

2016 IASB Legislative Priorities

Legislative priorities identify the most critical changes in state policy - and serve as a focal point for grassroots advocacy efforts of Iowa school boards and their association.

STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

(RESOLUTION 2):

Supports continued progress in the development of rigorous content standards and benchmarks that reflect the real-world knowledge and skills students need to graduate from high school prepared for college or to enter the workforce, including the following state actions:

- Provide and fund technical assistance to help school districts fully implement the Iowa Core Content Standards which define what students should know and be able to do in math, science, English language arts, social studies, and 21st Century skills in areas such as financial and technological literacy.
- Adopt high-quality summative and formative assessments, aligned to the skills students should know and be able to do to succeed globally and locally.
- Support research based professional development that provides educators with training, support and time to work together so that they can successfully teach a rigorous curriculum to all students. Ensure that curriculum decisions about how to teach remain in the hands of local schools and teachers.
- Include and fund all the components of successful standards systems: assessments aligned to high expectations, improved and aligned instruction and quality professional development.

IASB supports development of model content standards, recommended assessments and professional development supports in additional content areas but opposes expanding accountability, reporting and accreditation requirements in these areas.

SCHOOL FUNDING POLICY (RESOLUTION 20):

Supports a school foundation formula that:

- Provides adequate and timely funding;
- Provides a funding mechanism for transportation costs that reduces the pressure on the general fund and addresses inequities between school districts;
- Includes factors based on changes in demographics including socio-economic status, remedial programming, and enrollment challenges;
- Equalizes per pupil funding;
- Incorporates categorical funding in the formula within three years; and
- Includes a mix of property taxes and state aid

SUPPLEMENTAL STATE AID (RESOLUTION 21):

Supports setting supplemental state aid:

- For FY 2017, by January 29, 2016;
- For FY 2018 and future budget years, within 400 days (or 14 months) prior to the certification of the school's district budget; and
- at a rate that adequately supports local districts' efforts to plan, create and sustain world-class schools

STATE PENNY (RESOLUTION 28):

Supports preserving the integrity of the statewide penny sales tax for school infrastructure, including the tax equity provisions. Supports repeal of the Dec. 31, 2029 sunset.

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STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. RESEARCH-BASED INITIATIVES:

Supports implementation of initiatives in Iowa's K-12 education system that:

- Are research-based;
- Are focused on student achievement;
- And do not "re-purpose" existing education funds

2. STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

Supports continued progress in the development of rigorous content standards and benchmarks that reflect the real-world knowledge and skills students need to graduate from high school prepared for college or to enter the workforce, including the following state actions:

- Provide and fund technical assistance to help school districts fully implement the Iowa Core Content Standards which define what students should know and be able to do in math, science, English language arts, social studies, and 21st Century skills in areas such as financial and technological literacy.
- Adopt high-quality summative and formative assessments, aligned to the skills students should know and be able to do to succeed globally and locally.
- Support research based professional development that provides educators with training, support and time to work together so that they can successfully teach a rigorous curriculum to all students. Ensure that curriculum decisions about how to teach remain in the hands of local schools and teachers.
- Include and fund all the components of successful standards systems: assessments aligned to high expectations, improved and aligned instruction and quality professional development.

IASB supports development of model content standards, recommended assessments and professional development supports in additional content areas but

opposes expanding accountability, reporting and accreditation requirements in these areas.

3. PRESCHOOL:

Supports an increase in funding to ensure all 4-year-olds have access to a high quality public school preschool program. Districts should be given maximum flexibility to assign costs to the program.

4. EARLY LITERACY:

- Supports the continued development of and funding for research on best practices for improving proficiency in early literacy strategies.
- Supports continued funding for professional development and classroom intervention strategies focused on implementing best practices for early literacy in grades PK-3.
- Supports the continuation of programs currently funded by the early intervention block grant program with flexibility to use those funds for other K-3 literacy programs if approved by the school board.

5. ELL:

Supports adequate and on-time funding for English-language learner (ELL) students until the students reach proficiency.

6. DROPOUT/AT RISK:

Supports the inclusion of drop-out prevention and funding for at-risk students in the foundation formula and the inclusion of socio-economic status as a factor in determining a student's at-risk status. Opposes changes to compulsory age of attendance requirements unless sufficient funds and research-based programs are provided.

7. FOREIGN LANGUAGE:

Supports adequate and on-time funding for a comprehensive foreign language curriculum to promote lifelong learners in a global community.

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8. MENTAL HEALTH:

Supports increased statewide access to and funding for mental health services for children.

9. SPECIAL EDUCATION – STATE:

Supports predictable and timely state funding to serve students receiving special education services at a level that reflects the actual cost including educational programming and health care costs.

10. SPECIAL EDUCATION – FEDERAL:

Supports the federal commitment to fund 40 percent of the cost of educating students receiving special education services and requests that the federal government fulfill that commitment by increasing funding a minimum of 8 percent per year until the 40 percent figure is achieved.

11. AREA EDUCATION AGENCIES:

Supports adequate financial support of the area education agencies to provide essential services in a cost effective manner to school districts including:

- special education;
- technology;
- professional development;
- curriculum assessment; and
- student assessment data analysis.

12. SCHOOL CALENDARS:

Supports the authority of locally-elected school boards to determine the school calendar to best meet student needs, including start dates, year round schools, and other innovations.

EDUCATOR QUALITY

13. TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT:

Supports research-based programs and funding to develop strong instructional leadership including:

- teacher leadership and development
- beginning teacher mentoring programs
- quality professional development programs.

14. MARKET-COMPETITIVE WAGES:

Supports providing school districts with incentives and the flexibility to pay market competitive wages for shortage area positions, especially in the areas required to meet graduation and Iowa content standards.

15. BENEFITS:

Supports allowing school districts to voluntarily enroll their employees in the state's health, dental and life/long-term disability insurance pools.

16. ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE:

Supports the adoption of alternative teacher licensure upon completion of research-based teaching pedagogy training in addition to content knowledge in a curricular area.

17. STAFF REDUCTIONS:

Supports giving school districts and AEAs the option to waive the termination requirements in Iowa Code Section 279.13 to reduce staff in response to reductions in funding or to comply with an arbitrator's award.

18. ARBITRATIONS:

Supports a requirement that arbitrators, prior to the imposition of an award must first consider local conditions, ability to pay, and local settlement history. After the arbitrator determines the school district, AEA or community college has the ability to pay, the arbitrator should then consider comparability based upon similar size and geographic region.

19. LABOR/EMPLOYMENT LAWS:

Supports labor and employment laws that balance the rights of the employees with the rights of management and considers student achievement and student safety.

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FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND STEWARDSHIP

20. SCHOOL FUNDING POLICY:

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- Includes a mix of property taxes and state aid

21. SUPPLEMENTAL STATE AID:

Supports setting supplemental state aid:

- For FY 2017, by January 29, 2016;
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22. PROPERTY TAXES:

- Supports holding school districts harmless in property tax restructuring.
- Supports efforts to minimize property tax disparities created by the additional levy rate.
- Supports improved transparency and limits on the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) including requirements:
 - To include all affected taxing bodies before creation of a TIF district;
 - to limit the duration of all TIF districts

23. SPECIAL LEVY FUNDS:

Supports flexibility in the use of special levy funds.

24. TAX BASE:

Supports an independent, bi-annual cost-benefit analysis of all income, sales or property tax exemptions, credits or deductions. Creation of a new tax credit must undergo an independent cost benefit analysis. The legislature should have sole authority to make revisions to definitions that impact taxes, restrict future tax bases or provide additional tax breaks that decrease revenue to the state and either directly or indirectly impact tax revenue for schools.

25. FRANCHISE FEES:

Opposes the imposition of franchise fees on school corporations unless the board of directors agrees to such a fee.

26. CONSTITUTIONAL TAX LIMITATIONS:

Opposes a constitutional amendment or statewide voter referendum that would limit taxes, spending or local control impacting education.

27. UNFUNDED MANDATES:

Opposes any new mandate that does not provide sufficient and sustainable funding for successful implementation.

SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

28. STATE PENNY:

Supports preserving the integrity of the statewide penny sales tax for school infrastructure, including the tax equity provisions. Supports repeal of the Dec. 31, 2029 sunset.

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29. BOND ISSUES:

Supports allowing school bond issues to be passed by a simple majority vote.

Supports the authority to levy a combination of property taxes and income surtaxes to pay the indebtedness.

GOVERNANCE

30. SCHOOL BOARD TERMS:

Supports returning to three-year school board member terms with less than a majority of the school board elected in any one year.

31. HOME RULE:

Supports legislation that provides school boards greater flexibility including adoption of Home Rule.

32. CHARTER AND ONLINE SCHOOL AUTHORIZING AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

Supports the existing Iowa law establishing local school boards as the sole authority to establish charter and on-line schools. All plans and waivers must be approved by the state Board of Education and subject to all state accountability and reporting standards. After approval of a charter or on-line school by a local school district, charter or on-line school plans and waivers must be approved by the State Board of Education and subject to all state accountability and reporting standards.

33. SHARING AND REORGANIZATION:

Supports continuation of sufficient incentives and assistance to encourage sharing or reorganization between school districts including the establishment of regional schools.

After you have reviewed and made not of any issues or edits that are of interest to your district, please discuss at your May, June or July board meeting. Designate one person to then go to the IASB Call for Legislative Priorities page on www.ia-sb.org, to submit your district's top four priorities, amended or new resolutions.

If you have questions about this process, please call Jessica Hulen, IASB Government Relations Assistant at (515) 247-7055 or email jhulen@ia-sb.org.

Thank you for your participation in this important grassroots process!