

2023 PROPOSED ISBA RESOLUTION NO. 4

AMENDING IDAHO SCHOOL AGE STATUTE TO ALLOW FLEXIBILITY FOR SCHOOL PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, Idaho is one of six states that does not invest in early childhood education options for families with children 3 to 5 years old; and

WHEREAS, 59% of Idaho's children enter kindergarten with below grade level reading skills; and

WHEREAS, school districts and charter schools currently do not have the flexibility to use state funding to support and ensure that all children entering kindergarten are academically, socially, and emotionally ready to learn; and

WHEREAS, 66% of three and four-year-olds in Idaho are currently not enrolled in an early childhood education program, according to an Annie E. Casey Foundation study on overall child well-being in Idaho.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Idaho School Boards Association work with the State Board of Education, State Department of Education, and the Idaho Legislature to revise Section 33-201 and Section 33-208, Idaho Code, thereby providing school districts and charter schools with the flexibility to use state dollars to support school readiness with the understanding that such programs, like kindergarten, will not be compulsory or mandated, allowing school districts and charter schools to address the needs of their local students.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Currently Section 33-201, Idaho Code, prevents school districts and charter schools from using state dollars to support kindergarten preparedness programs for four-year-olds. By amending the current age, it will allow flexibility for local districts and charter schools to use state dollars as they see appropriate in supporting children entering kindergarten. There are no dollars attached to changing the code. It simply allows school districts and charter schools more choice in using the funding they receive in a manner that best fits their local community. This resolution would not amend the age threshold for a child enrolling in kindergarten or first grade. Nor would it be compulsory for local districts or charters to establish such programs.

Submitted by Boise School District No. 1

ISBA Executive Board Recommendation: Do Pass

Willy Schmitt, ISBA Region 6 Vice Chair, will present the ISBA recommendation during the annual business session.