

2026 ISBA RESOLUTION NO 04 (Proposed)

MAINTAINING OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR ONLINE SCHOOLS WITHIN TRADITIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

WHEREAS, Idaho's K-12 education system is built on the principle of local control, with elected Boards of Trustees responsible for governing public schools;

WHEREAS, these locally elected boards are tasked with creating schools and programs that serve the needs of students within their communities;

WHEREAS, Idaho law enables open enrollment, recognizing that parents are best positioned to decide what's right for their children, and if space is available, they have the right to enroll their child in another district;

WHEREAS, different traditional school districts in Idaho have responded by creating online schools that both serve their local communities and honor the state's commitment to open enrollment and parent choice;

WHEREAS, traditional school districts, governed by elected trustees, offer the highest degree of public accountability;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Idaho School Boards Association urges the Idaho Legislature and Governor to uphold the principles of parent choice and open enrollment as established in Idaho law;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ISBA calls on the Legislature and Governor to ensure traditional districts, those led by elected officials, are not unfairly restricted from participating in Idaho's open enrollment system, which is essential to honoring both local control and parental rights.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this resolution is to preserve open enrollment opportunities for students who wish to attend online schools operated by traditional school districts in Idaho. Open enrollment, established in state law, ensures that parents can choose the educational setting that best meets their child's needs, provided space is available. Many traditional districts have created online schools that serve both their local communities and families statewide, aligning with Idaho's commitment to parental choice. These schools operate under the governance of locally elected boards of trustees, ensuring strong public accountability. Maintaining open enrollment for online programs in traditional districts protects parental rights, supports local control, and prevents unfair restrictions that could limit educational options for Idaho families.

Submitted by Wilder School District

ISBA Executive Board Recommendation: NO RECOMMENDATION (NEUTRAL)

Eric Smallwood, ISBA Region 4 Chair, will present the Executive Board recommendation at the business session.

“This past legislative session, conversations about virtual education programs were contentious, and ultimately, no policy proposals moved forward. The ISBA Executive Board can understand the concerns from lawmakers about where virtual education programs are exploding in popularity, yet there is inconsistency in the delivery of virtual education district-to-district. However, ISBA maintains a strong value of local governance, including boards’ authority over the number of open enrolled students in their districts. The neutral recommendation provides the sponsors the ability to make their case to the membership during the business session.”