Brad Little
Governor

Steven Snow
Executive Director

Idaho Council *for the* Deaf and Hard of Hearing

12592 W. Explorer Dr., suite 100, Boise, ID 83713

Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, April 17, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Mountain Time

Location: CDHH Office, 12592 W. Explorer Dr., suite 100, Boise ID 83713

Meeting Format: In-Person

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

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ATTENDEES

Council Members *(quorum = 5 or more than 50% of positions filled)*

Council Member	Position/Representation	Attendance
Steven Birkby, Chairperson	*Member who is Deaf and represents an organization of people who are Deaf*	*Present*
Emilie Banasiak, Vice Chair	*Hard of hearing and represents an organization of people who are hard of hearing*	*Present*
Sonny Cabbage, Executive Committee	*Member who is Deaf*	*Absent*
Dr. Abe Vore	*Member who is an audiologist*	*Present*
Valerie Player	*Member who is a parent of a child who is deaf*	*Present*
Dr. Joshua Albright	*Member who is a physician*	*Present*
Matthew McGraw	*Member who is Hard of Hearing and over the age of 60*	*Absent*
Janette Lovell	*Member who is an interpreter*	*Absent*
Vacant	*Member who is a parent of a child who is hard of hearing*	*Absent*

Ex-officio Members	Position/Representation	Attendance
Steven Snow	*Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CDHH)*	
Paula Mason	*Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind (IESDB)*	
Erin Olsen	*Idaho Commission on Aging (ICG)*	*Absent*
Monique Marshall	*Idaho Sound Beginnings (ISB)*	
Jacque Hyatt	*Idaho State Department of Education (SDE)*	*Absent*
Kelli Toohill	*Public Utilities Commission/Idaho Telecommunications Relay Service (Idaho TRS)*	*Absent*
MiKayla Monaghan	*Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)*	*Absent*
Terry Gammel	*Idaho Department of Labor (DOL)*	*Absent*
Tabitha Edwards	*Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses (DOPL)*	*Absent*
Vacant	*Office of the Attorney General (AG)*	*Absent*

CDHH Staff	Position/Representation	Attendance
Steve Snow	*Executive Director*	
Dawn Wells	*Administrative Assistant*	
Tara Adams	*Human Services Program Specialist*	
Vacant	*Executive Interpreter*	Absent

Other Attendees:

LaVona Andrew Carson (interpreter), Shelia Robertson (interpreter), Todd Jenson (student), Natalya Tuma (student)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council Chair Steven Birkby called the meeting to order at 9:19 AM. Introductions and representations were made.

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2. OPENING ITEMS

2.1 Swearing-In of New Board Member

New board member, Dr. Joshua Albright was sworn in.

2.2 Approval of Agenda

- **MOTION –** Emilie Banasiak moved to approve the agenda. Valerie Player seconded the motion.
- **RESULT –** Motion carried with no opposition.

2.3 Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **MOTION –** Valerie Player moved to approve the minutes as amended; Emilie Banasiak seconded the motion.
- **RESULT –** Motion carried with no opposition.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Presenter: Steve Snow, Executive Director

3.1 Two board positions have been filled with one remaining vacant.

3.2 At the National Level

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

FCC released new rulings that require all video conference platforms to include sign language, accurate captioning, and relay service where the individual can control their own accessibility. Implemented by January 2027.

- Participants can bring in third-party captioning services and sign language services including VRS
- Two interpreters can be utilized
- If other deaf people are utilizing interpreters that were brought in by a deaf participant that needs to leave the meeting, that interpreter can stay for the continuity of the meeting.
- Captions must be 98% accurate and synchronized with speech
- Participants can control caption font size, font color, caption positions, and caption opacity
- Video quality must be sufficient to support sign language communication
- Participants can relocate video windows and pin interpreters
- Participants can edit display names before or after joining so interpreters can be easily identified
- Exclusivity contracts are not allowed. Individuals have freedom of choice for which company they want to use, platforms cannot limit options to a sole provider.

Office for Deaf Youth

Office for Deaf Youth is a nationwide working group that is proposing a central federal office to look at issues around the deaf and hard-of-hearing youth and families.

3.3 At the State Level

Newborn Hearing Screening

Legislature just passed SB1294 which is the newborn hearing screening. That is in the process of being codified. Newborn hearing screenings have been taking place in Idaho for over 20 years, but it was not part of Idaho Code.

Vehicle Registration Stickers

Idaho passed a law that no longer requires registration stickers on license plates. Registration is still required but eliminating the stickers is expected to save the state approximately $300,000.

Budget Holdbacks

Budget holdbacks of 3% have now become permanent. CDHH had to remove the Communications and Outreach Coordinator position to meet that change. An additional 2% cut was decided for next fiscal year, creating an overall 5% budget cut. CDHH split the Executive Interpreter position into two part-time positions and holding one of them back to meet the additional budget cut.

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)

VRI continues to change the landscape of interpreting. VRI can take place across state lines so to be clear, the Idaho law requires licensure for individuals engaged in sign language interpreting performed within the state of Idaho or delivered to individuals within the state of Idaho.

- Interpreter is outside Idaho; deaf individual is in Idaho – Idaho interpreter license applies.
- Deaf individual is outside Idaho; interpreter is in Idaho – Idaho interpreter license applies.

Division of Purchasing (DOP)

DOP manages all state contracts and recently added VRI contracts. A state agency wanting to use VRI must use one of those contracts. Primarily it is for spoken languages which do not require a license. These contracted agencies that provide sign language interpreting are not vetted for licensed interpreters. CDHH has been working with DOP on amending these contracts so we can legally use VRI services outside of the contracts.

VRI in the Classroom

One of CDHH's Proposed Priorities is looking at VRI use including the classroom. This would bring IESDB and SDE together to look at a better system and education on the topic.

ASL Bench Card

CDHH has been working with the State Supreme Court to draft a new ASL bench card for judges. The Supreme Court Language Access Committee will approve the card then give it to the Council of Judges to ratify and distribute.

3.4 At the Community Level

Domestic Violence Services

CDHH proposed ICDVVA create funding for a position to manage a state-wide program for deaf individuals experiencing domestic violence.

Part-Time Interpreter Position

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CDHH reopening position of Part-Time Interpreter. Community feedback was that the rate of pay was too low even with benefits to bring in applicants with the needed credentials and experience. We are trying again and emphasizing the value of benefits.

Tara Adams

Tara Adams is leaving CDHH on June 15th after 2-years. Her contribution has been incredible and sets a strong foundation for the next person in that role

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Election of Council Officers

Steven Birby is currently serving as Council Chair.

- **NOMINATION –** Emilie Banasiak nominated Steve Birkby to continue as Council Chair. Abe Vore seconded the motion.
- **RESULT –** Motion carried unanimously.

Emilie Banasiak is currently serving as Council Vice Chair.

- **NOMINATION –** Valerie Player nominated Emilie Banasiak for Vice Chair. Abe Vore seconded the motion.
- **RESULT –** Motion carried unanimously.

Sonny Cabbage is currently serving as Executive Committee 3rd Member.

- **NOMINATION –** Emilie Banasiak nominated Sonny Cabbage to continue as 3rd Member of the Executive Committee. Joshua Albright seconded the motion.
- **RESULT –** Motion carried unanimously.

4.2 FY 2028 Budget

Proposed budget of $636,223 includes an increase request to get back the Communications & Outreach Coordinator and other half of the part-time interpreter position.

- **MOTION –** Emilie Banasiak moved to adopt the budget as proposed. Valerie Player seconded the motion.
- **RESULT –** Motion carried unanimously.

4.3 FY 2026 Priorities

- Priority 1 - Law Enforcement Outreach Training
- Priority 2 – Improvement of State Services includes a sub-priority for First Responders and Domestic Violence situations.
- Priority 3 – Quality Foster Care Services Continuum for Deaf Children
- Added Focus – Communication Access and Interpreter Workforce, VRI
- Added Focus – Public Policy and Legislative Initiative, EHDI/ISB Legislation
  - **MOTION –** Valerie Player moved to accept the Fiscal Year 2027 Priorities as defined. Joshua Albright seconded the motion.
  - **RESULT –** Motion carried unanimously.

4.4 Awards

The following awards were presented:

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- 2025 Individual Award of Excellence, Jill Radford
- 2025 Organization Award of Excellence, Idaho State University, College of Education
    - **MOTION –** Joshua Albright moved to accept the Awards of Excellence as proposed. Emilie Banasiak seconded the motion.
    - **RESULT –** Motion carried unanimously.

4.5 Newborn Hearing Screening Legislation

- **MOTION –** Abe moved to accept the Newborn Hearing Screening Legislation as proposed. Emilie seconded the motion.
- **RESULT –** Motion carried unanimously.

4.6 CDHH Bylaws Update

- **MOTION –** Valerie Player moved to accept the CDHH Bylaws Update as proposed. Emilie Banasiak seconded the motion.
- **RESULT –** Motion carried unanimously.

4.7 FY 2026 Quarterly Meeting Dates

- Friday, September 18, 2026
- Friday, November 20, 2026
- Thursday, January 21, 2027
- Friday, April 16, 2027
    - **MOTION –** Valerie Player moved to accept the proposed meeting dates with flexibility for the January meeting depending on what works for the legislature. Emilie Banasiak seconded the motion.
    - **RESULT –** Motion carried unanimously.

5. EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPORTS

5.1 Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind

Presenter: Paula Mason

- New contracts are going out to replace some outreach teachers that are retiring. Emily Turner in Region 7, is retiring after 10 years. Donna Wesen in Region 6 is retiring after 43 years. Jim Dammarell in Region 2, who works with blind/low vision, is also retiring.
- MOU with State Department of Education is being updated. This MOU allows IESDB to share information and work with public schools.
- A group of students are going to Yellowstone through a grant.
- A group of students are going to the Aspen Camp in Colorado.
- This year IESDB does not have an agreement with Vocational Rehabilitation as in past years, for the Work Readiness Camp. It was a week on campus then a 4-week paid work experience due to budget. Instead IESDB is doing a modified regional work readiness to learn about work and do a job shadow.
- My Tools for Life is for youth with disabilities that can come together for 2-days and learn about resources and opportunities. Often the presentations do not apply to DHH students, so recently several states met on creating a cross-state Tools for Life with other Schools for the Deaf. Its getting closer to happening with neighboring states.

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- Graduation is May 21, 2026, at ISDB
- Superintendent position closes today, the board meets Tuesday and will have more information on the next steps.
- The Bridge Program for those aged 18-21, takes the food truck to Twin Falls and parks it at a building that IESDB has in Twin Falls. It is getting good traction. Still unsure how to expand with requests for weekend opportunities.
- Campus projects include new parking lots and accessible sidewalks which begin May 13th. The cottages are getting generators for outages of which one wing has some students on ventilators. The new cottage is in the last approval process before breaking ground.
- Discussing fencing around campus.

5.2 Idaho Sound Beginnings

Presenter: Monique Marshall

- ISB is still in a familiar place of the unknown. CDC announced a 10-day grant extension, which ISB has applied but it creates a hold on transitioning until after the extension has been awarded.
- The Newborn Hearing Screening SB 1292 offers some exciting opportunities to grow the program.
- HRSA funding was approved on the federal level but it was a partial Notice of Award (NoA) so the budget needs to be readjusted to reflect the partial NoA.
- ISB is officially under IESDB

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6. ADJOURNED

- **MOTION –** Emilie Banasiak moved to adjourn the meeting. Valerie Player seconded the motion.
- **RESULT** – Motion carried with no opposition.

Meeting adjourned at 11:54 AM Mountain Time

NEXT MEETING:

Date: Friday, September 18, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Zoom Video Conferencing