

The Boise School District's written responses, for Idaho EdNews' June 11, 2026 article.

1. How does the district view its current relationship with the Legislature?

The Boise School District values its relationship with members of the Idaho Legislature and recognizes the important role state policymakers play in supporting public education. At the same time, we do not always agree on policy. Like many school districts across Idaho, we occasionally find ourselves at odds with legislation that we believe limits the ability of locally elected school boards to make decisions based on the unique needs and priorities of their communities.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with legislators from across the state on issues that benefit students, families, educators, and communities.

2. Has that relationship improved, worsened, or stayed about the same in recent years?

The District's relationship with the Legislature has remained professional and productive, even when there have been disagreements on specific policy issues. That said, the relationship has become more challenging in some respects.

Over the last several years, we have seen an increase in legislation that directs decisions that were historically made by local school boards. Issues involving curriculum, instructional materials, library procedures, school operations, personnel matters, and other community-specific concerns have increasingly become subjects of statewide mandates.

That shift naturally creates tension because locally elected trustees are accountable directly to the families and taxpayers they serve. While we understand that legislators have policy objectives they wish to advance, we believe local communities are often best positioned to determine how those objectives should be implemented.

The Boise School District has consistently engaged with state leaders regardless of political climate or policy differences. We continue to maintain open lines of communication and appreciate opportunities to share the experiences and needs of the students and families we serve.

For example, during the legislative session, District leadership participates in a standing weekly Tuesday morning meeting with local legislators to discuss issues affecting public education and our community. In addition, District leaders regularly meet with legislators throughout the year and welcome opportunities to share the experiences and needs of the students and families we serve.

We have provided sample language, suggested edits, and bills to various legislators of both parties. We worked collaboratively with the K-12 AI committee alongside legislators to help draft legislation and a Framework. We testify about bills when needed.

3. Is the relationship with the Legislature a concern for the district going forward? Is this a priority to address going forward?

Building and maintaining productive relationships with policymakers is always important. The District believes that strong communication and mutual understanding help lead to better

outcomes for students. As leadership transitions occur at both the local and state levels, we look forward to continuing constructive dialogue with legislators and state leaders on issues affecting public education.

Our primary focus moving forward is not necessarily changing the relationship itself, but improving understanding. We believe policymakers benefit when they have a clear picture of the day-to-day realities facing Idaho's public schools, including funding challenges, workforce needs, student support services, and the diverse circumstances of communities across the state.

We also believe conversations about education are strongest when local educators, parents, students, trustees, and community members have a meaningful seat at the table. Continuing to advocate for local voice and local accountability will remain an important priority for the district.

4. During the 2026 session, JFAC Co-Chair Josh Tanner criticized the 2025 Boise property tax increase, suggesting parents are leaving the district over it. First, is there any evidence that parents are leaving? Second, the district's unique taxing authority has long been a sticking point with legislators; is there any way of alleviating those concerns going forward?

The Boise School District is not aware of data indicating that families are leaving the District as a result of the property tax increase approved by the Board in 2025. Like many districts across Idaho and the nation, enrollment trends are influenced by a variety of factors, including birth rates, housing costs, demographic shifts, educational preferences, and broader population trends.

With regard to the District's taxing authority, Boise operates under a charter established in Idaho law that has governed the District for generations. The Charter grants the Board of Trustees certain authorities related to budgeting and taxation that differ from those available to most Idaho school districts. Those authorities have long been part of the District's governance structure and are exercised pursuant to Idaho law. Most importantly, every local tax decision ultimately rests with local taxpayers through elections, public hearings, and elected trustees who are directly accountable to the community.

The Charter has helped enable the Boise School District to provide a comprehensive, high-quality public education to generations of students while responding to the evolving needs of our community.

The District understands that policymakers may have differing views regarding school funding mechanisms. Our focus remains on being transparent with taxpayers, responsibly stewarding public resources, and ensuring students have access to the programs and services our community expects. We welcome constructive conversations with legislators and stakeholders regarding education funding and the long-term needs of Idaho's public schools.

It is also important to note that the Boise Board of Trustees recently approved the District's Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget, which does not include a property tax increase. The adopted budget reflects the District's ongoing commitment to balancing the educational needs of students with responsible fiscal stewardship on behalf of taxpayers.

5. After the 2025 session, district leaders were very public in embracing the "Everyone Is Welcome Here" messaging. Does that create a wedge between the district and legislators?

The Boise School District's commitment is, and always has been, to ensuring that every student has access to a safe, welcoming, and supportive learning environment. The message that every student is welcome reflects both our educational mission and our legal obligation to serve all students who attend our schools.

We recognize that individuals may hold differing views on various issues. However, our focus remains on creating environments where students can learn, grow, and succeed.

To date, the District has not received complaints regarding the "Everyone Is Welcome Here" signage. We do not view our commitment to ensuring all students feel safe, supported, and welcome as being incompatible with maintaining productive relationships with policymakers.

At the same time, we will continue to advocate for local decision-making in matters involving school culture, classroom environments, and the day-to-day operation of our schools. We believe locally elected school boards, working in partnership with the families and communities they serve, are best positioned to make decisions that reflect local values and priorities while ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed.

6. Senate Bill 1412, which passed unanimously, was clearly a response to the Gavin Snow tort claims and lawsuits. Is that a mark against the district — and does it compromise the district's relationship with legislators in the future?

While our district has faced some incredibly devastating and high-profile incidents over the last few years, to imply that an unanimous vote by the Legislature was directed solely at the Boise School District not only discounts a broader effort to strengthen student safety, but also reduces an important public policy discussion to one of retributive politics rather than effective employment practices.

The Boise School District supported Senate Bill 1412 throughout the legislative process and welcomed the opportunity to participate in discussions regarding the bill. We support efforts that strengthen student safety and help ensure concerns involving student welfare are appropriately reported and addressed. Student safety remains our highest priority.

With regard to Gavin Snow, the District's position has consistently been that we followed the law and established hiring procedures when he was employed. At the time of his hiring, he had no criminal record, and there was no information available through the legally required background check process that would have disqualified him from employment.

We do not view the passage of Senate Bill 1412 as defining or determining the District's broader relationship with state policymakers. Our focus remains on serving students, supporting families, and working constructively with legislators on issues that affect public education throughout Idaho.