

2020 Political Agenda

Adopted by the ASBA Delegate Assembly | September 7, 2019

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.

2020 Priority Issues

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

Preserve and Strengthen Local Control

Improve Outcomes for All Students

Require Public Accountability for Taxpayer Dollars Spent on Education

For specific positions related to each priority issue, see page 2.

Guiding the Political Agenda Process



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

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- Maximize state funding for nationally and locally competitive salaries to attract, recruit, and retain talented teachers and staff.
- 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 schools.
- 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.
- Accelerate full restoration of district additional assistance (DAA) funding and index for inflation.
- Provide new school construction funding at actual cost for site acquisition, design, and construction before existing schools exceed their maximum capacity and become overcrowded.
- Eliminate unfunded mandates and administrative burdens.
- Return desegregation funding to a primary tax levy.
- Conduct an exceptional student services cost study to assure students are being funded at the actual cost of their services.
- Adequately fund the cost of student transportation.
- Provide funding for preschool programs.
- 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.
- Provide funding to individual districts to implement locally directed school safety programs as well as student mental health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Invest in technology equitably for all students.
- Adequately fund special education programs.
- Hold harmless all districts from repayment of budget funds occurring from lawsuits involving centrally valued properties

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.
- Maintain board control of all secondary property tax levies for district schools.
- Change "override/budget increase" language to better reflect what voters are being asked to support.
- Allow school districts greater flexibility in the divestiture or use of taxpayer-funded assets.
- Allow districts the option to operate individual schools for 200-day years and increase accompanying funding.
- Oppose legislative intrusion on school site budgeting decisions.
- Maintain local school board authority over any measure that would propose to consolidate and/or unify any school district.
- Support local board authority for student suspensions and open enrollment.
- Support policy that eliminates the use of corporal punishment in Arizona schools.
- Pursue legislation to confirm the confidentiality of school and district safety and security plans, programs, surveys and training.

Improve Outcomes for All Students

- Increase the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18 years.
- Enact research-based reform of the English Language Learner model of instruction that may include primary language literacy to improve student achievement that does not segregate English Language Learners from English speaking peers; integrates reading, writing and oral language instruction; and incorporates multiple assessment measures to demonstrate English proficiency.
- Fully restore 9th grade CTE/CTED eligibility and funding to allow students to explore career fields and/or certification completion.
- 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 chill 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.
- Support policy that protects school district employees and students from discrimination based on 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 (Student 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.
- Require consistency in the recusal of a board member from a decision in which the member or the member's employer stands to benefit financially.
- Enforce financial requirements and seek recovery of improperly received and/or expended public funds by charter and private schools and organizations.