



MEMORANDUM

MEMO TO: GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

FROM: LUPE CASTRO, Governmental Relations Associate

DATE: July 10, 2025

SUBJECT: PROPOSED 2026 POLITICAL AGENDA AND DELEGATE ASSEMBLY PROCESS

Thank you for lending your voice to every public-school student in Arizona. Enclosed you will find ASBA's Vision, Mission, and Core Beliefs; and the proposed 2026 Political Agenda.

The Legislative Committee reviewed and discussed every submitted proposal at its meeting in June. Most boards indicated support for items included in the 2025 Political Agenda, and the committee appreciates your overwhelming support of ASBA's agenda to advance public education statewide.

This year, as was the case last year, we have presented the proposed Political Agenda as a marked-up version of the prior year's agenda. During the Delegate Assembly, rather than discussing every item, Delegates will be able to focus on just the changes, additions, and deletions to streamline the process. Amendments and new items can still be proposed during the Delegate Assembly.

The Delegate Assembly determines the positions of the Arizona School Boards Association. Registration for Delegate Assembly is now open. You may register via the [registration page](#). **We look forward to seeing you at the Delegate Assembly on September 6th.**

The Delegate Assembly will be held at the JW Marriot Scottsdale Camelback Inn immediately following the ASBA Law Conference. Like last year, **we are offering delegates the chance to participate remotely**. We encourage districts to send an in-person delegate but wish to offer all district delegates the opportunity to participate in this important process regardless of travel ability.

Please copy and distribute this ENTIRE packet to all board members and place the proposed 2026 Political Agenda on your next board agenda for discussion and to provide any instruction to your district delegate as to your board's position on proposed agenda items. A sample board agenda item has been included for your reference. While all board members and superintendents are welcome to attend the Delegate Assembly, each member district has only one official delegate.

Delegate registration can be completed [online at this link](#).

Please see model agenda items for consideration on the next page if necessary.

The following model agenda items may be used if desired:

Model agenda item for selection of district delegate (may be consent if no discussion required)

Consideration and possible action to appoint [NAME] to represent [DISTRICT NAME] as the district delegate to the Arizona School Boards Association delegate assembly to be held on September 6, 2025.

Model agenda item for board consideration of the draft political agenda in general session

Governing Board to discuss and may consider action to approve in whole or in part the draft 2026 Political Agenda of the Arizona School Boards Association (ASBA) and direct the District's delegate to the ASBA delegate assembly to represent the Board's determined position.

As a reminder, while your board reviews the draft 2026 Political Agenda, you may also consider working with your designated delegate to develop any amendment proposals for the 2025 Delegate Assembly.

**Core Purpose (Mission):**

We cultivate excellence in locally-governed school districts.

Core Beliefs:

- The basic life needs of children must be met for them to succeed.
- Meeting the unique educational needs of all students must be the foundation of our school systems.
- The governance of publicly-funded schools must lie with locally-elected and publicly-accountable governing boards.
- The responsibility for student success is shared by students, parents, governing board, district staff and the community.
- Public education funding must be broad-based, stable and at a level that assures all students are successful.
- Knowledgeable and professionally trained governing board members are fundamental for ensuring student success.
- Closing the opportunity and achievement gap is a moral and economic imperative that must be addressed to ensure all Arizona's students are successful.

2026 Draft Political Agenda

Approved by 2025 Legislative Committee

Presented for consideration at the 2025 Delegate Assembly

I) Adequately and Equitably Fund District Schools to the National Median per Pupil Funding

1. Maximize state funding to:
 - a. Provide competitive salaries to attract, recruit, and retain talented teachers and staff;
 - b. increase the pipeline of certified teachers;
 - c. increase the diversity of the teaching workforce, and fill difficult positions, including CTED instructors
2. Provide consistent, dedicated sources of base funding **BASED ON MOST RECENT STATEWIDE COST STUDY** that equips all Arizona public schools with adequate support to address the academic, social and emotional needs of its students including:
 - a. Up to date curriculum, technology, and classroom support to enrich academic success and engagement.
 - b. Student support staff dedicated to enhancing safe and effective learning environments;
 - c. Exceptional student services, gifted students, and early intervention programs;
 - d. Before and after school programs;
 - e. Fine arts education;
 - f. Career and technical education;
 - g. Transportation, **INCLUDING MAINTENANCE AND INCREASED COSTS FOR CTEDS AND RURAL SCHOOLS;**
 - h. Ensure the formula addresses the unique financial needs of schools serving students in poverty and in rural and remote schools;
 - i. Fund distance learning at 100%;
 - j. JROTC.
3. Repeal the constitutional aggregate expenditure limit via legislative referral to the voters.
4. Fully fund full-day kindergarten and include kindergarten students in the override calculations.
5. Preserve and protect the voters' original intent for Propositions 123 and 301. Protect voters' intent in funding K-12 education and oppose legislation that attempts to supplant or divert additional voter-approved funding streams.
6. Index district additional assistance (DAA) funding for inflation.

7. Provide funding for new space before existing schools become overcrowded; advocate for the SFOB to set a standard for replacement of buildings that have exceeded their useful life; advocate for the SFOB to use a professional demographer firm in determining school construction; advocate for capacity standards that reflect the design of instructional space; **INCLUDE FUNDING FOR CAPITAL REPAIRS.**
8. Provide consistent, dedicated and flexible sources of ongoing state capital funding to Arizona public schools to fully maintain and renew physical assets that were built with either local or state taxpayer dollars.
9. Eliminate unfunded mandates and administrative burdens.
10. Protect desegregation funding and return it to a primary tax levy.
- ~~11. Increase funding for exceptional student services based on the cost study, including for rural or remote areas, gifted students, and early intervention programs.~~
- ~~12. Fully fund the cost of student transportation for school bus services and maintenance supporting for CTEDs and rural schools.~~
13. Fully fund preschool programs in the K-12 funding formula for districts that offer preschool.
14. Replace current year funding with a transparent, reliable system that provides districts stable annual budgeting ability and technical reliability.
15. Prorate funding over the entire school year among all schools that a student has attended during the year.
16. Give districts the authority to provide affordable housing options to faculty and staff **BASED ON THE LOCAL HOUSING MARKET.**

II) Preserve, Respect, and Strengthen Local Control

1. Ensure local control and flexibility in managing funds and programs, within the Arizona constitutional requirements of a general and uniform public school system.
2. Change “override/budget increase” language to better reflect what voters are being asked to support. Update requirements associated with school district voter-approved bonds and overrides to improve efficiency and permit more accurate presentations of estimated property tax rates.
3. Allow school districts full flexibility in the divestiture or use of taxpayer-funded assets.
4. Oppose legislative intrusion on school site budgeting decisions.
5. Maintain exclusive local authority over any measure that would propose to consolidate, unify, or restructure school districts.
6. Support local board authority **REGARDING for student suspensions and open enrollment policies based on capacity.**
7. Amend current statute to allow school board members to use the e-equal system in addition to in-person signatures to appear on the ballot.

8. Oppose any legislation that intends to lessen or curtail the legal authority of locally elected school boards, including their authority to approve curriculum.
9. Oppose legislative efforts to ban educational and supplemental materials that provide an inclusive and historically accurate, well-rounded education.
10. Oppose any legislation that seeks to make school board elections partisan.
11. Modify the number of signatures required for CTED board candidates to align with similar school board candidates.

III) Improve Opportunities and Outcomes for All Students

1. Increase the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18 years or the attainment of a high school diploma or GED before the age of 18.
2. Repeal and replace Prop. 203 with research-based bilingual education. Reform English Language Learner models of instruction to increase integration of English Learners and give schools flexibility and resources to administer them.
3. Fully restore 9th and 12th grade CTED funding and allow them to serve students through age 21 regardless of graduation status to expand the window of opportunity students have to complete industry-recognized CTE programs.
4. Support policy that recognizes, respects, and promotes teaching as a profession.
5. Defend against efforts to limit the free speech rights of school employees.
6. Oppose regulations, policies, and restrictions that overburden or unreasonably penalize educators and support staff as they educate and care for students.
7. Redefine the role and purpose of standardized testing and develop meaningful assessments and other measurable outcomes.
8. Support policy that protects school district employees and students from ALL TYPES OF discrimination ~~including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.~~
9. Support legislation and access to funding that would allow school districts to offer school meals to all students free of charge.

IV) Require Public Accountability And Transparency for Taxpayer Dollars Spent on Education

1. Establish financial and academic transparency for all institutions and individuals who accept public funds. Enforce financial audit requirements and seek recovery of improperly received and/or expended funds by individuals, charter and public schools, private schools, and organizations.
2. Repeal any program that gives funds for private schools, vouchers (Empowerment Scholarship Accounts) and private school subsidies (School Tuition Organizations) and prevent any future expansion.

3. Require comparative classroom spending audits for school districts and all other institutions that accept public funds and define “classroom spending” as both instructional spending and student support spending.

~~4. Support policy that encourages all eligible voters to exercise their right to participate in elections.~~

5. INCREASE PUBLIC SCHOOL TAX CREDIT DONATION LIMITS TO MATCH THOSE ALLOWED FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

V) Arizona’s Rural and Remote Schools

1. Ensure that students in Arizona’s small, rural and remote schools are considered by policymakers alongside students in large metropolitan schools.
2. Equitably invest in technology modernization, reliable internet broadband access, technology support capability and professional development.
3. Protect rural and remote school districts from inequitable impact due to formula adjustments, including transportation.

VI) School Safety and Security

1. Provide funding to individual districts to implement locally directed research-based school safety programs and mental health and wellbeing initiatives.
2. Support policy that promotes social-emotional wellness as a critical component of improving social climate, safety and learning for all students and staff.
3. Arizona's school boards call upon all state, federal, tribal and local officials to address the causes and impact of increased self-harm and violence **at K-12 schools IN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES.**
- ~~4. Arizona's school boards call upon all state, federal, tribal and local officials to address the causes and impact of increased gun violence directed at K-12 schools.~~
5. Fund programming to engage and support families and caregivers in culturally relevant and appropriate ways.
6. Develop a more comprehensive harassment/bullying definition and system to better enhance the clarity of understanding and the protection of our youth.

VII) Federal Advocacy

1. Advocate for maintenance and improvement of bus routes on tribal and federal land.
2. Fully fund Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
3. ~~Oppose efforts that would reduce or interrupt~~ **PROTECT** Impact Aid funding and the Secure Rural Schools Program for Arizona school districts that receive it.