

BLAINE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #61
Special Meeting of the Blaine County Board of Trustees
Friday, July 21, 2025
Wood River High School / Library
1250 Fox Acres, Hailey, ID 83333

1. Strategic Plan (For Reference Only)

A. Strategic Plan English and Spanish

2. Call To Order and Welcome

A. Call to Order and Determination of a Quorum

Chair Lara Stone called the meeting to order at 12:03p.m.

Board Clerk Vicki Pitcairn called the roll and Chair Lara Stone determined that a quorum was present. Those present for the meeting were Board members Dan Turner and Amber Perkes. Trustee Leah Scarnegi joined the meeting at 12:13p.m. Trustee Blanca Romero joined the meeting at 12:36p.m. Also attending the meeting were Superintendent Jim Foudy, Assistant Superintendent Adam Johnson, HR Director Kandy Blackburn, Finance Director Mandy Crow, Buildings and Grounds Director Shawn Bennion and IT Director Paul Zimmerman.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Approval of the Agenda

Trustee Amber Perkes made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Trustee Dan Turner seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

3. Information Agenda

A. Work Session Overview

The work session commenced with Chair Lara Stone's review of the current financial situation, utilizing a detailed financial model. The discussion incorporated a comprehensive rubric outlining potential strategies to balance the budget.

B. The 5-year financial picture

Finance Director Mandy Crow presented the current financial projections for the 2025-26 school year. A key concern highlighted was declining student enrollment, which is anticipated to reduce future state revenue. She also explained the status of the federal funding holdback, and that the governor of Idaho has requested state entities to be prepared for the possibility of 2%, 4% or 6% holdbacks in the 2025-26 fiscal year. The increase in student attendance to 95% last year was a big win. Attendance impacts student achievement, student mental health and behavior, and state revenue. Chair Lara Stone demonstrated how the board can use the financial model for 2025-26 to understand the shortfall for the upcoming year and the potential impact of the federal and state holdbacks, and the 5-year cash flow model to understand the impact of projected revenues and expenses on future budgets.

C. Matching ongoing expenses with ongoing revenue

The current supplemental levy expires in January 2026. Without replacing this levy, BCSD faces a significantly larger budget shortfall. Salaries and benefits constitute 86% of the overall budget. The state has held discretionary (operations) funding flat for the last two years. The revenue shortfall is most notably impacted by the fact that Idaho ranks 51st in the nation in per-student funding(Only American Samoa and Puerto Rico fund students less.) Trustee Dan Turner led a review of the board's Budget Guiding Principles, in which the board has committed to balancing the budget. Ideally, on-going expenses should be aligned with on-going revenue, in order to avoid committing to expenses long-term and then losing funding to pay for them.

D. Revenue tools

- 2-year supplemental levies

- 5-year plant facilities levies State funding Federal Funding - fairly small percent

E. Zero-based budgeting

Superintendent Jim Foudy explained the concept of zero-based budgeting, which offers a rigorous approach to financial planning, requiring every expense to be justified for each new budget cycle, rather than simply adjusting previous allocations. This involves a critical assessment of "allowed" versus "actual" expenditures, forcing a detailed examination of what is truly needed for staff and students to function effectively. A significant benefit of ZBB is its capacity for granular analysis, allowing for a thorough review of resource allocation by building or department. This means each school or operational unit would need to build its budget from the ground up, starting with identifying essential needs and justifying every dollar.

BREAK - 1:09p.m. - 1:16P.M.

F. Cost savings proposals

Chair Lara Stone reviewed the Rubric, which contained a list of items being considered to address the budget shortfall. Each item was tentatively scored on the same categories: impact on student achievement, alignment with the strategic plan, amount of annual cost savings, implementation cost, public support, non-financial benefits, and non-financial challenges. Each of those categories is weighted, with the highest weight given to impact on student achievement and cost savings. The group broke into pairs consisting of one trustee and one administrator and discussed additional considerations and recommended changes to the Rubric to ensure a comprehensive assessment.

BREAK 2:33p.m. - 2:45p.m.

The group reconvened as a whole to discuss recommended changes to the category weights overall, and each item's category scores. Weights and scores were updated based on group consensus. The Rubric was sorted to put the highest scored items to the top of the list.

H. Review proposed timeline for implementation

The group engaged in a high-level review of the options, with particular attention to timing. The central focus of the timeline discussion revolved around the best time to run a replacement 2-year supplemental levy.

I. Discuss possible actions

The session continued with a review of the financial spreadsheet, combining a range of critical options designed to address the budget shortfall and achieve fiscal balance. The discussion encompassed several significant strategies. The ultimate goal of this review was to identify the most effective combination of these options to achieve a balanced budget. This involved modeling various revenue and cost-cutting scenarios using the 5-year cash flow spreadsheet to understand the cumulative impact of different decisions and arrive at a sustainable financial plan.

Dinner Break 4:45p.m. - 5:03p.m.

J. Discuss a proposal for the next supplemental levy

This discussion underscored the urgent need for a successful levy, especially given the impending expiration of the current levy in January 2026 and the significant portion of the budget dedicated to salaries.

K. Levy - Information vs advocacy

It is crucial for all BCSD trustees and employees of the school district to understand the strict legal parameters governing their involvement in levy campaigns. District employees and trustees are expressly prohibited from using district resources (including time at work, BCSD email accounts, BCSD email distribution lists, BCSD phones, other BCSD equipment, or BCSD facilities) to advocate for the levy. This restriction is in place to prevent the use of tax dollars for political campaigning. BCSD trustees and employees may only use district resources to share information about the levy, but not to advocate for it (word choice can be critical - when in doubt, ask!). However, trustees and employees *are* permitted to advocate and endorse the levy on their own personal time and with their own personal resources. Members of the community are also welcome to engage in direct advocacy efforts, such as: actively promoting the levy's passage, donating money to a campaign, and explaining its importance to the community.

4. Adjourn (Action)

Seeing no further business, Trustee Amber Perkes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Blanca Romero seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The Monday, July 21 2025, Meeting of the Board adjourned at 6:16p.m.