



Arizona School Boards Association

2013 POLITICAL AGENDA PRIORITIES

As a governing board, please select the ten (10) legislative action proposals your school district believes are the most important ones for ASBA to pursue in any Special Session on Education and/or in the Fifty-First Legislature, First Regular Session. **PLEASE RETURN TO ASBA BY THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS SEPTEMBER 30, 2012.** They will be compiled to determine ASBA's Top Ten Priorities. Thank you much.

I. ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN AND STUDENT NEEDS

- 1. Encourage, assists and provides adequate financial support of the curriculum and instructional needs of Arizona's public schools to ensure college and career readiness of all students.
- 2. Increase mandatory school attendance requirements until graduation level competency has been reached or until 18 years of age.
- 3. Oppose efforts to undermine the authority of Arizona Interscholastic Association and its members to determine eligibility for student participation in interscholastic activities.
- 4. Fund programs to prepare and support children and families for success in public schools.
- 5. Oppose efforts to curtail communications in a language other than English for students, parents and other constituents and advocate for ADE to publish critical items intended for parent distribution in Spanish as well as English.
- 6. Oppose legislation to require school districts to report or determine the immigration status of students.

II. LOCAL CONTROL/GOVERNANCE

- 1. Advocate for preservation of community governance of school districts through elected representation and oppose federal, tribal, state, county, city or administrative efforts to erode the authority of governing boards.
- 2. Oppose unfunded and burdensome legislative mandates.
- 3. Oppose any effort not initiated by local school districts, through their governing boards or voters, to consolidate or unify school districts.
- 4. Ensure all public schools are funded and governed in a manner consistent with the Arizona Constitution's requirement of a general and uniform public school system, so that substantial disparities in the treatment of schools are not created by the law.
- 5. Oppose legislation that would limit district control of performance pay for teachers under the Classroom Site Fund, while acknowledging statewide best practices as demonstrated by the Performance Pay Task Force.
- 6. Oppose unreasonable differential treatment of school districts with other political subdivisions and governing board members with other elected public officials in matters of general governance, including the open meeting law and public records law.
- 7. Clearly articulate the free speech rights of ASBA, school employees, and school board members regarding elections and school district resources.
- 8. Revise A.R.S. 15-424(D) to allow candidates in an uncontested election, which has been cancelled, to be declared duly elected by the supervisors of that county rather than appointed.
- 9. Change student enrollment laws to allow a school district to honor a disciplinary action of a student from another district when enrolling that student.
- 10. Provide Governing Boards with flexibility in committing and prioritizing the use of education funds.
- 11. Allow the removal of a governing board member for excessive absences at meetings.

- 12. Retain the county school superintendent's statutory authority and the school district governing board's role in appointing governing board members when vacancies occur.
- 13. Provide a school district governing board with the authority to create a process to censure a board member.
- 14. Provide school districts with discretion and flexibility in divestiture of real property

III. ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1. Foster continuous improvement of standards and assessments adopted by the State Board of Education, including the common core.
- 2. Ensure that all schools receiving public funds are equally accountable financially to the public by complying with conflict of interest laws. Further, seek to ensure that charter funding systems are transparent, do not allow comingling of funds, and reverts all public funds and property to the state, if a charter school ceases to operate or loses its charter.
- 3. Advocate for continued local control of school improvement plans created and implemented for underperforming and persistently low performing schools and support other interventions as a last resort.
- 4. Oppose efforts to require verification of free and reduced lunch applications beyond federal guidelines.
- 5. Allow school districts and property owners to reach a solution to the Pesticide Covenant as it relates to new school sites.
- 6. Encourage the Arizona Department of Education to conduct research to determine the N number that is statistically valid.
- 7. Create greater flexibility in procurement policies and procedures.
- 8. Accurately, consistently and fairly measures the academic performance of individual schools and the district as a whole.
- 9. Implement an accurate, statewide data system that enables local districts to use data to inform financial, student, and personnel decision making,

with the cost of implementation to be funded and provided to each district by the state.

- 10. Require that county school superintendents have a teaching, administrative, or superintendent certificate.

IV. TAXATION/REVENUES

- 1. Advocate structural change to Arizona's tax system to ensure adequate funding for public education while opposing any change to the existing property tax structure unless a comprehensive tax reform proposal is implemented to adequately address the needs of public education.
- 2. Oppose any measure that uses state monies to fund private schools including vouchers and empowerment accounts.
- 3. Oppose any action that prohibits local school district governing boards from supplementing state funding and budget provisions through M&O and flexible capital overrides as well as bond authorizations.
- 4. Repeal of private school tax credits while demanding greater financial restrictions and public accountability until such time as repeal is accomplished.
- 5. Clarify A.R.S. 15-915 and require ADE to provide the commensurate state aid revenue to districts that lose assessed value regardless of the cause of the reduction so that there is no loss of revenue to the district.
- 6. Serve to maintain and increase the earnings of the school trust lands for the benefit of K-12 public education.
- 7. Ensure all property owners in the state of Arizona are paying the full qualifying tax rate to support education.
- 8. Oppose, or advocate the repeal of, any measure that requires a supermajority vote to increase state or local revenues.
- 9. Oppose efforts to permanently repeal the state equalization assistance rate.
- 10. Oppose the various Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) legislation.

- 11. Oppose efforts to undercut voter-approved measures.
- 12. Exempt public schools from municipal impact fees.
- 13. Allow school districts an appeals process to seek correction of census estimates.
- 14. Permanently address the Constitutional Aggregate Expenditure Limit formula.
- 15. Advocate for a review of all proposed legislative mandates to ensure any new requirements will have an identified funding stream.
- 16. Provide for direct reimbursement, grants, and/or other incentives to schools for energy efficiencies.
- 17. Modify the current freeze on the acquisition of school sites to allow acquisition of sites from the School Facilities Board or school district on State Trust Land according to the Arizona Constitution highest and best use provision.
- 18. Allow the purchase of equipment with bond money.
- 19. Support state funding for any tax judgments that are due to inaccurate rate settings by a county or state.
- 20. Strike the bond indebtedness limits found in Arizona statutes so that districts may utilize the limits found in Arizona's Constitution.
- 21. Change the designation of "override" elections to "local effort" elections and adjust other language in the law suggesting that these elections provide "extra" funding.
- 22. Advocate for legislation that requires an annual review/revision of travel mileage reimbursement rates.
- 23. Permanently count a kindergarten student as a full student for district override purposes

- 24. Advocate for tax credit opportunities for public schools/districts equal to the eligible amounts for private school tax credits, and advocate for full autonomy to public schools/districts to determine how the funds are used
- 25. Advocate for a freeze on STO private school tax credits, both individual and corporate, until school district payments are current

V. FUNDING

- 1. Advocate for a complete revision of the school finance formula to:
 - a. Reflect the actual costs of the individual educational needs of all students
 - b. Provide for re-evaluation of the school finance formula on a regular basis to adjust the weighting factors as necessary and to compensate for other costs that escalate faster than the GDP-IPD such as: health insurance, property/casualty insurance and utilities
 - c. Provide funding to improve instruction through the use of technology
 - d. Provide for a transportation support level that reflects actual students transported and actual costs
 - e. Provide funding for an extended school year as a local option
 - f. Provide for a funding formula that allows small and/or rural school districts the ability to fund basic school functions and programs such as maintenance, utilities, health music, arts and be competitive with the urban schools for teacher services
 - g. Ensure schools are held harmless for increases in state retirement contribution rates
 - h. Equalization of performance incentive funding for districts across the state
- 2. Address issues related to school capital issues, including minimum building standards, new school construction, building renewal, and soft capital.
- 3. Fund voluntary educational preschool programs and oppose any effort from federal or state bodies or agencies to require preschool in the state of Arizona on a mandatory basis.
- 4. Adequately fund English Language Learners.

- 5. Ensure full funding for inflation, especially in years in which the rate of inflation is greater than 2 percent and vigorously oppose at the legislature and in the courts any attempts to not fully fund at least the 2 percent inflation factor as approved by the voters in Proposition 301 (2000).
- 6. Oppose legislation that takes away district authority to comply with federal desegregation court orders and Office of Civil Rights agreements.
- 7. Oppose any effort to divert Medicaid in Public Schools (MIPS) reimbursement dollars from school districts to the state general fund.
- 8. Oppose any action to discontinue or reduce state and federal funding of career and technical education and Joint Technical Education Districts.
- 9. Oppose any measure that would require a certain percentage of district budgets be allocated to classroom expenditures, as defined by the State Auditor General, with the recognition that some "outside the classroom" expenditures directly benefit classroom learning of students.
- 10. Enable Joint Technological Education Districts (JTEDs) to:
 - a. Promote and expand Career and Technical Education programs, including summer programs for high school students through JTED central campus programs and allow communities wishing to form a JTED to do so following all regulations as required by law and to receive similar funding as existing JTEDs.
 - b. Receive equal recognition and funding benefits under state statutes of K-12 public school districts and Joint Technical Education Districts.
 - c. Revise the definition of a JTED Centralized Campus Model to include virtual campuses.
 - d. Continue to work with the legislature to ensure 100% funding for JTED and full funding for inflation, especially in years in which the rate of inflation is greater than two percent.
 - e. Reinstate 9th grade funding for JTED career and technical education.
 - f. Restore funding from 91.8% to the full 100% formulaic allocation.
- 11. Eliminate the Budget Balance Carry Forward limit in the M&O funding calculation.
- 12. Fund programs that are proven to enhance school safety including, but not limited to, gang and drug prevention programs.

- 13. Move the determination of the construction inflation costs from the Joint Legislative Budget Committee to the School Facilities Board.
- 14. Encourage legislation to provide funding for school districts to cover the cost of elections that are state mandated.
- 15. Seek and support efforts to create a statewide database of digital content to be used in the classroom to enhance student achievement while lowering costs.
- 16. Hold districts harmless for any loss of revenue and to cover transitional costs associated with district approved unification efforts.
- 17. Require the state to pay 100% of the cost of the Structured English Immersion model to districts to implement the program.
- 18. Reenact and fund voluntary, full-day kindergarten.
- 19. Distribute Prop. 301 funds on an unweighted student count versus a weighted student count.
- 20. Remove requirements for public schools to use public school resources to evaluate, test and otherwise serve special education students who are enrolled in private school.
- 21. Fairly allocate ADM with respect to students enrolling in on-line summer school outside their home district

VI. PERSONNEL

- 1. Provide increased funding for school personnel salaries.
- 2. Provide all school districts with 5.5% in revenue to fund a system that promotes or rewards teacher individual performance, including merit pay.
- 3. Oppose any legislation that would further restrict the local board's ability to terminate non-certificated personnel.
- 4. Oppose any legislation to impose mandatory collective bargaining as a method of determining salaries and working conditions for employees.

- 5. Oppose any legislative attempts to reduce the governing board's authority to use lawful forms of affirmative action.
- 6. Prevent the award of unemployment compensation to substitute teachers and other substitute employees.
- 7. Provide that the school district may require medical or psychological examination of an employee by a physician of the board's choosing and at the district's expense.
- 8. Expand existing programs for the provision of instruction from proficient teachers through technological means.
- 9. Provide additional funding to help low income and small rural/isolated schools, as well as for high-need subject areas, to attract and retain highly qualified teachers.
- 10. Allow public colleges and universities to offer a tuition discount to teachers who need to meet the ESEA criteria for becoming "highly qualified" and continue to teach in schools that have a high concentration of economically disadvantaged students.
- 11. Set a mandatory minimum contribution rate for the Arizona State Retirement System that would be based on historical averages and prevent large variant increases or decreases from year to year.
- 12. Encourage the development of a comprehensive professional education certification system to establish an independent Professional Licensing Board.
- 13. Allow for the evaluation of superintendents to be confidential and not public record similar to the A.R.S. 15-537 regarding teacher evaluations.

VII. FEDERAL CONCERNS

- 1. Increase the federal investment in public education to meet the federally-imposed mandates and subsequent cost increases for special education (IDEA) and implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

- 2. Amend the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA):
 - a. Increase the flexibility for states to use additional types of assessments for measuring AYP – including growth models
 - b. Grant states and districts more flexibility in assessing students with disabilities and students not proficient in English for AYP purposes
 - c. Create a student testing participation range, providing flexibility for uncontrollable variations in student attendance
 - d. Allow schools to target resources to those student populations who need the most attention by applying sanctions only when the same student group fails to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the same subject for two consecutive years
 - e. Ensure that students are counted properly in assessment and reporting systems
 - f. Allow supplemental services to be offered in the first year of “improvement,” seek a greater role for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in approving supplemental education service providers, and for LEAs to be able to provide such services even if identified as in need of improvements.
 - g. Strengthen the federal responsibility for funding
 - h. Require ESEA testing and reporting for non-public schools for students receiving Title I services
 - i. Flexibility and expanded authority for states and LEAs
 - j. Seek changes this year, or temporary relief to LEAs from the restructuring sanctions until such time as it is reauthorized
- 3. Urge the Arizona congressional delegation to ensure that adequate federal funds are available to support and sustain federally initiated supplemental programs such as Title 1, Title 2 and gifted programs as well as federally mandated programs and oppose efforts to make these programs into competitive grants.
- 4. Advocate for the full funding for federal impact aid
- 5. Advocate for legislation that funds Secure Rural Schools Act forest fees and payment in lieu of taxes on all federal land on a formula basis whereby a minimum of 50% would be distributed to the public schools in the county.
- 6. Make student/parent collegiate grant and loan programs more accessible and affordable.

- 7. Firmly establish Medicaid responsibility for IDEA activities and direct medical services while recognizing that school-based Medicaid programs are good fiscal policy.
- 8. Ensure that the E-Rate is continued, making advanced telecommunications services affordable for the nation's schools and libraries.
- 9. Defeat all federal voucher and tuition tax subsidy proposals that result in public funds supporting private K-12 institutions.
- 10. Align the Higher Education Act with ESEA to ensure a pool of highly qualified teachers.
- 11. Support developmentally appropriate early education standards for Head Start that are aligned with state academic content standards and reflective of the expectations of local schools.
- 12. Support supplemental federal grants to enhance school district innovation and further student success.
- 13. Advocate Arizona maximize opportunities to receive federal matching monies for all education-related issues.
- 14. Allow classified employees to be hired to fill sports and academic coaching positions and be paid the same stipend as other coaches rather than having to track their hours and be paid hourly.
- 15. Seek federal support and services for high school students at Bureau of Indian Education funded schools for JTED programs equivalent to those provided by the state of Arizona