



Idaho Council *for the* Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 16, 2025 MT, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

In-Person

JRW Building West Conference Room, 799 W. State St., Boise, ID 83702

Transcripts available upon request, dawn.wells@cdhh.idaho.gov

ATTENDEES

Council Members (*quorum = 5*)

Steven Birkby, <i>Chairperson</i>	<i>Member who is Deaf and represents an organization of people who are Deaf</i>
Valerie Player, <i>Executive Committee</i>	<i>Member who is a parent of a child who is deaf</i>
Emilie Banasiak, <i>Vice Chair</i>	<i>Hard of hearing and represents an organization of people who are hard of hearing</i>
Sonny Cabbage.....	<i>Member who is Deaf</i>
Matthew McGraw.....	<i>Member who is Hard of Hearing and over the age of 60</i>
Dr. Abe Vore.....	<i>Member who is an audiologist</i>
Dr. Jacob Robison.....	<i>Member who is a physician</i>
Vacant.....	<i>Member who is a parent of a child who is hard of hearing</i>
Vacant.....	<i>Member who is an interpreter</i>

Ex-officio Members

Steven Snow.....	<i>Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CDHH)</i>
Brian Darcy.....	<i>Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind (IESDB)</i>
Kelli Toohill.....	<i>Public Utilities Commission / Idaho Telecommunications Relay Service (Idaho TRS)</i>
Erin Olsen.....	<i>Idaho Commission on Aging (ICG)</i>
Terry Gammel.....	<i>Idaho Department of Labor (DOL)</i>
Miranda Nelson.....	<i>Idaho Sound Beginnings (ISB)</i>
Chynna Hirasaki.....	<i>Idaho State Department of Education (SDE)</i>
Tabitha Edwards.....	<i>Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses (DOPL)</i>
Brett T. DeLange.....	<i>Office of the Attorney General (AG)</i>
Vacant.....	<i>Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)</i>

CDHH Staff

Steve Snow.....	<i>Executive Director</i>
Dawn Wells.....	<i>Administrative Assistant</i>
Leah McElwee.....	<i>Executive Interpreter</i>
Tara Adams.....	<i>Human Services Program Specialist</i>
Jahaira Faber.....	<i>Communications & Outreach Coordinator</i>

Other Attendees: LaVona Andrew Carson (interpreter), Colleen (captioner), Bill Andrew (community member), Jaidyn Eller (ISU student), Ariel Carter (ISU student)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council chair, Steven Birkby, called the meeting to order at 12:45 PM and welcomed everyone. Introductions and representations were made.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION – Valerie Player moved to approve the agenda; Emilie Banasiak seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION – Valerie Player moved to approve the minutes as corrected from November 15, 2024; Emilie Banasiak seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION – Steven Birkby nominated Emilie Banasiak for the position of Vice Chairperson. Emily accepted. The motion passed 5-0 (Voting yes: Steven-yes, Valerie-yes, Sonny-yes, Emilie-abstained, Abe-yes).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Steve Snow

At the National Level

1. Watching HB 5408. Introduced in 2023 as the Social Security Elimination Act would increase the cap of earnings or assets before benefits are affected, from \$2,000 to \$10,000.
2. Watching HR 883. This changes the timeline of Medicare benefits. Currently SSDI benefits can take up to 5 months before benefits are received and then up to another 24 months for Medicare to kick in. This bill would make both start upon onset, "Stop Waiting Act".
3. Rule changes with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will require 3 things of video conferencing platforms by 2027.
 - a. Captioning option
 - b. Interpreter features for visibility
 - c. User interface and control by the individual using the platform
4. Another Rule change with FCC is that all prisons and jails must have a videophone available. If that is not available yet, then they must have text relay services available. This has been an ongoing struggle for years.
5. A third rule with FCC encourages companies to provide direct service by using employees and others who are deaf and hard of hearing through Direct Video Calling (DVC).
6. Rule changes for the Department of Transportation that just went into effect last month require airplanes designed and built with disability access. The other rule is an improvement to assistant services. Currently there is much confusion about access, for example, providing access to a deaf person by bringing them a wheelchair. City of Boise already has a type of pager system in the works which should be ready in the spring.
7. Watching regulations around Safe AI in regards to the Deaf and hard of hearing community.

At the State Level

1. No legislation directly impacting the deaf or hard of hearing community to report.
2. CDHH budget request for ASL classes, a new position, and a lease increase were all denied due to a three percent cap. Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) and a request for additional communication access funding was granted.
3. Amazon proposed an "Interpreter Business License" for individual sign language interpreters that work for a company. The governor referred Amazon to CDHH.

At the Community Level

1. Holiday Families selected a couple of families in North Idaho and couple of families in the Treasure Valley, totaling four families that received gifts.
2. Treasure Valley Day School project is continuing to move forward with meetings.
3. Community services through Vocational Rehabilitation could be affected by their new Order of Selection (OOS) status. Services will be provided upon severity of needs. Deaf Readiness Camp is a program through VR that could also be affected.
4. FEMA Region 10 hired a new Regional Disability Integration Specialist, PV Jantz, who is deaf.
5. The K.W. lawsuit settlement includes picking a new developmental disability assessment tool. CDHH has provided feedback on that assessment tool.

6. DRI filed a complaint against Ada County Paramedics for disregarding the need of a sign language interpreter. CDHH has been a part of these ongoing discussions.
7. CDHH website is going through accessibility verifications to make sure we are compliant with section 508 of the ADA before our launch.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPORTS

Brian Darcy, Idaho School for the Deaf and Blind

1. Legislative budget exceeded the three percent cap so we can retain staff and recruit for new positions.
2. Treasure Valley Day School has been in works. Currently looking into any statute changes that need to take place to get this done.
3. National Deaf Center in DC is currently visiting the ISDB campus. We have been identified by NDC as one of the top three transition programs in the US and ranked first for doing the most while utilizing the least amount of budget.
4. Long time employee of ISDB, Suszan Cadwell passed away last Monday. She will be impossible to replace.
5. The summer work experience program (Work Readiness Camp) is in danger of losing funding with VR.
6. Sawtooth Camp is in planning stages for this summer.
7. Treasure Valley Christmas event had over 150 visitors and channel 7 reported on the event.

Chynna Hirasaki, Idaho State Department of Education

1. Comprehensive review on the Idaho Special Education manual. Review is taking place chapter by chapter and being posted online for public input as required through federal and state law. The manual is Idaho's interpretation of IDEA which will require the state board approval then legislative approval.
2. Software used for special education is currently in RFP. Through state procurement law, the years we have used the current vendor is maxed out.
3. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) reached out about our specific learning disability criteria. Idaho's criteria were too restrictive, a work group committee revised policy, approved by SBE, now awaiting legislative approval.
4. SDE covered VR funds this year for Idaho Transition Institute and Tools4Life so those events could still happen.
5. The Governor approved all SDE budget requests which included five percent CEC.
6. Superintendent Debbie Critchfield proposed a Weighted Student Funding formula to fund schools with more money for students that cost more to educate.
7. Idaho Code 33201 revised to be in compliance with IDEA FAPE applies until the student's 22nd birthday.

Miranda Nelson, Idaho Sound Beginnings

1. Introduction of ISB Program Specialist, Miranda Nelson. Shared some of her background including that she has deaf parents.
2. CDC grant application in process, which would be good for 5 years. This grant helps with data collection, hearing screenings, and early intervention.
3. Last year ISB was awarded the HRSA grant which is also good for 5 years.
4. Looking at purchasing more hearing screening machines which could be loaned to midwives and home births for more screenings.
5. ISB is working across state lines in places like North Idaho where there are a lack of providers for pediatric services. Trying to problem solve insurance coverage for services over state lines.

ADJOURNED

MOTION – Sonny Cabbage moved to adjourn; Dr. Abe Vore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING:

Friday, April 18, 2025, 9 AM – 12 PM in-person at Vocational Rehabilitation, Treasure Valley East location.

DRAFT