1. Purpose

This policy establishes common standards among all postsecondary institutions for ensuring students have affordable and reliable access to the instructional materials they need to be successful. It also bolsters the ongoing work of faculty and staff in facilitating meaningful, transparent engagement with the development and adoption of course curricula. This policy applies to Boise State University, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, University of Idaho, College of Eastern Idaho, College of Southern Idaho, College of Western Idaho, and North Idaho College (hereinafter "institutions").

2. Definitions

a. "Instructional Materials" are print or digital media used to support access to knowledge. Common examples of instructional materials include books, articles, lab manuals, study guides, software, subscriptions, modules, multimedia, assessments, assignments, courseware, and full courses. Tools, equipment, and supplies are not included.

b. "Automatic Charges" are financial costs assessed to a student alongside tuition and fees for the purpose of accessing the instructional materials assigned in a course. Automatic charges for instructional materials may apply at the course, program, or institutional level. Automatic charges do not include tuition. Special course fees, as defined in Board policy V.R., are not considered automatic charges for instructional materials.

c. "Cost" accounts for the calculated total price, comprising any pricing or alternative pricing negotiated with a provider, that an institution may guarantee for the instructional materials required for a single course or course section for one term.

d. "Course Marking" is the act of assigning specific attributes (e.g., letters, numbers, graphic symbols, colors, etc.) to course sections that help students quickly identify important information and make informed decisions at time of registration. Course marking must use the following cost designations for instructional materials:
   i. "Zero cost" means a total cost of $0.
   ii. "Very low cost" means a total cost $1-$30.
   iii. "Low cost" means a total cost of $31-$50.
   iv. "Mid cost" means a total cost of $51-$100.
   v. "High cost" means a total cost of more than $100.

Instructional materials may also be marked with an "Affordable" designation only if they meet the zero, very low, or low-cost price ranges listed above. Examples of affordable instructional materials often include open educational resources, self-published materials, low-cost textbooks, or materials accessed through an institution's library.

e. "Open Educational Resources" are teaching, learning, and research materials that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license, such as a Creative Commons license, that permits free use and repurposing by others.

3. Ensuring Instructional Material Access and Affordability

Each institution must develop and implement a plan to increase access and affordability of instructional materials for all students. Plans must include the following elements:

a. Resources and support to help faculty ensure any instructional materials are relevant and accessible for all students, especially students who require learning accommodations or additional modes of delivery (e.g. a print version of a digital textbook, internet access, etc.).

b. Policies and/or strategies that account for the cost of instructional materials and protect the academic freedom and responsibility of faculty and students relevant to instructional materials (see Board Policy III.B).

c. Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff related to the discovery, adoption, and use of affordable instructional materials.

d. Strategies to support and promote faculty adoption, adaption, and/or use of affordable instructional materials.

e. Programs, incentive structures, or other strategies to encourage and support faculty to create, adapt, and share open educational resources. These scholarly practices may, for example, be considered as part of tenure and promotion practices.

f. Strategies to implement course marking at time of registration indicating the cost, delivery, and any automatic charges related to instructional materials.

g. A list of existing courses and programs that utilize automatic charges for instructional materials. Institutions must identify whether students may opt in or opt out and briefly describe how students may purchase or otherwise access alternative, comparable-quality materials to complete the course successfully, consistent with Section 1323 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

h. Institutions must regularly review and update their plans as needed.

Institutions must submit to the Board Office an annual report on the implementation and outcomes of their plans. The Executive Director or designee determines the format and requirements of this annual report.

4. Administering Automatic Charges for Instructional Materials

a. Institutions must clearly communicate the costs associated with automatic charges to students (see “Cost” subsection 2.c). Information about the process of opting in or out of automatic charges must be available to students as early as possible and for at least two full weeks after the beginning of each course.
b. Institutions must ensure that any automatic charge program does not disincentivize faculty members from adopting affordable instructional materials, including open education resources.
c. Contracts for any instructional materials made available through automatic charges must require that any personally identifiable student data that may be obtained by a provider through the students’ use of the instructional materials must be used only to support learning during the students’ use of the instructional materials. Such contracts must prohibit the following:

i. the sale by the provider of any personally identifiable student data obtained through students’ use of the instructional materials; and,
ii. the transfer by the provider of data described in (a) except:
1) to the institution;
2) to a government entity or a scholarship entity for providing financial aid subsidies to the student for course materials; or,
3) to an educational institution or organization, for research purposes only, under an agreement where such data is maintained in a system that is in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and will not be sold, transferred, or otherwise used outside of that system unless de-identified.

5. Maintaining Curricular Transparency

a. To ensure that curricular transparency is consistently maintained across courses, each institution must utilize the same enterprise learning management system and share financial responsibility for a statewide contract coordinated by the Board Office.

b. Each institution must ensure that an accurate and current description of each course is available to the public on the institution’s website at least one week before the start of the course.

c. Each institution must ensure that students have access to current syllabi for all course sections in which they are enrolled. Syllabi must be available within the learning management system and available no later than the first day of the course.