



Action Line

IASB Legislative Activity

2009 IASB Legislative Conference Report

Nearly 200 local education leaders attended the IASB Legislative Conference on Tuesday, Jan. 20. Click on the following link to view the conference handouts for information on the state budget and IASB legislative priorities: <http://www.iasb.org/RecentPresentations.aspx?id=6400>.

Senate and House leadership and members of the Education Committees participated in panels and answered questions posed by conference attendees. They addressed the state budget, allowable growth and spending authority, protecting the current uses of the state penny for property tax equity and school infrastructure, and other issues important to schools including: flexibility of calendar hours, compulsory attendance age and collective bargaining and teacher termination. There was vocal bi-partisan consensus that the state penny purposes should not be altered and hesitancy on the part of most panelists to consider allowable growth at a per pupil level that the state might not be able to fund in FY 2011. Please thank the following legislators for their panel participation: Sen. Becky Schmitz (D), Sen. Nancy Boettger (R), Rep. Roger Wendt (D), and Rep. Jodi Tymeson (R) on the Education Committee Panel; and Sen. Mike Gronstal (D), Sen. Jack Kibbie (D), Sen. Paul McKinley (R), Rep. Pat Murphy (D), and Rep. Kraig Paulsen (R) for the Senate and House Leadership Panel.

Allowable Growth Pending

Gov. Culver is planning to release his budget by Feb. 1 as required by Iowa law. The Legislature will have 30 days after the governor's budget is released to determine the FY 2011 allowable growth rate. In the meantime, allowable growth, the amount of authorized education spending per pupil, is the education topic of the day. Declining revenue means it will be nearly impossible 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, including, in IASB priority order:

#1 IASB Preference: Set an adequate allowable growth for FY 2011 that covers our increased costs due to settlements and other cost increases and revisit the state's ability to fully fund it as state revenues are clarified down the road.

#2 Delay the FY 2011 decision until the first two months of the 2010 legislative session.

#3 Set a low allowable growth rate for FY 2011, which IASB opposes. See the Jan 15 *Action Line* or today's **CapitolCast** video for more information about IASB's rationale regarding the tough allowable growth choices ahead.

Bill Tracker

Bills on Writing Assessments

HSB 39, HSB 24 and SSB 1016 by DE

These identical bills, requested by the Iowa Department of Education (DE), require the state board of education to establish a statewide writing assessment for student in third, sixth and 10th grades and require districts to begin administering the assessments in the 2010-11 school year. The bills require the assessments to measure specified essential writing skills in the Iowa Core Curriculum, and direct the DE to collaborate with stakeholders on the development of the assessments, create a mechanism for collecting and reporting assessment data and include the results in the next annual Condition of Education Report. IASB supports these bills, in their respective Education Committees.

HSB 4 Disposition of School Property by Wendt (D) and SF 9 by Ragan

These bills reverse changes made in HF 2526 last year, returning to how *Iowa Code* was written prior to the enactment of HF 2526 during the 2008 legislative session. In effect, these bills strike the requirement that school districts wait for 12 months after the decision to

dispose of property, lest a public petition to question the board's decision and take it to a vote surfaces. These bills also delete the definition of "dispose" and "disposition" which was changed in HF 2624 to include exchange, transfer, demolition or destruction of any real or personal property of the school district. IASB supports these bills.

SSB 1012 and HSB 38 Compulsory Attendance Age 17 by DE

These companion bills increase the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 17 years old and require school district prevention measures. The bills require boards to take every opportunity to prevent students from dropping out of school, specify that actions boards may take include but are not limited to, general education interventions, alternative program or alternative school placement, provision of support and supplemental services, individual and family intervention or therapy, truancy mediation, and coordination with other student support services. The bills require that boards make every effort to align and maximize funding streams that support students with potential for dropping out. The bills include unfunded mandate language that any cost incurred be paid by the school districts out of state school foundation aid and are effective July 1, 2010. IASB supports these bills, assigned to their respective Education Committees, and is lobbying for passage of **HSB 3** as a funding mechanism in addition to the per pupil cost received by school districts for students staying in school.

HF 40 Compulsory Attendance Age 17 by Heddens et al and SF 17 by Dandekar et al.

These bills raise the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 17 years old and exempt students receiving competent private instruction (home-schooled). The bills encourage students who reach age 18 on or after Sept. 15 and intend to leave school, to formally file their intent to leave school with the school district or accredited nonpublic school and, to the degree possible, participate in an exit interview and complete a survey that will provide data annually to the DE. The school district or nonpublic school must make every effort to notify the student's parent or guardian of a student's intent to terminate enrollment. As possible, the exit interview must determine the reasons for the student's decision to drop out, discuss actions that could be taken to stay in school, and inform the student of opportunities to continue education in a different environment, including but not limited to adult education and test preparation designed to qualify the student for a high school equivalency diploma (GED). The bill requires districts to convene a working group to review financial and programmatic supports for students affected by the

increase in the compulsory age of attendance and include a plan for addressing the needs of students at risk of dropping out in the comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP.) The bill also requires the DE to convene a working group to review supports for affected students and to consider the necessity of expanding support programs and services, online at-risk academy courses, career academies, current at-risk allowable growth provisions, and full funding of the Instructional Support Levy. The working group must submit a report by Jan.15, 2010.

The provisions relating to the compulsory attendance working groups take effect July 1, 2009, while the remaining provisions take effect July 1, 2010. The bills include unfunded mandate language that any cost incurred be paid by the school districts out of state school foundation aid. The bills are in their respective Education Committees and IASB supports them.

HSB 3 Dropout Prevention Funding by Wendt (D)

This bill increases the number of students a school district can identify as returning dropouts and potential dropouts, from 5 percent to 7 percent of the district's budget enrollment, when the district is requesting to use modified allowable growth to fund dropout prevention programs. IASB supports this bill, assigned to the House Education Committee.

SSB 1009 and HSB 40 PPEL and Management Flexibility by DE

These bills expand the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) to include utility and transportation expenses and the Management Levy to include the cost of transporting students to the list of allowable Management Levy funds. These bills are in their respective Education Committees. IASB opposes these bills for the following reasons:

- The problems of school transportation equity and funding adequacy are not solved by using limited and inequitable property tax levies.
- IASB's resolution on PPEL flexibility specifically requires that the original intent of infrastructure be retained in any expansion.
- IASB opposes any action which would dilute the infrastructure and property tax relief purposes of the state penny newly enacted last July, which also applies to PPEL purposes.

CapitolCast

This week's CapitolCast video clip focuses on allowable growth. View it at this link: <http://www.iasb.org/LegislativeAdvocacy.aspx?id=6380>.

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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@ia-sb.org, or 1-800-795-4272.