

From: [David Binetti](#)
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First draft:

Statement by the West Ada Board of Trustees

The public has asked for, and deserves, a response from the West Ada Board of Trustees regarding recent events concerning staff actions related to Board Policy 401.20, Duties and Responsibilities. Idaho State Law forbids the Trustees from meeting outside of Board Meetings, which has hindered our ability to respond as rapidly as we would have wished. It is regrettable we couldn't respond more quickly; however, we remain volunteers who must attend to family and work obligations, and we are gratified to finally be able to speak with one voice.

First: Everyone is Welcome

The Board of Trustees reaffirms that all students are welcome in West Ada.

We say re-affirm because this has been, is, and will continue to be true. Our classrooms reflect this, our staff practices this, and our hearts hold it. From incoming Kindergarteners to graduating Seniors; from Desert Sage Elementary in the South to Star Middle in the North; from Summerwind STEM in the East to Owyhee High School in the South and every school in between; to every student at every age in every grade, with every face from every place, every day and in every way:

****Everyone is Welcome in West Ada.****

And while we mean no disrespect to our amazing staff whose dedication to this principle should be unquestionable, to avoid any confusion we are directing the Superintendent to print signs to this effect to be placed prominently on every campus at the earliest practical opportunity.

Second: Focus on Learning

The Board of Trustees reaffirms the Focus on Learning present in 401.20, Duties and Responsibilities.

Unanimously approved, Policy 401.20 was the result of a three-month collaborative effort between teachers, administration, staff, patrons, and union representatives who all shared the same goal: to ensure our learning environments maintained a focus on learning, and as free as possible from political, social, or other distractions. That goal remains more relevant today than ever before, and the Board of Trustees commends those who worked on that policy which has helped produce remarkable gains in learning outcomes.

In the two and a half years since adoption, our Reading and Math scores both reached the highest levels recorded -- twice. We vaulted to become the top performing large District in Idaho by a significant margin. And were West Ada to be considered its own state, we would be ranked First in the Nation in Reading, and behind only Connecticut in Math -- and rest assured we have the Nutmeg State firmly in our sights.

****In short, we believe focusing on learning produces better learning.****

Of course, focusing on one thing means we must remove things that may potentially jeopardize that focus. This can obviously be difficult, and especially so when those distractions are otherwise seemingly worthy of attention. Nonetheless, focusing attention on one thing necessarily means sacrificing attention on another, and for us the importance of learning must take precedence.

We do not presume to know exactly where that line should be drawn every time. Indeed, as individual Trustees we have differing opinions that we value even if we disagree. This is true of this instance as well. However, we can say with one voice that should these disagreements not be reconcilable, we wish to err on the side of our curriculum.

Third: Curiosity Before Judgement. ****IN PROGRESS****

The Board of Trustees reaffirms our commitment to Curiosity Before Judgement.

The foundation of learning is curiosity, which we all hope will lead to sound judgement. However, if we put judgment first then learning can't happen -- and learning is why we are here.

To that end, it is a deep hope and desire that all of us in the West Ada Family -- students, staff, parents and patrons -- seek to engage with each other from a spirit of curiosity first. By rushing to judgement we may close off solutions that didn't seem possible at the time, but could produce a better outcome for our kids.

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2024-25 Theme: *Empowering Minds, Ensuring Excellence*



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