

2026 ISBA RESOLUTION NO. 15 (Proposed)

K-12 FUNDING FORMULA PRINCIPLES

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of Idaho states: “it shall be the duty of the Legislature of Idaho, to establish and maintain a general, uniform and thorough system of public, free common schools;” and

WHEREAS, 87 of the 115 school districts in Idaho have supplemental levies to maintain operations; and

WHEREAS, elections have been consolidated to twice a year, and there has been discussion about consolidating further to twice a year every two years; and

WHEREAS, many school districts are not able to pass supplemental levies or pass supplemental levies that are adequate to meet their needs; and

WHEREAS, these practices have resulted in a public school system that is neither uniform nor thorough; and

WHEREAS, some students with special needs have a higher cost to educate; and

WHEREAS, the funding formula will be used to drive and distribute over two and a half billion dollars in state funds to local education agencies (LEAs).

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Idaho School Boards Association shall work with the Idaho Legislature to adopt a funding formula that is based upon the following principles:

- Predictability: It should give school districts the ability to accurately predict and budget for coming years;
- Adequacy: It should provide sufficient funding for districts and charter schools to provide essential needs to all students, pay competitive wages with neighboring states and the private sector, and keep pace with inflation and the cost of living;
- Transparency: The process should be clear where the money is coming from, how it is being spent, and easy to understand by all stakeholders;
- Stability: There should be no cliffs from year to year;
- Uniform and Thorough: It should provide support for students so they can demonstrate growth, fund the additional needs of special populations, and address facility and safety needs;
- Quality Staffing: Honors the experience of staff, honors the education of staff, and provides funding to recruit and retain qualified staff.
- Holds harmless: No LEA should lose funding, i.e., the cost per pupil is not lower than the current funding model; and the new model should take into account growing enrollment;

- Enrollment: Maintain enrollment-based funding, recognizing that districts must staff, maintain adequate facilities, and purchase materials based on the number of students enrolled, and not based on the number of students that are present on a given day;
- Accountable: Tied to the LEA's documented goals, and all recipients of public funding are held to the same requirements.

Statement of Purpose

For years, a K-12 public school funding formula legislative interim committee worked to develop a proposal for a new K-12 funding formula. While the proposed model was not approved, the 2019 Legislature did approve HB 293, which established definitions to be used in a Student-Based Funding Formula (SBFF) model that was to be considered by the 2020 Legislature. During the 2021 Legislative Session, the SBFF model was not addressed, leaving the issue unresolved for Idaho's students, educators, and taxpayers. We believe that having a standard of fundamental guiding principles provides a measure against which ideas can be weighed and evaluated. During the 2023 Legislative session, funding formula ideas were discussed and a bill was produced. During the 2024 and 2025 legislative sessions, further discussions were had and drafts were considered. These guiding principles represent a philosophical direction for funding public schools and reflect some of the concerns identified with the proposed models.

Submitted by Boise School District

Recommendation of the ISBA Executive Board: DO PASS

Anne Ritter, Region 9 Chair, will present the Executive Board recommendation at the business session.

“While conversations around the funding formula have gone on for nearly a decade, there has not been a consensus from our legislature on transitioning away from a resource allocation model. The recommendation on this resolution reflects the values and principles of Idaho school board members, who are the governing bodies closest to Idaho students, when discussions on legislation arise. The membership has adopted these principles every other year since 2019.”