

# 5 things suburban school boards want to be legislative priorities

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Suburban school boards are set to help decide the legislative priorities of the state's association of school boards, and here's what's on their minds: energy savings, safety drills, charter school funding, mental health and student voter registration.

These are among topics suggested by suburban districts for consideration of all member districts within the Illinois Association of School Boards during its annual conference Nov. 16-18 in Chicago.

All five proposals are recommended for adoption and likely will be approved to join or update existing items on the association's list of 139 position statements, said Terry Fielden, a Naperville Unit District 203 school board member who is the DuPage County representative on the association's resolutions committee.

Positions that are approved will be pushed in the association's lobbying efforts, but approval doesn't guarantee legislative action will be taken.

Here's a look:

**Energy savings:** West Chicago

High School District 94 wants to help schools more easily obtain money for energy efficiency projects by allowing districts to borrow for that purpose without asking voters through a referendum. A resolution school board representatives will consider next month asks the association to pursue legislation to allow such non-referendum borrowing.

**Safety practices:** Indian Prairie Unit District 204 wants more local control concerning active shooter and lockdown drills. Prompted by a law that requires districts to conduct an active shooter drill with students present, the proposal cites guidance from the National Association of School Psychologists in saying each district should have authority over whether to do so.

"We feel districts should make their own decisions," District 204 school board President Mike Raczak said. This approach would result in "fewer physical, emotional and psychological risks," the proposal says.

**Charter funding:** Woodland District 50 in Gurnee is pushing the association to reaffirm

a position held since at least 2014 to help protect districts against financial losses from diverting state funding to charter schools. The proposal calls for the association to seek legislation creating a new method of funding charter schools that doesn't hurt the finances of local districts.

**Mental health:** Lake Villa Elementary District 41 is taking the lead on a proposal to push the state and federal governments to better support mental health resources for students.

"This is clearly a vital concern, especially in the current social climate and increased attention to school violence," the association's resolutions committee wrote in its review of the proposal.

**Voter registration:** Indian Prairie Unit District 204 wants the association to support "student nonpartisan civic responsibility, including the importance of student voter registration." "Community benefit, support for a healthy democracy and empowered citizens are direct results of encouraging voter registration in the high schools," the proposal says.