

2021 IASB Legislative Resolutions

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

RESEARCH-BASED INITIATIVES

Supports implementation of initiatives in Iowa's PK-12 education system that:

- Are research-based;
- Are focused on student achievement; and
- Do not "re-purpose" existing education funds.

STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Supports continued progress in the development of rigorous content standards and benchmarks that reflect the real-world knowledge and skills students need to graduate from high school prepared for college or to enter the workforce, including the following state actions:

- Provide and fund technical assistance to help school districts fully implement the Iowa Core Content Standards which define what students should know and be able to do in math, science, literacy, social studies, and 21st Century skills in areas such as financial and technological literacy;
- Continue to improve the implementation of the statewide assessment to ensure alignment to the Iowa Core Content standards and provide the necessary funding and technological capacity for every student to successfully complete the assessment;
- Support research-based professional development that provides educators with training, support and time to work together so that they can successfully teach a rigorous curriculum to all students. Ensure that curriculum decisions about how to teach remain in the hands of local schools and teachers; and
- Include and fund all the components of successful standards systems: assessments aligned to high expectations, improved and aligned instruction and quality professional development.

IASB supports development of model content standards, recommended assessments and professional development supports in additional content areas but opposes expanding accountability, reporting and accreditation requirements in these areas.

PRESCHOOL

Supports continued funding to ensure that all 4 and 5-year-olds have access to the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program.

Supports an increase in funding from the current weighting of 0.5 to 1.0 full-time equivalent to increase the ability of districts to provide services such as full-day programming and transportation to ensure that all 4 and 5-year-olds have the ability to attend the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program.

Districts should be given maximum flexibility to assign costs to the program.

EARLY LITERACY

Supports the continued development of and funding for research on best practices for improving proficiency in early literacy strategies.

Supports continued funding for professional development and classroom intervention strategies focused on implementing best practices for early literacy in grades PK-3.

Supports the continuation of programs currently funded by the early intervention block grant program with flexibility to use those funds for other K-3 literacy programs if approved by the school board.

Supports additional funding for programs designed to ensure that all students meet literacy expectations by the end of 3rd grade.

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ENGLISH LEARNERS

Supports sufficient and on-time funding for English-learners (EL) until the students reach proficiency.

COVID-19 REMEDIATION

Supports additional resources to school districts and AEAs to:

- Identify achievement gaps among individual students that have occurred as a result of COVID-19 breaks in instruction; and
- Provide remediation for all students impacted negatively by loss of instruction due to COVID-19 school closings.

DROPOUT/AT RISK

Supports the inclusion of dropout prevention and funding for at-risk students in the foundation formula and the inclusion of socio-economic status as a factor in determining a student's at-risk status. Supports allowing districts to request additional dropout prevention modified supplemental amount up to the 5% maximum cap. Opposes changes to the compulsory age of attendance unless sufficient funds are provided to implement strategies to retain those students.

MENTAL HEALTH

Supports efforts to establish comprehensive community mental health systems to offer preventative and treatment services and comprehensive school mental health programs that include:

- Increased access for in-school and telehealth services;
- Increased access to mental health professionals via in-person or telehealth visits;
- Creation of a categorical funding stream designated for mental health professionals serving students and ongoing teacher, administrator, and support staff mental health training;
- Equitable reimbursement by Medicaid and private insurers for in-school services;
- Ongoing teacher, administrator, and support staff training to improve the awareness and understanding of child emotional and mental health needs;
- Integration of suicide prevention and coping skills into existing curriculum;
- Expanding state-funded loan forgiveness programs to include mental health professionals who agree to provide services to schools;
- An ongoing mental health resources clearinghouse for schools and community providers; and
- Trainings that include a referral plan for continuing action provided by mental health professionals outside of the school district.

SPECIAL EDUCATION—STATE

Supports predictable and timely state funding to serve students receiving special education services at a level that reflects the actual cost including educational programming and health care costs.

SPECIAL EDUCATION—FEDERAL

Supports federal commitment to fund 40% of the cost of educating students receiving special education services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We urge the federal government to modernize and fully fund IDEA by emphasizing improved outcomes for students with disabilities.

AREA EDUCATION AGENCIES

Supports full funding of the area education agencies to provide essential services in a cost-effective manner to school districts including, but not limited to:

- Special education;
- Technology;
- Professional development;
- Curriculum assessment;

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- Student assessment data analysis
- Teacher training on social-emotional learning and services for students in schools; and
- Creating and maintaining an online platform for students for remote learning.

SCHOOL CALENDARS

Supports the authority of locally elected school boards to determine the school calendar to best meet student needs, including start dates, year-round schools, and other innovations.

EDUCATOR QUALITY

TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Supports adequate resources for research-based programs and strong instructional leadership, including:

- Teacher leadership and development;
- Beginning teacher mentoring programs;
- Quality professional development programs, including those that prepare teachers for online or remote learning strategies; and
- Ongoing and additional cultural competency training.

MARKET-COMPETITIVE WAGES

Supports providing school districts with incentives and the flexibility to pay market competitive wages for shortage area positions, especially in the areas required to meet graduation and Iowa content standards.

BENEFITS

Supports allowing school districts to voluntarily enroll their employees in the state's health, dental and life/long-term disability insurance pools.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT & LICENSURE

Supports additional tools to attract individuals to the teaching profession, especially for teacher shortage areas including:

- Alternative teacher licensure upon completion of research-based teaching pedagogy training in addition to content knowledge in a curricular area;
- Pathways for individuals with non-traditional educational backgrounds to meet licensure qualifications;
- Reciprocity agreements with other states with high-quality education programs so as to increase diversity among our certified teachers and administrators;
- Expansion of programs such as: Teach Iowa Scholar, Troops to Teachers, Teacher Intern Program, and others as approved by the Board of Educational Examiners;
- Programs designed to recruit teachers that will better match the demographic makeup of our student population; and
- Advocate for funding of loan forgiveness programs and grants that will make education careers a viable option.

STAFF REDUCTIONS

Supports giving school districts and AEAs the option to waive the termination requirements in *Iowa Code* Section 279.13 to reduce staff in response to reductions in funding.

LABOR/EMPLOYMENT LAWS

Supports labor and employment laws that balance the rights of the employees with the rights of management, with an emphasis on student achievement and student safety.

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FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND STEWARDSHIP

SCHOOL FUNDING POLICY

Supports a school foundation formula that:

- Provides sufficient and timely funding to meet education goals;
- Equalizes per pupil funding;
- Provides a funding mechanism for transportation costs that reduces the pressure on the general fund and addresses inequities between school districts;
- Includes factors based on changes in demographics including socio-economic status, remedial programming, and enrollment challenges;
- Reflects actual costs for special education services;
- Incorporates categorical funding in the formula within three years; and
- Includes a mix of state aid and property taxes.

SUPPLEMENTAL STATE AID

Supports setting supplemental state aid:

- At a rate that sufficiently supports local districts' efforts to plan, create and sustain world-class schools;
- For FY 2022, by January 29, 2022; and
- For FY 2023 and future budget years, at least 14 months prior to the certification of the school's district budgets.

Setting supplemental state aid within the statutory requirements allows districts to make sound financial decisions on programs and staffing levels in order to provide the best possible education to all students.

IASB supports a formula driven method for establishing the supplemental state aid growth rate if it is not set within the statutory requirements.

BUDGET GUARANTEE

Supports increasing the budget guarantee amount to 3% to provide additional stability to school districts with declining enrollment.

PROPERTY TAXES

Supports holding school districts harmless in property tax restructuring. Supports efforts to minimize property tax disparities created by the additional levy rate without compromising additional resources to school districts. Supports improved transparency and limits on the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) including the following requirements:

- To receive input from all affected taxing bodies before creation of a TIF district; and
- To limit the duration of all TIF districts.

BOND ISSUES

Supports allowing school bond issues to be passed by a simple majority vote.

Supports the authority to levy a combination of property taxes and income surtaxes to pay the indebtedness.

Supports legislation to clarify that revenue bonds do not count toward a 5% statutory debt limit.

SPECIAL LEVY FUNDS

Supports flexibility in the use of special levy funds.

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TAX BASE

Supports an independent, bi-annual cost-benefit analysis of all income, sales or property tax exemptions, credits or deductions. Creation of a new tax credit must undergo an independent cost-benefit analysis. IASB supports elimination of any tax credits that are deemed not effective and redirect any revenue increases from the elimination of those credits to enhance funding for public education.

Supports the legislature having sole authority to make revisions to definitions that impact taxes, restrict future tax bases or provide additional tax breaks that decrease revenue to the state and either directly or indirectly impact tax revenue for schools.

Opposes a constitutional amendment or statewide voter referendum that would limit taxes, spending or local control impacting education.

FRANCHISE FEES

Opposes the imposition of franchise fees on school corporations unless the board of directors agrees to such a fee.

UNFUNDED MANDATES

Opposes mandates that do not provide adequate and direct funding for successful implementation.

GOVERNANCE

LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND DECISION-MAKING

Supports providing local school boards with decision-making authority regarding methods to accomplish desired educational outcomes. IASB opposes overly restrictive or inefficient limitations which inhibit innovation, efficiency, and the ability of school boards to meet local needs. Local accountability and decision-making includes:

- Student Achievement: As locally elected officials, school boards should have the ability to set priorities, customize programming, and maximize community strengths to improve outcomes for all students;
- Accountability & Reporting: Data collection for state accountability should enhance the ability of school boards to focus on student learning and school improvement. IASB supports streamlining state-level reporting on management operations and eliminating duplicative or inefficient reporting processes;
- Funding flexibility: School boards should have the ability to maximize existing resources to meet local needs;
- Transparency: School boards should have flexibility to provide public access to records in ways that promote transparency for citizens while balancing the cost to taxpayers; and
- Flexibility on Health and Safety Emergencies: School boards should have the ability to make decisions, in partnership with local health officials, regarding the health and safety needs of students, staff, families and the community.

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Supports providing the flexibility to expand educational opportunities and choices for students and families. Educational options must remain under the sole authority of locally elected school boards charged with representing community interests and accountability. IASB supports efforts including:

- Investment in magnet and innovation schools; expansion in flexible program offerings; and greater partnerships among schools and community organizations;
- Establishment of charter schools under the direction of the locally elected public school board; and
- Establishment or use of online schools or classes while maintaining per pupil funding.

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Supports opportunities for continued collaboration between public and nonpublic schools; however, the association opposes the use of additional taxpayer funds for the creation of vouchers or educational savings accounts or an increase in tax credits or deductions directed toward nonpublic schools.

ELECTIONS

Supports a minimum of four special election dates per calendar year for bond referendums, votes on levies and revenue purpose statements and filling school board vacancies.

SHARING AND REORGANIZATION

Supports continuation of sufficient incentives and assistance to encourage sharing or reorganization between school districts including the establishment of regional schools. Supports expanding the positions eligible for operational sharing incentives.

HOME SCHOOL REPORTING

Supports requiring parents/guardians home schooling their children without the support of a certified teacher to register with their public school attendance centers.