

ASBA 2023 Political Agenda

Approved by the ASBA Delegate Assembly, September 10, 2022

The Arizona School Boards Association represents and advocates for the diverse interests of the state's school district governing boards and the approximately 1 million Arizona children whose education is entrusted to their care. ASBA's legislative, regulatory and legal advocacy is based on the association's Political Agenda. A member-developed document, the Political Agenda is discussed, debated and approved by ASBA membership at the annual Delegate Assembly. Every district member board has the opportunity to influence the yearly agenda.

Adequately and Equitably Fund District Schools to at least the National Median per Pupil Funding

- Maximize state funding for competitive salaries to attract, recruit, and retain talented teachers and staff, including support for the AZ ' teacher's academy and efforts to increase the diversity of the teaching workforce, and for difficult to fill positions.
- Revise the School Finance formula to:
 - Provide a stable, dedicated revenue source less reliant on the general fund or annual legislative appropriation.
 - Provide dedicated school capital funding consistent with the constitutional requirement of a general and uniform public school system.
 - Ensure the formula addresses the unique financial needs of schools serving students in poverty and in rural & remote schools.
 - Fund distance learning at 100%
- Amend the Constitutional aggregate expenditure limit to reflect current education funding levels and priorities via legislative referral to the voters.
- Fully fund full-day kindergarten and include kindergarten students in the override calculations.
- Advocate to preserve and protect the voters' original intent of Prop 301. Protect voters' intent in funding K-12 education and oppose legislation that attempts to supplant or divert additional voter-approved funding streams.
- Index district additional assistance (DAA) funding for inflation.
- Provide funding for new space before existing schools exceed their maximum capacity and become overcrowded, and provide dedicated and flexible ongoing maintenance funding, including replacement of buildings that have exceeded their useful life. Advocate for capacity standards that reflect the design of instructional space.
- Eliminate unfunded mandates and administrative burdens.
- Protect desegregation funding and return it to a primary tax levy.
- Conduct an exceptional student services cost study to ensure students, including in rural or remote areas, receive adequate funding for the actual cost of their services, including early intervention.
- Adequately fund the cost of student transportation including adequate maintenance of school bus routes for rural schools.
- Provide full-time funding for preschool programs in the K-12 funding formula.
- Reform current year funding to a system that provides districts with appropriate stable annual budgeting ability and technical reliability.
- Prorate funding over the entire school year among all public schools that a student has attended during the year.
- Give all districts the authority to provide affordable housing options to faculty and staff.

Preserve and Strengthen Local Control

- Ensure local control and flexibility in managing funds and programs, when possible, given the Arizona constitutional requirements of a general and uniform public school system.
- 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.
- Allow school districts greater flexibility in the divestiture or use of taxpayer-funded assets.
- Oppose legislative intrusion on school site budgeting decisions.
- Maintain exclusive local authority over any measure that would propose to consolidate and/or unify any number of school districts into a larger district.
- Support local board authority for student suspensions and to adopt open enrollment policies based on capacity.
- Amend current statute to allow school board members to use the E-Qual system in addition to in-person signatures to appear on the ballot.
- Oppose any legislation that intends to lessen or curtail the legal authority of locally elected school boards including their authority to approve curriculum.
- Modify the number of signatures required for CTED board to align with similar school board candidates.

OUR MISSION IS TO CULTIVATE EXCELLENCE IN LOCALLY-GOVERNED SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

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Improve Outcomes For All Students

- 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.
- Continue reforming English Language Learner models of instruction to increase integration of English Learners and give schools flexibility and resources to administer them. Advocate for the repeal of Prop. 203 and replace it with research-based bilingual education.
- Fully restore 9th and 13th grade CTE/CTED eligibility and funding to increase access to work-based learning and expand the window of opportunity students have to complete industry-recognized CTE programs.
- Allow CTEDs to serve students through age 21 regardless of graduation status.
- Support policy that recognizes, respects, and promotes teaching as a profession.
- Defend against efforts to limit the free speech rights of school employees.
- State standardized testing shall not be used for any purpose other than a year over year measurement of student growth in the tested subject. Rethink and redefine the role and purpose of standardized testing and develop meaningful assessments and other measurable outcomes.
- Support policy that protects school district employees and students from discrimination including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Require Public Accountability for Taxpayer Dollars Spent on Education

- Establish financial and academic transparency for all institutions and individuals that accept public funds.
- Repeal any program that gives public funds for private schools, vouchers (Empowerment Scholarship Accounts) and private school subsidies (School Tuition Organizations) and prevent any future expansion.
- 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.
- Enforce financial requirements and seek recovery of improperly received and/or expended public funds by charter and private schools and organizations.
- Support policy that encourages all eligible voters to exercise their right to participate in elections.

Arizona's Rural and Remote Schools

- Ensure that students in Arizona's small, rural and remote schools are considered by policymakers alongside students in large metropolitan schools.
- Equitably invest in technology and reliable internet access for all students.
- Protect rural and remote school districts from inequitable impact due to formula adjustments.

School Safety and Security

- Provide funding to individual districts to implement locally directed school safety programs as well as student mental health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Support policy that promotes social-emotional wellness as a critical component of improving school climate, safety, and learning for all students and staff.
- Arizona's school boards call upon all state, federal, tribal and local officials to address the causes of increased self-harm and violence at K-12 schools.
- Arizona's school boards call upon all state, federal, tribal and local officials to address the causes of increased gun violence directed at K-12 schools.