

November 1, 2006

Board Approves Rules To Go To Legislature

BOISE — State Board of Education members unanimously approved a series of administrative rules to go forward to the Legislature in January.

The Board approved rules governing:

- • the Idaho Digital Learning Academy,
- • cut scores for the Idaho English Language Assessment (IELA):
- • Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's oversight of the extended employment services program;
- • content standard for K-12;
- • general education requirements for teachers;
- • educator endorsements;
- • definition of at-risk students;
- • school bus standards;
- • school transportation (this rule was passed on a 7 to 1 vote).

The Board also unanimously approved increasing the high school graduation requirements with two changes to the rule. The first change would allow debate, speech or a series of classes that meet communication standards to count as the student's speech credit. The other change would make it clear that a student must take math during the last year of high school.

Beginning with the class of 2013, the plan requires students to complete three years of science and three years of math, with at least one of the math classes taken in the student's last year of high school. Students would also be required to take algebra I and geometry or classes that meet those standards.

Idaho has one of the lowest graduation requirements in math and science in the country. Current state requirements only require students to take two years of math and two years of science, versus four years of English and three years of social studies and fine arts. English is the only course a student must take all four years of high school. The Board included language in the rule to ensure students could meet math and science requirements by mastering standards in other courses including professional technical classes or other standards-based classes developed by districts.

Students would also be required to take a state funded college entrance exam either the ACT, SAT, or Compass. Several other states including Wyoming, Illinois and Colorado require students to take the exam. The plan incorporates greater opportunity for students to take advanced classes and requires students to do a senior project including an oral and written component. Districts would have the flexibility to determine how to implement the project.

More than 10 states have raised their requirements in the past 12 months including Utah, Texas, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio.

The rules will be sent to the Idaho Legislature for consideration by the House and Senate Education Committees.