MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Bond Resolution Update**

POCATELLO, IDAHO – On Friday, March 29, the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District Board of Trustees held a special meeting to consider updated progress on the pending status of Idaho House Bill 521. Having passed both the Idaho House and the Idaho Senate, the legislation awaits the signature of Governor Brad Little. Due to the pending status of the legislation, the Board made the decision to move forward with the Highland High School bond resolution in order to meet the ballot printing deadline. The election will be held on May 21.

If passed, the ten-year $33 million bond proposal will be combined with insurance replacement monies to fund the reconstruction of Highland High School as the project was proposed to local voters in November. Based on current cost estimates, which include cost escalation over the project timeline, the district anticipates the total project to be approximately $60 million.

The bond resolution is available at sd25.us/elections. More information to educate the public about the bond proposal is forthcoming.

The Board may still consider the option to forego the bond election in the coming weeks should HB 521 become law as anticipated. The landmark legislation is projected to provide $43 million to the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District to fund facilities construction. The Board of Trustees will earmark approximately a significant portion of the funding for the reconstruction of Highland High School. The balance is money the district anticipated receiving over the next ten years from lottery funds, which the Board will continue to allocate as part of the district’s annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

Whether the funding is ultimately provided by the passage of the bond or HB521 legislation, the district will undertake the comprehensive rebuilding project with a goal for completion in Fall 2027. The priority is to restore essential facilities and implement modern amenities to enhance the learning experience at Highland. In total, Highland lost approximately 75,000 square feet of space. The project includes: (a) replacing facilities lost or damaged in the April 2023 fire, (b) adding, remodeling, and modernizing science classrooms, (c) replacing and increasing the size of the gymnasium and activity space, (d) constructing an auditorium.

Throughout their discussions, the Board has focused on guiding goals to:

* Educate learners in facilities design for today’s standards;
* Return all learners and extracurricular programs to campus;
* Modernize science and music classrooms to meet the evolving needs of a growing student population;
* Restore the gymnasium as a central hub of physical, academic, social, and cultural development, increasing the capacity and versatility of the facility to resume as the community-building heart of the school.
* Restore functional gathering spaces critical to elevating the high school experience;
* Build a functional auditorium to meet educational, cultural, and community needs;
* Make prudent and fiscally responsible decisions.

“The Board remains united in its commitment to accomplish the monumental task of addressing Highland’s critical needs *and* bring the school’s facilities up to today’s modern standards,” said Deanna Judy, Board Chair.

The Board has framed its work on this issue with the belief that rebuilding Highland High School is not just an investment in educational facilities; it is an investment in the community's economic vitality. Every time we modernize our schools’ infrastructure, we build the capacity to create jobs, attract businesses, and elevate property values, laying the foundation for a prosperous future. The district continues to pledge an unwavering commitment to stretch every taxpayer dollar as far as it will go as we work together to position PCSD 25 for a strong, successful future.

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