

# NCA NEWSFAX FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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**Idaho Falls Post Register, June 20, 2008, by Phil Davidson, 2 pages**

## **Medical, Law Schools Studied**

*State Board will take up the proposals at later meeting*

Idaho has a shortage of physicians, and Boise is one of the largest metropolitan areas without a law school.

Solutions to both of those were part of a slew of proposals the State Board of Education heard Thursday during a daylong meeting at Eastern Idaho Technical College.

Board members listened to pitches for a new law school, as well as boosting the number of opportunities for Idaho students interested in studying medicine.

They didn't make any decisions Thursday but are expected to in the next few months.

University of Idaho Law School plans to give the board a proposal by the end of the July to open a satellite law school in Boise. It operates the state's only law school in Moscow, but proponents believe opening a location in Boise, one of the country's largest areas without a law school in a 100-mile radius, is long overdue.

Daniel Eismann, chief justice of the Idaho Supreme Court, stumped for the new school, which he estimated would eventually house 250 new students. Eismann said supporters are looking at two locations, including the old Ada County Courthouse where state lawmakers will convene for one more year while the Capitol is renovated.

One of the challenges is to ensure the new school wouldn't sap the strength of the law program in Moscow, said Don Burnett, dean of UI's law school. Rather, Burnett envisions complementary law schools with different focuses. The Moscow campus would specialize in natural resources, environmental law and public lands, for instance, while the Boise satellite would focus on business law, intellectual property and international trade.

If the board has information by July, members could vote on the new law school proposal in August, said Milford Terrell, president of the State Board.

Outgoing University of Idaho President Tim White presented board members with a letter from himself and Paul Ramsey, dean of the University of Washington's School of Medicine, supporting boosting the number of Idaho students participating in an interstate medical education program.

The WWAMI Medical Education Program serves as the medical school for Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho through the University of Washington's School of Medicine.

Idaho currently has 80 slots (20 each year), but White wants to see the state get more.

White, who's leaving the UI on June 30 to take over as chancellor at the University of California at Riverside, also told the board that WWAMI supports exploring the feasibility of establishing a second year of medical school in Idaho. Currently, second-year medical students must complete their educations at Washington. White's comments came as Idaho State University President Arthur Vailas is drumming support for a statewide medical school in Idaho.

An interim task committee of state lawmakers is assessing Idaho's medical education needs after a 2007 study found physicians here are older than the national average and several counties are designated as having shortages of health professionals.

White informed the board that UC-Riverside is committed to building a medical school at a cost of more than \$800 million over the next 10 years. The school would serve a population of nearly 5 million near San Bernardino, Calif., he said after his presentation, adding that a medical education program should match a state's size.

"The decision isn't about a medical school," he said. "The decision is about medical education."

Vailas, who supports more of a virtual operation than a bricks-and-mortar facility located in Pocatello, said he would reserve judgment about proposals until more information is brought forward on the state's medical education needs. He expects more details to emerge in the fall after the interim committee wraps up. "I'd rather let the facts present themselves," he said.