2027 ISBA RESOLUTION NO. 3

MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, Idaho school districts are committed to providing every student, including students with disabilities, access to a high-quality education that recognizes individual strengths, needs, and potential;

WHEREAS, Idaho law recognizes that students with disabilities require specially designed instruction and related services to meet their unique educational needs. Idaho Code section 33-2001 defines special education as specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of exceptional children;

WHEREAS, Idaho requires students with disabilities to participate in statewide assessments, and current rules require the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to determine whether a student participates in the regular assessment with or without accommodations, or qualifies for the alternate assessment;

WHEREAS, the Idaho Alternate Assessment (IDAA) is currently intended only for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet specific participation criteria established by the Idaho Department of Education;

WHEREAS, many students with disabilities demonstrate significant academic gaps and may be performing several grade levels below their enrolled grade level, yet do not meet the criteria for participation in the alternate assessment;

WHEREAS, these students may be required to participate in grade-level assessments that do not accurately reflect their individual progress, academic growth, or the effectiveness of the specially designed instruction provided through their IEP;

WHEREAS, Idaho educators and school boards support accountability systems that provide meaningful information about student learning, but recognize that assessment systems must also preserve student dignity, encourage growth, and provide valid measures of achievement;

WHEREAS, changes in federal education priorities and potential reductions in federal oversight create an opportunity for Idaho to strengthen state-based solutions that better serve Idaho students with disabilities;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Idaho School Boards Association encourages the Idaho State Board of Education and Idaho Department of Education to review current assessment participation requirements for students with disabilities and explore additional flexibility for students who do not meet alternate assessment criteria but whose academic functioning is significantly below grade level;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Idaho School Boards Association encourages the Idaho Department of Education to engage school districts, special education professionals, parents, and other stakeholders in developing assessment options that better measure individual student growth while maintaining appropriate accountability;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Idaho School Boards Association supports the creation of assessment pathways that recognize student progress toward individualized educational goals while ensuring Idaho continues to meet state and federal accountability expectations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Idaho School Boards Association requests that the Idaho Department of Education review whether current alternate assessment eligibility criteria create a gap for students who require significant instructional support but do not meet the definition of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this resolution is to encourage state education leaders to review assessment options for students with disabilities who do not qualify for the Idaho Alternate Assessment but whose academic functioning is significantly below grade level. It seeks assessment pathways that more accurately measure individual growth, recognize progress toward individualized educational goals, preserve student dignity, and maintain appropriate state and federal accountability.

Submitted by Marsing Joint School District No. 363

Basin School District No. 72

Boundary County School District No. 101

ISBA Executive Board Recommendation: DO PASS

Jim Chamberlain, Region 7 Vice Chair, will present the Executive Board recommendation at the ISBA Business Session.