



**For Immediate Release**

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## **BOARD REVIEWS DRAFT RESOLUTIONS**

The Idaho State Board of Education today reviewed and discussed draft resolutions on Diversity Equity and Inclusion, Institutional Governance and Freedom of Expression on campus.

The draft resolutions affirm the Board’s existing policies and provide directives to ensure successful outcomes for all students attending Idaho’s 4-year institutions.

“We’ve heard concerns from lawmakers for several years now and from people in the communities that they represent about matters addressed in these draft resolutions,” Board President Dr. Linda Clark said. “These concerns are being expressed not only in Idaho, but in many states across the nation. We will work with our institutions to collect input, and the Board will make a decision during a future Board meeting.”

“These draft resolutions are based on our review of similar activity in effect in other states such as Utah and Texas,” State Board Executive Director Joshua Whitworth said. “The purpose is to ensure that we are providing support for all of our students and that our institutions are defending core principles of freedom of

expression by not taking sides on contentious issues, but rather facilitating constructive discussions and civil and rigorous debate on our public campuses.”

Here is a summary of the draft resolutions:

### **Draft Resolution on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

This resolution affirms Board policy and Idaho code prohibiting diversity statements in hiring and admissions decisions and confirms that Idaho’s institutional accreditor does not require specific structures or activities related to DEI at Idaho’s public postsecondary institutions. The resolution makes the following directives:

- Institutions shall establish and maintain equality of opportunity for all students regardless of personal identity characteristics
- Institutions shall ensure that no central offices, policies, procedures, or initiatives are dedicated to DEI activities.
- Institutions shall ensure student success centers are dedicated to all students.
- Institutions shall ensure that no employee or student is required to declare gender identity or preferred pronouns.

### **Draft Resolution on Governance**

This resolution affirms Board policy that establishes presidential power at the public postsecondary institutions, including that final decisions at the institutional level rest with the Presidents, and affirms that the Board is responsible to hold the Presidents accountable for their performance. It also affirms that institutions are required by Board policy to conduct regular reviews of tenured faculty, and that Presidents may terminate tenured faculty members for “adequate cause.” The resolution makes the following directives:

- The Board shall establish clear criteria for evaluating the presidents.
- Institutions shall report to the Board on post-tenure review actions.

- Institutions shall develop faculty codes of conduct.

### **Draft Resolution on Freedom of Expression**

This resolution affirms Board policies and principles related to academic freedom and academic responsibility for faculty, students, and institutions, including the limits to academic freedom. The resolution makes the following directives:

- Institutions shall maintain institutional neutrality, protect speakers' rights to free expression, protect the safety of those participating in constitutionally protected speech, introduce campus communities to diverse viewpoints, and establish programs designed to educate students and faculty about the institutions' role as the marketplace of ideas;
- Institutions shall provide curricular transparency by making course syllabi available to the public.

The Board actions from today's meeting includes:

- Approved several negotiated rules including revised high school graduation requirements that will be presented to the Legislature for consideration during the 2025 legislative session. If approved by lawmakers, graduates beginning with the class of 2028, would be required to take a digital literacy class covering basic computer science, artificial intelligence, coding and internet safety.
- Update the existing senior project to the new Future Readiness project that would demonstrate a student's application of college and career competencies and exploration of post-high school options through work-based, service-based, research-based, or portfolio-based experiences.
- The Board also approved the University of Idaho's \$163 million request to improve on-campus student housing. The project includes renovation of the U of I's residents halls (1,408 beds) and design, development and construction of new South Hill apartment style housing (408 beds).

The Board's next regular Board meeting is scheduled on December 18, 2024.

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