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Boland Announces Plans To Retire At The End Of The School Year

After more than 40 years in public education, Superintendent George Boland has announced plans to retire at the end of the 2020-21 school year. During his 15 years as superintendent of Idaho Falls School District 91, Boland was instrumental in:

- **Upgrading facilities, including major improvements to the auto program based at Idaho Falls High School;** the centralization of transportation services; the centralization of maintenance and operations and **passage of a \$53 million bond** that replaced aged schools in the district and renovated others
- **Shifting 9th graders to the high schools** to give them better access to more educational and enrichment opportunities
- **Creation of D91's Compass Academy**, D91's first magnet high school, which has provided more voice and choice for students
- **Encouraging investments in technology infrastructure and technology**, which has resulted in D91 being a 1:to:1 district, and that has proven critical in providing remote learning to students during the pandemic.

"Supt. Boland's dedication to the educational excellence of the students, teachers and staff of District 91 is unequaled. He is very well respected by his peers, colleagues and the community as a whole and he will be sorely missed," said D91 Board Chair Lara Hill. "Even in challenging times, George takes a thoughtful approach to lead the district forward with diligence and grace. The impact he has made on the district is immeasurable."

Boland began his career in public education as a high school teacher in Billings, Montana. He taught in Montana for 11 years before returning to his hometown of Idaho Falls in 1991 to become assistant principal at Idaho Falls High School. In 1995, he was named principal of Skyline High School. Boland joined the district office as Supervisor of Educational Services in 2002. He was named superintendent of Idaho Falls School District 91 in 2006, and went on to become one of D91's longest serving superintendents.

"Every day as a teacher, you have the potential to make a positive difference in a child's life," said Boland, who felt a connection and comradery with others drawn to the profession. "I can't think of another career that provides the opportunity to have that type of impact."

Trying to ensure our educational system meets the needs of all students is one of the challenges Boland has faced during his career. That issue has made headlines in recent months as schools across the country have tried to serve students struggling to access remote learning because of a lack of support or critical resources at home.

“Our educational system is based on uniformity, but that doesn’t always work well because every student is unique and comes to us with different abilities, interests, resources and aptitudes,” he said. “Sometimes you have to question current practice and advocate for change to meet the needs of all students.”

One of Boland’s priorities as superintendent was striving to meet the needs of the district’s more than 1,500 employees, and working to recognize their contributions.

“There is no question in my mind that the success of any educational endeavor is directly related to the efforts of our staff,” he said. “Teachers are in a position to have a great impact on our students, but every day there are so many other employees in so many other positions, from classroom aides to bus drivers, who may be “the one” to make a positive, significant difference in the life of a student.”

While much has changed in the last 40 years, Boland said he believes the profession has remained fundamentally the same.

“Effective teachers approach their profession with a passion to help students progress – taking them from where they are to as far as they can go with the time and resources they have,” he said. “The fundamentals of why one goes into education remain fairly constant – a satisfaction from working productively with colleagues to make a positive difference in the lives of others.”

Boland said the ability to make a difference in the life of a student, a parent or a staff member has been the most rewarding aspect of all his years in education. “Each of those instances has a story and being able to contribute to a happy ending or at least a chapter in the life of another fuels a lot of effort,” he said.

In his retirement, Boland, an avid cyclist who logged more than 3,000 miles this season, is looking forward to more adventures like a cross country ride, skiing in the backcountry and spending time with his family.

“It has been an honor to serve the students, parents, patrons and staff of Idaho Falls School District 91,” he said. “I am very appreciative of the opportunity I have had to shape this district, the school district where I attended school, where I graduated from high school and where my children attended school. It has been a rewarding experience for which I will always be grateful.”

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