



Please direct inquiries to:

Jim Foudy, Superintendent

208-578-5000, jfoudy@blaineschools.org

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Joint Statement from the Blaine County School District, Blaine County Education Association

HAILEY, ID — The Blaine County School District Board of Trustees and the Blaine County Education Association have released the following joint statement:

"We are pleased to announce that the Blaine County Education Association and the BCSD Board of Trustees have jointly ratified a new master agreement for the 2023-24 school year. This agreement is the result of a two-and-a-half-day process that employed a consensus framework expertly facilitated by Diane Groves. The model emphasizes careful listening, thoughtful discussion, and the pursuit of the best possible outcome for the district, our staff, our students, and the community at large.

We considered several critical issues facing BCSD and its staff, including financial constraints, the recently completed classification and compensation study from the 2021-22 school year, and workplace improvements. We worked carefully on a solution to the longstanding practice of the district paying 6.6 percent of the employee's contribution to the Idaho Public Employee Retirement System (PERSI). This is not sustainable and has been in place since 1985. The solution includes employees now paying 100 percent of their contribution to PERSI. To accomplish this, the district's expenditure was added as income to the employees. This change represents a neutral impact to the district and a significant gain for employees upon retirement.

The constant negotiation process by which issues related to the Master Agreement can be discussed and explored throughout the year, rather than compressed into a few days of discussion near the end of the school year, was highly successful during the 2022-23 school year and will continue into next year.

The 2023-24 school year, like any year, will bring with it a host of challenges, some of which are predictable and others yet unknown. We are better prepared today to face those challenges because of our work together as one district on behalf of each child entrusted to our care."

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