

Snake River School Board of Trustees
Held at Rockford Elementary
1152 W. Highway 39, Blackfoot, ID 83221
Wednesday, October 15, 2025

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Josh Sorensen opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Carol Hepworth and seconded by Larin Mortimer to approve the agenda as presented. All board members present voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

There were no comments during Public Input.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Consent Agenda

Minutes: Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 16, 2025

Payroll Status Change: Julie Crowther and Katie Williams

Budget Report, Payroll, and Claims Payable for September 2025; Reconciliation (July 2025) Reconciliation was not completed at this time.

Student Teacher/Admin Internship: Saige Dalley will be student teacher with Heather Miller at the Jr. High; Emily Goodwin will be doing her Administrator Internship with Ray Carter and Dave Sotutu.

A motion was made by Larin Mortimer and seconded by Carol Hepworth to table the July 2025 Reconciliation and to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

b. 2024-2025 Financial Audit

- 1. Financial Audit:** The district's financial reconciliation is delayed because the state is demanding more detailed financial reporting. Many school districts are about a month behind due to these new requirements.
- 2. Current Financial Status:** Despite the delays, the district's finances are in good shape and "in the black." Final numbers are expected at the next board meeting.
- 3. Year-End and Monthly Reports:** Staff have been prioritizing year-end budget work, which has delayed completion of monthly reports for July–September. These should be ready by the next meeting.
- 4. State Oversight and Funding Concerns:** The state legislature is scrutinizing school budgets more closely due to an overall state funding shortfall. Districts with strong fund balances may receive reduced state funding because the state views them as capable of self-funding.
- 5. Surplus & Spending Strategy:** Superintendent Kress plans to address the district's surplus in the November meeting. He recommends spending down part of the general fund.

Overall, the district is financially stable, though reporting is behind schedule due to new state requirements. Strategic spending is being considered to protect future funding

Josh Sorensen moved and Carol Hepworth seconded to table the district's Financial Audit Report for the 2024-2025 school year until next month. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

c. SROHS Fee Hearing and Presentation

Principal Scott Corgatelli gave a report about Snake River Opportunities High School. He reported that the school has seen continued growth in its dual credit opportunities, with students earning a total of 504 credits last year—an increase of 60 from the previous year. Students are able to earn these credits through the College of Southern Idaho (CSI), the Idaho Digital Learning Alliance (IDLA), and various early college programs. In addition to dual credit expansion, the school is also broadening its Career and Technical Education (CTE) and community partnerships. Principal Corgatelli noted that approximately 30 percent of the student population is identified as at-risk or alternative. To strengthen support for these students, the school has added several new positions, including a social worker and an at-risk mentor, with plans to add student success coaches who will assist with academic progress and engagement. Additionally, the school will have an internal candidate completing internship hours as part of their professional training, helping to further support counseling and student services. Enrollment currently stands at 234 students, up from 222 last October. The school now has its largest junior and senior classes to date, while smaller freshman and sophomore numbers remain typical for this type of program.

Principal Corgatelli also explained that a budgeting error this year reduced student fees by \$300 per student, funds that were originally intended to support school-wide activities. To address this issue, the school plans to temporarily reallocate a small portion of student funds from individual accounts to the school's activity fund. This adjustment will be in place for one year only and will be corrected in next year's budget cycle. Overall, the school remains financially stable, academically strong, and focused on expanding student support systems.

Josh Sorensen moved and Larin Mortimer seconded to approve the SROHS student activity fee of \$25 per trimester for grades 7-11 and \$50 per trimester for Grade 12, as presented. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

d. 2026-2027 Bus Purchase

Superintendent Kress presented information to the board regarding the purchase of new school buses for the upcoming school year. He explained that he had gathered bids for both a travel bus and a regular school bus, both of which meet state requirements. The cost of a new travel bus has increased significantly from the previous year—rising from \$174,000 to approximately \$204,795. Although the bus qualifies for state reimbursement, the district would only receive those funds gradually over a 12-year period, making the district's total immediate cost around \$31,000. The regular school bus was quoted at \$138,803, up from the \$94,000 the district paid for similar buses several years ago, reflecting the general rise in equipment costs.

Board members discussed how the buses could serve as both travel and backup vehicles. While the smaller travel buses would not typically be used for daily routes, they would still count toward the district's required number of emergency backup buses. Concerns were raised about maintenance costs for the rear-engine travel buses, which are higher than standard models, but Superintendent Kress shared that other districts have been very satisfied with their performance. Discussion was held about the purchase of both a travel bus and a standard school bus, acknowledging rising costs, the district's aging fleet, and the practical need for additional vehicles to support student transportation and activities.

It was moved by Josh Sorensen and seconded by Larin Mortimer to approve the purchase of a travel bus from Western Mountain Bus in the amount of \$204,795 as presented. Josh Sorensen, Carol Hepworth, and Larin Mortimer voted aye, Lon Harrington voted nay. Motion passed 3-1.

It was moved by Josh Sorensen and seconded by Carol Hepworth to approve the purchase of a 72-passenger bus from Western Mountain Bus in the amount of \$138,803, as presented. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

e. Weight Room Engineering Bid

Superintendent Kress reported that the district received a bid from Resin Architecture for the weight room engineering project, but the quoted cost was significantly higher than expected. After consulting with the second qualified engineering firm, he received an estimate of under \$150,000—less than one-third of Resin's bid. The proposed weight room project covers approximately 6,300 square feet. Superintendent Kress recommended that the board reject the bid from Resin Architecture and move forward with the second qualified firm instead.

It was moved by Larin Mortimer and seconded by Josh Sorensen to reject the engineering bid from Resin Architecture in the amount of \$306,000, as presented. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

- a. High School Drama Presentation:** Jana McBride discussed their recent trip to the Hale Theater in Utah and highlighted the achievements of the music, arts, and drama programs, emphasizing their consistent excellence and community pride. On October 7th, 56 students attended a performance of *Sister Act* at the Hale Center Theater, a three-hour trip showcasing professional-quality productions comparable to Broadway. The experience was fully funded through grants, with students only paying a travel fee, and scholarships were available to ensure no student missed the trip due to financial constraints. The trip provided students with an inspiring cultural and educational experience, and student representatives shared their positive experiences, emphasizing the benefits of exposure to high-quality performances. The program was praised for its impact, accessibility, and the memorable experience it provided for all participants.

b. Superintendent Report

- 1. I-Work Report:** This report will be given at next month's board meeting.
- 2. Safety Report:** The high school intercom system is installed and being used. It took three weeks to install and is a work in progress but Superintendent Kress and Principal Ray Carter are happy and satisfied with the system. In the future, Superintendent Kress would like to have this system in all of the buildings in the district.

c. Upcoming Events

- 1. Parent Teacher Conferences:** Rockford Elementary and Middle School: October 15th; Jr. High and High School: October 16th; Moreland Elementary: 20-21st; Riverside Elementary 21-22nd.
- 2. The Junior Play, Alice In Wonderland, will be October 20-24th.**
- 3. SREF Craft Fair and Halloween Carnival will be November 1st.**
- 4. K-6 Teacher Inservice is November 13th.**
- 5. Annual ISBA Conference will be November 12-14, 2025 in Coeur d'Alene**

- d. Proposed Resolutions of the 2026 Legislative Session:** The board has agreed to go with the ISBA recommendations for all proposed resolutions and Lon Harrington will represent the board in the business session at the ISBA Conference in November.

7. POLICY READINGS

Second Readings (Policy Updates from ISBA)

Policy 5100-Hiring Process and Criteria: This is a minor correction to a reference to IC 33-512 and some other changes for improved readability and grammar/usage reasons.

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Policy 5110-Criminal History/Background Checks: These edits are for clarity and readability. Trustee Mortimer had a question as the time period of five days after starting employment or unsupervised contact with students, whichever is sooner. Superintendent Kress will check up on the wording and make sure it is correct. The board will bring this policy back at the November board meeting.

Policy 8300-Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness: This update is based on House Bill 224, which requires district and school level emergency operations plans and requires coordination with local school staff and local emergency response agencies. **This is a recommended update to a recommended policy.**

Policy 8300P-Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Procedure: This update is also based on House Bill 224, and it covers additional requirements, including annual review of the plan and training staff on the plan. Parts of this policy have also been rewritten and rearranged for greater clarity. Some parts that address details better covered in the emergency operations plan itself have also been removed. It is important to note that school and district emergency operations plans are exempt from disclosure under Idaho public records law. They may be safety-sensitive as they may contain information about how the school or district would respond to an intruder or other bad actor. **This is a recommended update to a recommended procedure.**

Policy 9803-Flags and Banners: This is a new policy aimed at implementing House Bill 41a, a new Idaho statute that restricts flags and banners that can be displayed in some places and contexts on school grounds. It outlines permissible types of flags, the exemptions to this statute, and provides an optional process for the Board to designate official school or district flags. ISBA anticipates the State Department of Education will issue further guidance on this statute sometime this summer. At that time, ISBA may provide an update to this policy. **This is a new recommended policy.**

A motion was made by Larin Mortimer and seconded by Carol Hepworth to approve the second readings of Policy 5100-Hiring Process and Criteria; Policy 8300-Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness; Policy 8300P-Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Procedure; and Policy 9803-Flags and Banners. All board members present voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

First Readings: (ISBA Policy Updates)

Policy 4210F1-Facility Use and Rental Agreement: The kitchen staff rates were increased this year and this policy needs to be updated. If renting the facilities and a kitchen cook needs to be used, a cook must be present. The fee needs to be increased from \$15 per hour up to \$23 per hour.

A motion was made by Carol Hepworth and seconded by Josh Sorensen to approve the first reading of Policy 4210F1-Facility Use and Rental Agreement. All board members present voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

8. ADJOURN

Larin Mortimer moved and Josh Sorensen seconded to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

Terisa Coombs
Clerk

Lon Harrington
Chairman

November 19, 2025
Date