harmony Shuler serve as Deputy Treasurer. All the board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

It was moved by Josh Sorensen and seconded by Carol Hepworth that the following serve as Assistant Treasurers: Kara Warner, Dashia Clark, Amber Anderton, Ashley Marlow, Gaye Jones, Doralee Mortensen, Debbie Ranstrom, Dalrene Pincock, Kristi Toone, Teresa Wood, Natalie Raymond, Janice Hallinan, and Lori Fillmore. All the board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

After review, each Board Member signed the Code of Ethics.

c. Set Meeting Calendar

Board meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise posted.

Josh Sorensen moved that the regular board meetings be held on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m., unless posted otherwise by the board, and that they be held at the Snake River Community Library or at the schools as posted during the year. Motion was seconded by Larin Mortimer. All the board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

d. Establish Posting Locations:

According to Idaho Code, posting locations (required and courtesy locations) must be established during the annual meeting. The district office and district website and are required postings locations and Fast Stop, Chad's Place, and Moreland Post Office have been courtesy locations. We would like to remove Fast Stop as they don't provide a place to post.

Larin Mortimer moved and Carol Hepworth seconded to approve the following board meeting agenda posting locations: The District Office, the district website, Chad's Place, and at the Moreland Post Office. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

e. Appointment of Board Representatives to Committees

Discussion was held about each committee and board member responsibilities. When each board member would like to give a report on their specific committee, they will contact the board clerk and add it to the next board meeting agenda.

The new chairman made committee assignments for the following:

Snake River Education Foundation: Carol Hepworth

Snake River Activities Foundation: Toni Ibarra

Snake River School/Community Library: Lon Harrington

Technology Advisory Committee: Carol Hepworth

Budget Committee: Josh Sorensen

Insurance Committee: Larin Mortimer

Negotiations: Lon Harrington and Josh Sorensen

ISBA Business Session Representative: Lon Harrington

ISBA Legislative Representative (Leg Rep) Program: Lon Harrington

Title VII Coordinators: Superintendent Kress, Harmony Shuler

Title IX Coordinators: Robert Coombs, Superintendent Kress

It was moved by Josh Sorensen and seconded by Carol Hepworth to approve the committee assignments as read by the superintendent; to approve Mark Kress and Harmony Shuler as Title VII Coordinators; and to approve Robert Coombs and Mark Kress as the Title IX Coordinators. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

f. Consent Agenda

Minutes: Minutes of December 17, 2025

Resignations: Maralee Turpin, Riverside Title I Aide; Maysa Howell, Rockford Special Ed Parapro; Neiley Mangum, Custodian.

New Hires: Michael Hammond, Rockford Behavior Intervention Parapro; Elizabeth Egbert, Middle School Special Ed Parapro; Jane Reynolds, Riverside Title I Aide; Rosa Pizarro, Custodian; Rudy Ramirez, Custodian; Becky Hone, SROHS Online School Counselor.

Psychology Intern: Emma Smykla, Internship with Emery Clayson

Budget Report, Payroll, and Claims Payable for December 2025; Reconciliation Report (Nov/Dec 2025)

Review of District Credit Card Users: (list is in your packet to review)

A motion was made by Josh Sorensen and seconded by Larin Mortimer to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

g. Investment Statements and Maturity Renewal Options

The investment statement was reviewed. The 12-month CD is expiring in March of 2026. Superintendent Kress discussed either reinvesting or considering other options. A presentation will be made at the board meeting in February.

Carol Hepworth moved and Toni Ibarra seconded to approve the fourth quarter investment statements as presented. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

Superintendent Report

- 1. High School Auditorium Seats and Ceilings:** Jana McBride reported that recent upgrades improved the auditorium's sound and lighting, but several major issues remain. The roof still needs work, and many auditorium seats are failing with no available replacement parts, prompting discussion about fully replacing all seats. She outlined ongoing ceiling problems caused by large access holes cut during the sound system installation that were never repaired. Proposed solutions include covering the holes with acoustic panels or fabric, repairing them with sheetrock, or installing a full metal grid/catwalk system, which is expensive. Lighting access is also a safety issue, as current lights above the balcony cannot be safely reached. Additional items raised included the lack of a scene shop, dressing room, and costume storage space, with a suggestion to consider an auditorium addition in the future.

Snake River Board of Trustees Minutes
January 22, 2026 (3)

- 2. High School Student Council Presentation:** The Snake River High School leadership team presented a proposal to implement the Hope Squad, a peer-to-peer suicide prevention and mental health support program. They explained that, despite available counselors, many students lack trusted peers or adults to confide in, a need underscored by the recent loss of a classmate to suicide. The Hope Squad would consist of about 30 students nominated by their peers, including student council members, and trained to identify students in distress and connect them with trusted adults and professional help. The program is nationally recognized and already used in nearby schools. Funding of \$5,400 to launch the program has been secured from the Bingham Healthcare Foundation, covering training and the first year of curriculum. The team plans to sustain the program through school and community fundraising, including a mental health awareness week. The program will promote wellness, resilience, and connection, while helping normalize conversations around mental health and seeking help.

- 3. Calendar Revision:** Superintendent Kress noted that due to the possibility of having no snow days this year, similar to last year, the district is considering allowing for an extended spring break if no snow days are used. While weather conditions could still change, a decision will be made in February. Currently, spring break is scheduled for April 2-6. If no snow days occur before the next board meeting, the district would propose holding school on April 2 and instead shifting spring break to the second week of April (April 6-9).

- 4. Legislative Updates:** The legislative session began January 12, 2026. Superintendent Kress reported that overall K-12 funding is expected to remain stable; however, proposed state legislation could significantly impact online schools. The governor has proposed cutting approximately \$20 million statewide from districts operating online programs, which could result in an estimated \$3 million reduction for the district's online schools. In response, the district is working with its provider and has hired a legislative liaison with state experience to advocate for online school funding. While the district's traditional schools are not expected to be harmed, online programs are at risk, and the district plans to actively work to preserve funding, protect students, and retain staff associated with those programs.

- 5. Land Purchase Update:** Superintendent Kress announced the successful purchase of 22 acres of land west of the high school. Plans for the property include developing an athletic complex with two softball fields, two baseball fields, a walking path, golf practice areas, and new access roads at the front and back of the site.

- 6. Supplemental and Plant Facility Discussion:** The superintendent also noted the need to begin discussions about whether to pursue a supplemental levy. Although it is not yet required to be posted, the levy could be run early, either this May or next, while still aligning with the intended funding timeline. This consideration is especially important given potential funding cuts to the district's online school programs.

- b. Upcoming Events**
 - 1. Parent Teacher Conferences** (HS/JrH/MS/Rockford are today; Riverside is January 29th; Moreland is March 4th)
 - 2. IETA Workshop is February 4-7, 2026**
 - 3. Day on the Hill, February 16-17, 2026**

7. POLICY READINGS

a. Second Readings:

Policy 8130—Transportation of Students with Disabilities: These updates are also based on HB 396. They change bus-specific descriptions of transportation services that may be provided to students with disabilities to vehicles and transportation in general. It also notes that an alternate vehicle type may be used when a special education bus isn't a practical way to transport a student. The update also includes general cleanup for improved readability. **This is a recommended update to a recommended policy.**

Policy 8140-Student Conduct on Buses: These updates, prompted by HB 396, apply language related to student discipline during transportation to vehicles beyond buses alone. This includes changing a mention of rules set by the bus driver to rules set by the driver more generally, application of rules established by the superintendent to all school vehicles, and education of students on these rules regardless of whether they ride a bus or another type of school vehicle. It also changes requirements related to due process for students facing a revocation of transportation privileges to apply them to students who ride any type of school vehicle. **This is a recommended update to a required policy.**

Policy 8170—District/Charter School-Owned Vehicles: The edits to these items are also based on HB 396. They expand to all school vehicles the requirement for buses to be in safe and legal operating condition, to be inspected as required by law, and for their defects to be reported by the driver. The update restricts to school buses the requirement to meet the construction requirements of the State Board of Education. **This is a recommended required policy.**

Policy 8180-Driver Training and Responsibility: These edits, prompted by HB 396, apply some requirements to all school vehicle drivers and restrict others to bus drivers only. Specifically, all school vehicle drivers are required to follow the law and administrative rules. They must be provided annually with a written copy of rules for drivers and students, and they must meet the basic qualifications required of all drivers, such as being over 18 and of good moral character. Also, this policy optionally expands the system of having employees besides the driver who accompany students on the bus take responsibility for managing student behavior. The requirements specific to school bus drivers relate to legal requirements for bus driver training, while the training requirement for other school vehicle drivers may be set by the superintendent/executive director or their designee. **This is a recommended update to a required policy.**

Policy 8185-Use of Wireless Communication Devices by Bus Drivers: This is the last of the items updated due to HB 396. It applies to all district/charter school drivers who transport students and restrictions that previously applied specifically to bus drivers. These restrictions relate to the use of wireless communications devices while operating a vehicle. **This is a recommended update to a required policy.**

A motion was made by Toni Ibarra and seconded by Carol Hepworth to approve the second reading of Policy 8130—Transportation of Students with Disabilities; Policy 8140-Student Conduct on Buses; Policy 8170—District/Charter School-Owned Vehicles; Policy 8180-Driver Training and Responsibility; Policy 8185-Use of Wireless Communication Devices by Bus Drivers. All board members present voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

b. First Readings

Policy 2605—Advancement Requirements (6-9): This update adds the mathematics requirements for a student to advance from 8th grade to 9th. These requirements are set in state administrative rule (IDAPA). This is a recommended update to a recommended policy.

Policy 3380P—High School and Jr. High Extracurricular Academic Eligibility: This legacy procedure needs to be added to the current policy manual.

Policy 5740—Reduction in Force: This update consists of minor improvements for readability and clarity and no recent changes have happened in state law to warrant this update. However, in light of uncertainty surrounding state revenue projections, we believe it is prudent for boards to review their policies and procedures on this topic to ensure they are up-to-date and accord with current practices and the Board's intent to prepare for possible reductions in funds for FY2027. This is an optional update to a required item.

Policy 5740P—Reduction in Force-Reduction in Force Procedures: This update includes the same kinds of changes aimed at readability and clarity as the procedure, as well as the same encouragement to ensure that it is current. It also makes language related to highly qualified teachers and master teachers optional. These terms used to have a specific and highly salient meaning, but they are no longer commonly used in this way. If your board still makes use of them, you may wish to include this language. If not, you may wish to remove it.

Policy 7225—Financial Fraud and Theft Prevention: In addition to establishing internal controls for cybersecurity vulnerabilities, the substantive edits also outline mandatory disclosures when the board finds credible evidence of fraud, conflicts, bribery, or other criminal violations in federal code. Finally, it includes protections for employees who disclose evidence of such. This is a required update to a required item.

Policy 7235—Fiscal Accountability and Federal Grant Funds: The substance of these edits is to ensure that Elementary and Secondary Education Act Funds are used in alignment with program goals. These edits update time and effort reporting as well as property and procurement tracking. They also outline the opportunity for the board to direct the superintendent/executive director to object to or appeal federal agency complaints about how funds were used. This is a required update to a required item.

Policy 7237—Retention of Records Relating to Federal Grants: These edits include details on how federal grant spending records are to be collected and stored, including substantive changes on electronic records in lieu of paper records. These provide that the electronic records cannot be altered. This is a required update to a required item.

Policy 7270—Property Records: These changes update reporting requirements for equipment and computing devices, including changes in the condition or status of such property. It also makes substantive changes to requirements for supplies purchased by subrecipients, including how unused supplies are managed. Updates also include provisions to notify the State Department of Education when items are lost, damaged, or stolen and details on how to sell or dispose of equipment that is no longer used. This is a required update to a required item.

Policy 7320—Allowable Uses for Grant Funds: This update adds one new question that is useful in determining whether a cost is allowable under a federal grant. This is a required update to a required item.

Policy 7320P—Allowable Uses for Grant Funds – Selected Items of Cost: This adds more information on participant support costs. Specifically, they call for the board to direct the superintendent/executive director to adopt procedures to classify participant support costs. It also makes other minor additions. This is a required update to a required item.

Policy 7600—Declaration of Financial Emergency: Like the updates to the RIF-related policies, the changes to this policy and its related items are an effort to ensure these policies are current, recently-reviewed, and in good condition in case they are needed in the tough economic times that may be ahead. These are largely improvements for clarity and readability. They also include edits for brevity. This is an optional update to a recommended policy.

Policy 7600P—Declaration of Financial Emergency—Financial Emergency Declaration Requirements: These updates are for clarity and readability and are not due to recent changes to the financial emergency declaration statute. However, in light of uncertainty surrounding state revenue projections, we encourage a review to assist boards in ensuring their procedure on this topic is up-to-date. Updates are intended to restructure the procedure to make it easier to understand. We've also tried to eliminate any in-text references to specific, numbered items in lists contained in policy. This is to avoid the risk of these references becoming inaccurate if a change to the list changes the numbering of the referenced item. This is an optional update to a recommended procedure.

A motion was made by Carol Hepworth and seconded by Larin Mortimer to approve the first readings of Policy 2605—Advancement Requirements (6-9); Policy 3380P—High School and Jr. High Extracurricular Academic Eligibility; Policy 5740—Reduction in Force; Policy 5740P—Reduction in Force-Reduction in Force Procedures; Policy 7225—Financial Fraud and Theft Prevention; Policy 7235—Fiscal Accountability and Federal Grant Funds; Policy 7237—Retention of Records Relating to Federal Grants; Policy 7270—Property Records; Policy 7320—Allowable Uses for Grant Funds; Policy 7320P—Allowable Uses for Grant Funds – Selected Items of Cost; Policy 7600—Declaration of Financial Emergency; and Policy 7600P—Declaration of Financial Emergency—Financial Emergency Declaration Requirements. All board members present voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Under Idaho Code 74-206 (1)(b) to consider the evaluation of the Superintendent and (1)(c) to acquire an interest in real property not owned by a public agency. Larin Mortimer moved and Josh Sorensen seconded to go into Executive Session. A roll call vote was taken: Lon Harrington, aye; Larin Mortimer, aye; Josh Sorensen, aye; Toni Ibarra, aye; and Carol Hepworth, aye. Motion passed 5-0.

The board went into Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. Idaho Code 74-206 (1)(b) was discussed until 8:00 p.m.

From 8:00 p.m. until 8:20 p.m., Idaho Code 74-206 (1)(b) was discussed.

At 8:20 p.m., the doors were opened and the board returned to Regular Session.

9. ACTION ITEM:

A motion was made by Josh Sorensen and seconded by Larin Mortimer to extend the superintendent's contract through the 2027-2028 school year at the current rate to be negotiated in May of 2026. All board members present voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

10. CLOSING INFORMATION ITEMS

The next Board Meeting will be February 18, 2026 at Snake River Middle School at 7 p.m.

11. ADJOURN

Larin Mortimer moved to adjourn and Toni Ibarra seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

ATTEST:

Terisa Coombs
Clerk

Lon Harrington
Chairman

February 18, 2026
Date