

**Snake River School Board of Trustees
Held at Snake River Community Library
924 W. Highway 39, Blackfoot, ID 83221
Wednesday, February 18, 2026**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Lon Harrington called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Other board members present were Larin Mortimer and Carol Hepworth. Toni Ibarra and Josh Sorensen arrived at 5:38 p.m. Also attending were Superintendent Mark Kress and Board Clerk Terisa Coombs.

2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Carol Hepworth opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Action was not taken on approval of the agenda.

4. PATRON FORUM

There were no comments in the Patron Forum.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Consent Agenda

Minutes: Minutes of Regular Meeting of January 22, 2026 and Minutes of Special Meeting of February 2, 2026

Resignations: Samantha Holmquist, Moreland Preschool Teacher

Budget Report, Reconciliation Report, Payroll, and Claims Payable for January 2026

Property Disposal: 2019 Honda CRV

A motion was made by Larin Mortimer and Carol Hepworth seconded by Carol Hepworth to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 3-0.

b. Idaho History Curriculum

The board reviewed a proposal to replace its outdated Idaho History textbook due to its age, limited perspectives, and lack of inclusive language. With new Grade 4 standards pending adoption in Idaho, the district piloted a new third-edition curriculum (Idaho Adventure) aligned to the updated standards. Teachers and a state-compliant parent committee reviewed digital trial access and found the new program more engaging, inclusive, and supportive of multilingual learners. It includes improved visuals, primary sources, inquiry-based activities, and five-year digital resources. The proposed cost is about \$17,582 for 150 textbooks, teacher materials, and digital licenses. The board postponed a final decision until members can further review the materials.

Carol Hepworth moved and Larin Mortimer seconded to table the purchase of the Idaho History curriculum until the next meeting. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

c. Surveillance System Equipment

The board discussed urgently upgrading the district's surveillance camera system after being previously advised by federal and state officials to remove outdated cameras due to security concerns. Many current cameras, especially at the junior high, are either nonfunctional or in need of repair. After reviewing bids, the district selected the same vendor that previously installed district TVs, citing best pricing. The proposal includes 176 cameras and multiple video channel systems across several buildings. Superintendent Kress requested approval to immediately proceed with \$32,000 for the most urgent upgrades (primarily the junior high), with the remaining \$86,000 deferred until after July 1. Principal Syd Hale mentioned that the need was underscored by a recent student assault near the junior high that was not captured on school cameras.

A motion was made by Toni Ibarra and seconded by Carol Hepworth to approve the purchase of surveillance equipment through Bluum USA, Inc. in the amount of \$118,000 split into two payments, the first payment of \$32,735.56 for the Jr. High that is due 30 days from delivery and the second payment of \$86,052.24 will be due on July 30, 2026. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

d. Investment Renewal

The 12-month CD at D.L. Evans is maturing March 19, 2026. Superintendent Kress and Harmony Shuler discussed the plan to either reinvest or consider other options. Proposals were received by New York Life (National and Securian), Frontier Credit Union, D.L. Evans Bank; and Zions Bank. The board reviewed the 12-month CD of approximately \$1.15 million, which earned about \$40,000 in interest at 4.35%. Administration presented reinvestment options and the state's Idaho Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP), with rates ranging roughly from 3% to 4.8%. After discussion about rates, liquidity, laddering strategy, and future capital needs, the board voted not to renew the CD at this time and instead move the funds into the LGIP for flexibility, with the option to reconsider investment choices later.

Josh Sorensen moved and Larin Mortimer seconded to not renew the CD at D.L. Evans and move those monies into the LGIP for the time being. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

e. 2025-2026 Calendar Revision

The board considered revising Spring Break after having two consecutive years without snow days. Last year, when no snow days were used, the board agreed to consider extending Spring Break in similar situations. Superintendent Kress met with the Administrative Council, who supported moving Spring Break to April 6–9, 2026, pending no additional snow days before April 2 because they felt it would be most beneficial to the students.

At this time, Chairman Harrington opened the discussion to the audience, where attendees expressed a preference for moving Spring Break to March 30–April 2 instead of April 6–9. After discussion, the board approved the motion to set Spring Break for March 30–April 2, 2026, provided there are no school closures before March 26.

A motion was made by Carol Hepworth and seconded by Larin Mortimer to approve rescheduling Spring Break from April 2–6, 2026, to March 30-April 2, 2026, provided there are no school closures through March 26, 2026. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

f. 2026-2027 Snake River Online/Opportunities Calendars

Snake River Online K-8 and Snake River Opportunities High School have submitted 2026-2027 calendars for review and approval. Superintendent Kress met with the administrators of each online school to come up with a calendar that would fit the needs of the staff and students making sure that they have enough instructional hours for students and the negotiated agreement terms are met for teachers.

Josh Sorensen moved and Carol Hepworth seconded to approve the 2026-2027 calendars for Snake River Online K-8 and Snake River Opportunities High School as presented. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Middle School Principal Report:

Principal Sydnee Hale gave a brief report on the middle school. She thanked the board for visiting and shared recent improvements at the school. Hallway walls were repainted from green to light gray with help from volunteers and staff, giving the building a refreshed feel. The library has added reading incentives with prize baskets for students meeting reading goals. Students are also participating in new STEM activities led by Marcy Bradley. Two teams placed first and second in the Invent Idaho competition, and another group will compete in a 3D printing competition in Pocatello. Mrs. Hale also noted strong participation in music programs, including band, strings, and choir, and thanked the board for supporting a halftime choir teacher who works with about 75 students.

b. Superintendent Report

1. Land Purchase Update: As part of purchasing the land, the district agreed to keep the existing cattle lease in place through at least September. Superintendent Kress spoke with the current leaseholder, who owns the cattle and is supportive of the district's purchase. The district plans to maintain the agreement until it decides how the land will be used.

2. Legislative Updates/Day on the Hill Report: Two board members, Lon and Josh, and Superintendent Kress attended the Day on the Hill event to meet with legislators and discuss district priorities and concerns, including potential funding impacts to education. They shared concerns about a possible state budget shortfall due to lower-than-expected revenues, which could affect education funding.

c. Upcoming Events

- 1. K-6 Teacher Prep Day/End of the 2nd Trimester is February 26th**
- 2. Spring Leadership Institute, March 17th in Rigby**
- 3. Teacher Inservice will be March 20, 2026**

7. POLICY READINGS

a. Second 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 Larin Mortimer and seconded by Josh Sorensen to approve the second 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.

b. First Readings/Policy Reviews

A motion was made by Josh Sorensen and seconded by Larin Mortimer to table the remainder of action items including the policy first readings and the policy reviews until next month. All board members present voted aye. Motion passed 5-0.

8. CLOSING INFORMATION ITEMS

The next Board Meeting will be March 18, 2026 at Riverside Elementary at 7 p.m.

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9. ADJOURN

Josh Sorensen moved to adjourn and Carol Hepworth seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

ATTEST:

Terisa Coombs
Clerk

Lon Harrington
Chairman

March 18, 2026
Date