



# Action Line

IASB Legislative Activity

## 2009 Legislative Session Begins

The 2009 legislative session began Jan. 12 with Democrats in power in both chambers: 56 Democrats and 44 Republicans in the House, and 32 Democrats and 18 Republicans in the Senate. Regardless of your political preferences or your legislators' party affiliations, continuous contact with your legislators will help them make the very best decisions for the students in your district. IASB is here to help you with information, data analysis, position papers, key messages and information about your legislators and their votes. Please contact Margaret Buckton, Mary Gannon or Marte Brightman with any questions, concerns or help with local advocacy efforts. Emily Piper is also a critical part of our lobbying team. We look forward to serving you during the 2009 session!

## Gov's Budget / Allowable Growth

Gov. Culver is planning to release his budget after the transition of presidential leadership, pending federal action on disaster aid and economic stimulus anticipated to impact both Iowa state expenditures and revenues. In the meantime, allowable growth, the amount of authorized education spending per pupil, is the education topic of the day. With no revenue growth and since K-12 education makes up 41 percent of the state's general fund budget, there aren't sufficient resources to deliver the 6 percent allowable growth that school boards prioritized at the IASB Delegate Assembly. Given reduced state revenue estimates and a crippling economic downturn, the state will have limited policy options in funding allowable growth:

- **Set a low allowable growth** for FY 2011, which would be devastating for school districts, resulting in net budget reductions for many. For example, if a one percent allowable growth had been set for FY 2010, 268 of Iowa's 362 school districts would be on the budget guarantee, resulting in a \$39 million increase of property taxes to fund the

budget guarantee. Of those 268 districts, at least 98 would experience net reductions in district budgets under this scenario.

Although the estimates for 2011 will depend on enrollments reported next fall, the impact of low allowable growth is estimated to be similar to the FY 2010 impacts. With little or no ability to control salary, benefits and other educational costs, even districts with increased resources will be cutting programs and staff.

- **Set a 4 percent allowable growth rate**, and fund what the state can afford of the state's contribution, thus creating the spending authority for districts to fund the difference locally. School districts realize that we need to be part of the state's budget solution. This policy option provides the best alternative given the realistic choices.
- **Delay the FY 2011 allowable growth decision for a year**, giving the economic stimulus and infrastructure investments a chance to work. This option is preferable to setting low allowable growth, which would be disastrous for Iowa school districts. There is enough time for district budget planning if the 2010 Legislature sets the allowable growth rate in the first 30 days of the next session.

To find out more about the state budget, allowable growth options and what it will take to connect with legislators in this tough budget year, plan to attend IASB's Legislative Conference on Tuesday, Jan 20. Data comparing allowable growth rates, historical tentative salary agreements and other critical information will be available to help school advocates explain the choices to legislators. We hope to see you there!

## Don't forget! Tuesday is the annual IASB Legislative Conference

Don't miss the 30th Annual IASB Legislative Conference on Jan. 20 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Des Moines. For a detailed agenda and to register, visit the IASB web site: <http://www.iasb.org/EventsTraining.aspx?id=394>. Although pre-registration is encouraged, walk-ins are always welcome. The agenda includes:

- A session on state revenue projections, the bleak state budget forecast, and the future of IASB priority issues;
- A panel of key education committee leaders;
- Viewing of the Presidential Inauguration;
- Lunch followed by a trip to the Capitol;
- Legislative leadership from both chambers.

The following legislators have confirmed their panel participation. If your legislator is among them, it is even more critical that you be on hand to hear their comments, follow up with additional information if they need it and thank them for participating: Sen. Becky Schmitz (D), Rep. Roger Wendt (D), Rep. Jodi Tymeson (D), Sen. Mike Gronstal (D), Sen. Jack Kibbie (D), Sen. Paul McKinley (R), Rep. Pat Murphy (D), Rep. Kevin McCarthy (D) (tentative) and Rep. Kraig Paulsen (R).

## Action Line Keeps You in the Know

IASB's government relations staff follow education legislation through the process, lobby the Legislature and the governor's office concerning your needs, connect you with advocacy tools and keep you regularly informed of happenings at the Capitol.

The **Action Line** is a weekly update of legislation moving through the process. When an issue requires specific advocacy action, we will send you an **Action Network**, which includes everything you need to contact your representatives, senators and the governor on behalf of the students in your district.

**CapitolCast** video clips, new this year, provide timely explanation and advocacy actions you can take. They are available on the Legislative Advocacy page of IASB's Web site. Here is the direct link to today's message from Margaret Buckton, IASB's associate executive director, public policy:

<http://www.iasb.org/LegislativeAdvocacy.aspx?id=6380>.

If you are preparing for local legislative forums, visits to the Capitol, want to write a letter to your local newspaper or just want to talk things over before you call your legislator, we are here to assist you. We encourage your feedback and ideas throughout the session and look forward to working with you during what promises to be a very interesting four months!

## IASB Government Relations Team

Margaret Buckton, [mbuckton@iasb.org](mailto:mbuckton@iasb.org)

Mary Gannon, [mgannon@iasb.org](mailto:mgannon@iasb.org)

Emily Piper, [emily80@mchsi.com](mailto:emily80@mchsi.com)

Marte Brightman, [mbrightman@iasb.org](mailto:mbrightman@iasb.org)

**Delivery Note:** IASB sends you the *Action Line* by the fastest method possible: E-mails are usually sent Thursday evening; the print version is mailed Friday. If you prefer the *Action Line* by a method other than how it's now being sent to you, please contact Marte Brightman at IASB, [mbrightman@iasb.org](mailto:mbrightman@iasb.org), or 1-800-795-4272.

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Des Moines, Iowa  
Permit 2111

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED  
Des Moines, IA 50312-1417  
6000 Grand Avenue  
Iowa Association  
of School Boards

