2027 ISBA RESOLUTION NO. 5

PROTECTING LOCAL CONTROL OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of Idaho requires the Legislature to establish and maintain a general, uniform, and thorough system of public, free common schools;

WHEREAS, Idaho law assigns local school boards significant powers and duties to govern school districts, provide educational programs, protect the health and safety of students, adopt policies, approve budgets, and remain accountable to their communities;

WHEREAS, local school board trustees are elected by local voters and are directly accountable to parents, taxpayers, students, educators, and community members through public meetings, elections, public records, budget hearings, policy adoption processes, and daily community interaction;

WHEREAS, Idaho communities differ significantly in size, geography, local values, school facilities, staffing capacity, student needs, transportation challenges, public safety partnerships, and community expectations;

WHEREAS, statewide mandates and one-size-fits-all requirements often fail to account for the unique circumstances of rural, suburban, and urban districts and public charter schools;

WHEREAS, when the Legislature mandates specific local practices on matters that are best determined by the local community, it can override the will of locally elected boards and the parents and taxpayers who elected them;

WHEREAS, parents exercise meaningful influence through local school board elections, local public comment, curriculum review processes, policy committees, school advisory groups, and direct communication with locally accountable school officials;

WHEREAS, local control is not a lack of accountability; rather, it is the form of accountability closest to students, families, and taxpayers;

WHEREAS, state education policy should establish essential constitutional, fiscal, safety, civil rights, and transparency standards while preserving local authority over implementation decisions that reflect community needs and values;

WHEREAS, outside advocacy organizations and out-of-state political spending increasingly seek to shape state education policy in ways that may not reflect the priorities of local Idaho communities;

WHEREAS, locally elected school boards are best positioned to balance parent voice, student needs, educator expertise, taxpayer resources, legal requirements, and community values;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Idaho School Boards Association shall advocate for the preservation and strengthening of local control in public education and shall oppose legislation that unnecessarily removes decision-making authority from locally elected school boards or public charter school governing boards;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Idaho School Boards Association shall support legislation, rules, and policies that recognize local boards as the primary governing bodies for local school operations, including curriculum adoption, instructional materials, school safety implementation, student discipline, extracurricular procedures, calendars, staffing, facilities, communications, and other community-sensitive decisions, except where state action is necessary to protect constitutional rights, federal law compliance, fiscal accountability, student safety, or minimum statewide educational requirements;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Idaho School Boards Association shall advocate that education bills include a Local Control Impact Statement identifying any new mandate on districts or charter schools, the fiscal and staffing impact of the mandate, whether the proposal preempts local board policy, whether local flexibility or opt-in implementation is available, and whether school boards, superintendents, parents, educators, and community stakeholders were consulted before introduction;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Idaho School Boards Association shall support statutory language requiring adequate funding and realistic implementation timelines for any state mandate imposed on local school districts or public charter schools;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that when an education policy question primarily involves local values, local resources, local safety planning, locally selected instructional materials, or community expectations, the Idaho School Boards Association shall advocate for local-option frameworks rather than statewide compulsory mandates.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this resolution is to reaffirm that Idaho's public schools are best governed by the local communities they serve through locally elected school boards and public charter school governing boards. The Legislature has an important constitutional role in establishing and maintaining Idaho's system of public schools, but local boards are the governing bodies closest to students, parents, educators, taxpayers, and community partners. Increasingly detailed statewide mandates can displace local decision-making, create unfunded administrative burdens, and force communities to implement policies that do not reflect local needs or values. This resolution directs ISBA to advocate for local control, local-option approaches, meaningful stakeholder

consultation, transparent fiscal analysis, and Local Control Impact Statements for education legislation. Local control preserves parental voice, taxpayer accountability, and community trust by keeping school decisions as close as possible to the people affected by them.

Submitted by Boise School District No. 1

Buhl School District No. 412

Aberdeen School District No. 58

ISBA Executive Board Recommendation: DO PASS

Brandee Kline, Region 8 Chair, will address the Executive Board Recommendation at the ISBA Business Session.

PASSED

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