

## **2023 PROPOSED ISBA RESOLUTION NO. 3**

### **IN OPPOSITION TO DIVERTING PUBLIC DOLLARS TO PRIVATE OR PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS INCLUDING VOUCHERS, THE GRANTING OF TAX CREDITS FOR SCHOLARSHIP DONORS, SAVINGS ACCOUNTS, OR AMENDING ARTICLE IX, §5, IDAHO CODE, ALSO KNOWN AS THE BLAINE AMENDMENT**

**WHEREAS**, the Idaho State Constitution provides for “the free and thorough public education for children”; and

**WHEREAS**, the Idaho State Constitution as amended by the Blaine Amendment ensures the separation of church and state in Idaho by prohibiting the flow of public money to private or religious institutions for education; and

**WHEREAS**, public school districts and charter schools receiving public funds from the legislature are required to meet state accounting standards, use state-approved curriculum standards, and submit student achievement reports to receive those funds; and

**WHEREAS**, an additional layer of state oversight would have to be created to account for the use of public money distributed to either individual families or to private or religious institutions; and

**WHEREAS**, Idaho’s students have increasing access to a wide variety of school choice options in the state of Idaho, and parents are free to choose educational services through Idaho’s public education system or educational options in the private sector; and

**WHEREAS**, in other areas of the country that have adopted voucher programs, student achievement has suffered, especially among those children receiving vouchers; and

**WHEREAS**, no statement of fiscal impact has been generated by proponents.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Idaho School Boards Association strongly oppose any effort to divert public dollars to private or parochial schools by such approaches as tax credits for scholarship donations, savings accounts, or amending the Constitution of the state of Idaho, Article IX, §5, Idaho Code, also known as the Blaine Amendment, to allow public dollars to finance private or parochial education in the K-12 education system of the state of Idaho.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

School choice is an integral part of public education in the state of Idaho. Public school choice includes charter, magnet, at-risk alternative, virtual, and traditional schools where dual language, classical, harbor, international, Montessori, Career

Technical, STEM, and STEAM programs, among others. These programs are an integral part of what public education already offers across Idaho, funded by state tax dollars.

Idaho's current (2022) investment in our children's public schools ranks 50th in the country. Reducing the general fund by offering a tax credit for donations to scholarship programs or diverting already scarce resources to provide vouchers to private schools will further erode funding to current public schools all across Idaho. If our state constitution is changed, Idaho's investment in public education will become even smaller as our taxes will be siphoned off to unaccountable private and parochial schools. We oppose amending The Idaho State Constitution, Article IX, §5, Idaho Code, also known as the Blaine Amendment, for the reasons outlined above. Idaho already has substantial choice in its public school system.

A voucher, tax-credit, or scholarship program will cause irreparable harm to our existing system of public school districts and charters, especially in rural Idaho, and will likely harm overall student achievement.

**Submitted by Boise School District No. 1**  
**Meridian Medical Arts Charter High School**  
**Meridian Technical Charter High School**

**ISBA Executive Board Recommendation: Do Pass**

*Alan Erickson, Region 5 Vice Chair, will present the ISBA recommendation during the annual business session.*