

Snake River School Board of Trustees
Held at Snake River Jr. High
918 West Highway 39, Blackfoot, ID 83221
Wednesday, December 17, 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 Toni Ibarra. Larin Mortimer was absent. Also attending was Superintendent Mark Kress and Board Clerk Terisa Coombs.

2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Toni Ibarra 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 4-0.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

There were no comments during Public Input.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Consent Agenda

Minutes: Minutes of Regular Meeting of November 19, 2025

Resignations: Jarom Luker, Jr. High Math Teacher; Abigail Perschon, Custodian; Jenna Lee, Jr. High Cook's Helper;

New Hires: Amber Mitchell, Moreland Special Ed Parapro; Michael Olsen, Bus Driver/Maintenance Worker; Brittanie Wadsworth, Jr. High Cook's Helper and Food Delivery Driver.

Payroll Status Change: Brandi Ellis, from 29 to 22 hours; Madison Thieman, from 30 to 14.5 hours per week; Mya Van Orden from the Middle School to Moreland;

Budget Report, Payroll, and Claims Payable for November 2025; Reconciliation (July-October 2025)

A motion was made by Josh Sorensen and seconded by Toni Ibarra to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

b. 2026-2027 District Calendar

One of the responsibilities of the board is to approve the district school calendar. Calendar #1 was chosen by the staff for the 2026-2027 school year. Superintendent Kress reviewed relevant dates including starting and ending dates, teacher inservices, Harvest Break, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Break.

It was moved by Toni Ibarra and seconded by Carol Hepworth to approve the 2026-2027 District Calendar as presented. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Special Education Report

Special Education Director Bryn Katseanes gave a brief presentation. She discussed the Annual Determination Report and the good things that are happening within the program. She also discussed the academic growth that has happened and attributes this to behavior training for paraprofessionals and behavior interventions that has taken place. The board thanked Mrs. Katseanes.

b. Superintendent Report

1. Sewer Connection Agreement with Country Haven Utilities and Groveland Water and Sewer: Superintendent Kress reported that the Country Haven sewer line is nearly connected at the high school. The district waived hookup fees for 42 Country Haven units (saving them about \$100,000) in exchange for guaranteed future access for Rockford Elementary, the middle school, and any future school buildings—saving the district significant costs. The agreement also ensures the district receives 50% of any future hookup fees if the development expands.

2. Supplemental and Plant Facility Discussion: Superintendent Kress explained the district is nearing the end of its current supplemental levy cycle and must decide by March whether to run it again by May. The May election is on the 19th with wording due on March 13th; November election is November 3rd with wording due on August 28th.

3. District Advocacy Plan: Superintendent Kress reviewed the district's annual advocacy plan, prepared ahead of the legislative session. He emphasized the importance of presenting a unified message when speaking with legislators. The board discussed possibly prioritizing the advocacy items and agreed to individually rank them before the December meeting. Members were encouraged to communicate regularly with legislators and add new ideas if needed. Priorities are as follows:

1. Consistent and stable funding
2. Support for traditional public schools and charters, without diverting public funds to private or religious institutions
3. Increased funding for classified staff, who are significantly underfunded statewide
4. School safety needs that often go unfunded
5. Technology support
6. Continued support for the Idaho LAUNCH program.

4. **Weight Room Project:** The weight room project is moving forward and they are hoping to start breaking ground as soon as the winter is over.
5. **Superintendent Evaluation Discussion:** The timeline of the superintendent evaluation was discussed. It will be held in executive session in January.

c. **Upcoming Events**

1. **Christmas Break will be December 19, 2025-January 4, 2026; Students Return January 5, 2026**
2. **Teacher Inservice will be January 16, 2026**
3. **Parent Teacher Conferences will be January 22nd Grades 4-12, January 29th Grades 2-3**
4. **Day on the Hill will be February 16-17, 2026**

7. **POLICY READINGS**

Second Readings:

Policy 2320-Health, Sex Education, and Human Sexuality: ISBA suggested adding a line to this policy reiterating that instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity (along with other aspects of human sexuality, as defined in Idaho Code) is only permitted if it is age appropriate, developmentally appropriate, and in accordance with state standards. HB 352 requires school boards to have a policy stating that instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity that does not meet these requirements is prohibited. After ISBA received questions from members who had difficulty finding this policy language, we've added this new line for additional clarity. **This is a recommended update to a required policy.**
Policy 2395 and 2395 P, IDLA Classes and Procedure: The High School counselors have submitted these changes for your review.

Policy 2470 and 2470P, Self-Directed Learners Policy and Procedure: This update is updated on the procedure for Snake River Online.

Policy 7400, Miscellaneous Procurement Standards: This update changes the maximum value of micro-purchases from \$3,000 to an amount of \$10,000 or less chosen by the board. This optional change was suggested by an attorney ISBA consults on policy and brings the general purchasing micro-purchase threshold into alignment with the threshold in the school meals purchasing policy, 7403. **This is an optional update to a required policy.**

Policy 7403, Procurement of Goods and Services for School Meal Programs: This update changes threshold amounts for different purchasing requirements, bringing them into alignment with State Department of Education guidance. In accordance with advice provided by the State Department of Education, we've also added cost-reimbursable contracts and line item bidding as acceptable contract types along with firm fixed price contracts. **This is an optional update to a required policy.**

Policy 8100, Transportation: The edits to this policy are based on HB 396. These changes allow non-public school students to ride other authorized vehicles in the same way that they can ride school buses if they meet the additional requirements for use of other authorized vehicles. These changes also extend the requirement to establish rules for emergency drills and student conduct to authorized vehicles as well as buses. It also extends to all drivers who transport students the requirement for training on the district or charter school disaster and emergency preparedness plan. The edits also include minor language clean-up, including changes of language to accommodate the newly permitted use of vehicles other than school buses, such as changing "bus stop" to "transportation stop." **This is a recommended update to a required policy.**

Policy 8103, Vehicles other than School Buses to Transport Students: This is a new policy based on HB 396. It outlines the groups of students who can be routinely transported to and from school in a vehicle other than a school bus and notes that such vehicles may be used for trips that are a part of the instructional program and for which a school bus can't be reasonably provided. It lists types of safety equipment these vehicles must carry; notes that the district, charter school, or contractor name must be clearly marked on the vehicle; and notes the requirements to inspect the vehicle and comply with restrictions provided by the manufacturer. **This is a new recommended policy.**

Policy 8105, Extracurricular Transportation: These edits are also based on HB 396. They expand discussion of school buses used to provide extracurricular transportation to include other vehicles used for this purpose. This includes noting that restrictions on lending buses to outside groups also apply to other vehicles. It similarly expands requirements related to passenger lists, requirements for students to be transported from school to the activity and back, and on supervision of activity trips. **This is a recommended update to a required policy.**

Policy 8105P: Extracurricular Transportation, Discipline: Based on HB 396, this update broadens the procedure's discussion of school rules to vehicle rules. It also includes some rephrasing for clarity and readability. **This is a recommended update to a required procedure.**

Policy 8110, Safety Busing: These edits are based on HB 396. They note that safety busing includes cases where the student is transported by a vehicle other than a bus. It also includes some minor cleanup for readability, including replacing a mention of an exhibit related to safety busing with a specific reference to a new form: 8110-F. **This is a recommended update to a required policy.**

Policy 8110F: Safety Busing Measuring and Scoring Instrument: This new form is a placeholder for the district or charter school's own scoring instrument, which the Standards for Idaho School Buses and Operations require districts and charter schools to have if they provide transportation to students directly or via a contracted transportation provider. The State Department of Education offers a model measuring instrument on their website. We added this item to help clarify which document was being referred to in Policy 8110. **This is a new required form.**

Policy 8120, Bus Routes, Stops, and Non-Transportation Zones: These are more edits based on HB 396. They change discussion of buses and busing to refer more generally to district or charter school-provided transportation. This includes applying requirements for bus stop siting to all transportation stops and applying bus safety rules and procedures to all district or charter school vehicles. Similarly, practices related to bus transportation in inclement weather are also applied to other types of transportation. As in 8110, this update also replaces a mention of an exhibit with a specific reference to Form 8110-F. A redundant reference to this form and its use in making bus stop siting decisions has also been removed.

Finally, these edits note that safety busing includes cases where the student is transported by a vehicle other than a bus. It also includes some minor cleanup for readability, including replacing a mention of an exhibit related to safety busing with a specific reference to a new form: 8110-F. **This is a recommended update to a required policy.**

A motion was made by Carol Hepworth and seconded by Josh Sorensen to approve the second reading of Policy 2320-Health, Sex Education, and Human Sexuality; Policy 2395 and 2395 P, IDLA Classes and Procedure; Policy 2470 and 2470P, Self-Directed Learners Policy and Procedure; Policy 7400, Miscellaneous Procurement Standards; Policy 7403, Procurement of Goods and Services for School Meal Programs; Policy 8100, Transportation; Policy 8103, Vehicles other than School Buses to Transport Students; Policy 8105, Extracurricular Transportation; Policy 8105P Extracurricular Transportation, Discipline; Policy 8110, Safety Busing; Policy 8110F: Safety Busing Measuring and Scoring Instrument; and Policy 8120, Bus Routes, Stops, and Non-Transportation Zones. All board members present voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

First Readings: (Policy Updates ISBA)

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 update to a 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' 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 Josh Sorensen and seconded by Toni Ibarra to approve the first 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 4-0.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Under Idaho Code 74-206 (1)(c) To acquire an interest in real property not owned by a public agency and (1)(d) to consider records that are exempt from disclosure as provided in Chapter 1, Title 74, Idaho Code, I move to go into Executive Session, moved and seconded to go into Executive Session. Roll call vote was taken: Josh Sorensen, aye; Toni Ibarra, aye; Carol Hepworth, aye; and Lon Harrington, aye. Motion passed 4-0.

The board went into Executive Session at 7:25 p.m. Idaho Code 74-206 (1)(c) was discussed until 7:45 p.m.

Item (1)(d) was briefly discussed from 7:45 p.m. to 7:52 p.m.

At 7:52 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 Toni Ibarra to approve the acquisition of 19.65 acres located immediately west of Snake River High School and touches Highway 39 and 950 West, Blackfoot, Idaho, from Jeff and Lisa Watt, for a total price of \$700,130.00 with closing costs. All board members voted aye. Motion passed 4-0.

10. CLOSING INFORMATION ITEMS

The Annual Board Meeting will be January 21, 2025 at Snake River Community Library at 7:00 p.m.

11. ADJOURN

Toni Ibarra moved and Josh Sorensen seconded to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

ATTEST:

Terisa Coombs
Clerk

Lon Harrington
Chairman

January 22, 2026
Date