



# 2021 IASB Legislative Platform

# 2021 IASB Legislative Beliefs

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## PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public education is the foundation of our democratic society and the key to successful futures for Iowa children. Quality public schools strengthen our communities and are the cornerstone of any sound economic development policy. The state must put public education first and provide sufficient funding and support services. The state should provide full funding to public schools to meet the evolving needs of public school students before additional financial support of nonpublic schools is provided.

All schools that receive any public funds, including property taxes, state aid or federal monies, should be subject to the same governance and educational standards as public school districts.

## EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The promise of public education is for every child to succeed. As locally elected leaders, school boards are uniquely positioned to set expectations for educational equity, ensuring that each child is given supports and interventions based on need. Educational equity requires that discriminatory practices, barriers, prejudices, and beliefs be identified and eradicated. Leaders must hold themselves accountable for deliberate actions, including the examination of policies and practices, intentional allocation of resources according to student need, support for rigorous curriculum and instruction, and engagement of families and communities.

## GOVERNANCE

Iowa has one of the finest public educational systems in the United States. The federal government, governor, General Assembly, Iowa Department of Education, school boards, professional educators and the public should strive to keep it strong. There must be a proper balance of state and federal control designed to ensure quality and a standard of education for all students, with local control which allows local school boards flexibility and decision-making authority to innovate and adapt to local needs and community values.

School districts are governed by boards that, as elected representatives, must be responsive and responsible to the citizens of the school district. Citizen involvement is the key to our representative form of government.

Local boards are, within the guidelines established by state law, vested with the authority to make the final decision on matters pertaining to a school district, area education agency (AEA) or community college. Local board members, who are closely connected to students, families and the communities in which they live, are best capable of understanding student needs and identifying effective solutions. The statutory duties and responsibilities of the local board cannot be delegated to persons who are not elected by the voters of the school district.

Locally elected school boards must have control over the content and management of their educational program, including the calendar and the flexibility for innovation and decision making. A leadership team composed of the superintendent, principals and supervisory personnel working with the board is necessary for the efficient operation of the school district.

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## SCHOOL CHOICE

Iowa law provides sufficient choice through public charter schools, open enrollment, home school assistance, postsecondary enrollment options and nonpublic school alternatives. Additional investments in tax credits for nonpublic tuition or other options are not necessary to provide educational choice.

## SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Through original research and a close evaluation of highly effective board practices across the country, IASB recognizes the following five essential roles of effective school boards and encourages all Iowa board members to incorporate these principles in carrying out the mission of public education in their communities:

- **Setting Clear, High Expectations:** The board sets a vision which expresses a commitment to high expectations, consistently communicates the expectations, sets clear and focused goals and focuses on improving instruction.
- **Creating the Conditions that Support Successful Teaching and Learning:** The board creates the conditions for success by showing commitment via board actions, resource allocations and system alignment; provides quality, research-based professional development for educators; builds commitment and focus throughout the system and stays the course, solving problems along the way so improvements have time to work.
- **Holding the System Accountable for Student Success:** The board uses data and monitoring to hold the system accountable and to make decisions at the board table; identifies clear, understandable indicators that the board will accept as evidence of progress and success; and supports and monitors progress regularly at the board table with staff leaders.
- **Building Collective Will:** Within the school staff and throughout the community, the board creates widespread awareness and urgency of the improvement required to meet students' needs, instills hope that it's possible to change, and connects with and engages the community in a frank and ongoing effort to encourage each facet to fulfill its responsibility.
- **Learning Together as a Board/Superintendent Team:** The board establishes board learning time around school improvement efforts, engages in deep conversations about the implications of learning, builds a trusting and supportive relationship with the superintendent, and leads thoughtful policy development.

## ELECTIONS

Participation in the democratic process is integral to the success of schools. School districts have a responsibility for promoting more community involvement in the election process to foster better-informed citizens and greater ownership in public education. Student achievement should drive decisions that impact school elections.

In keeping with the principles of democracy, IASB is committed to the concept of each vote having equal value and a simple majority vote as sufficient to determine election or taxation decisions.

School board elections should coincide with the opening of school. Due to boundary differences and to help maintain the nonpartisan status of school board elections, they should be separate from any other election.

School board members should be elected in a nonpartisan manner in which decisions are based on the best interest of the school and students without regard to party affiliation. Boards should have less than a majority of board members elected in any one year.

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School boards should have flexibility to determine when special elections are necessary and to schedule these to best suit the district's needs.

## IOWA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

IASB is committed to statewide leadership to ensure high achievement for all Iowa students. IASB recognizes that school boards are in a strategic position to bring about continuous improvement in public education through governance, public policies and advocacy.

We believe that IASB is the organization most appropriate to deliver training and board development to school board members about their role and responsibilities to contribute to high student achievement.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

School boards, and the residents of the school districts involved, have the primary responsibility to determine the makeup and boundaries of school districts and attendance centers.

The school board and the citizens of a school district assess the quality and extent of its educational program and determine whether the school district continues to operate within its present geographical boundaries.

In order to reduce costs and maintain or enrich a quality public education, IASB encourages school districts to share administrators, teachers, equipment, facilities and transportation, including the scheduling of joint classes and extracurricular activities. Sharing does not necessarily lead to eventual reorganization.

IASB believes school district reorganization, dissolution or sharing may be appropriate when:

- The best interest of students is the most important factor considered.
- The reorganization or dissolution is voluntary—initiated and voted upon by the citizens of the school districts involved.
- The state offers sufficient incentives to make the reorganization or sharing financially attractive to the school districts involved.
- Geographical issues are considered, including minimizing the amount of travel time by students and allowing for continued community participation by the communities involved.

## PUBLIC RECORDS AND OPEN MEETINGS

The schools belong to the people—the citizens and taxpayers of the school district. The public has the right to know what decisions are being made regarding the education of their young people and the expenditure of their tax dollars. School districts should have the ability to determine the method of public notice dissemination that maximizes public access to records at a minimal cost to the district.

Although it may not always be easy to publicly consider and discuss some of the tough issues confronting school boards, school boards should be responsive to the open meetings and public records policy established in state law. Compliance with the intent of the public records and open meetings law is best achieved through education, training and consistent enforcement.

Every citizen has the right to examine and copy all public records. The news media may publish public records, unless the law expressly limits the right or requires public records to be kept confidential.

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## SCHOOL FUNDING

School finance decisions, whether at the local, state or federal level, should put student achievement first in all decisions. Iowa's school funding system must provide all Iowa children an equal opportunity to a quality public school education. The funding system must recognize that a high-quality public education is the first and foremost economic engine of our state.

A sufficient funding system provides equitable, sufficient, predictable and timely funding, based on these foundational principles:

**Equity:** Iowa should fund public education with a student-driven formula, ensuring Iowans that the education of each student is supported equitably. The formula must provide sufficient revenue to cover the actual cost of the educational program, including on-time funding for districts experiencing increasing enrollment. The state should allow school districts with declining enrollment to maintain sufficient funding so the school district can adjust operations to meet student needs. The state should minimize the disparity for property taxpayers due to variances in property valuation per pupil.

**Excellence and Opportunity:** School finance must provide for continuous improvement of classroom instruction and promote excellence. A critical attribute of increasing the achievement of all children is the skill level of teachers and administrators in the school. Therefore, the school funding system must provide for the professional training and development of teachers and administrators, and school improvement that will promote Iowa as a national leader in public education.

**Stability:** The school funding system must continue to be a fair balance between property taxes, which are a stable and reliable revenue source, and other revenue sources. Iowa school boards are grateful for categorical funds but encourage the state to provide resources through the funding formula to maximize local flexibility and provide growth through an equity-based system. School districts should have spending authority for any reduction in state funding.

**Efficiency:** A diverse system of school finance helps schools control costs. To ensure well-managed and efficient schools, the school funding system must encourage cooperative ventures and the pooling of resources and services. The school funding system must address increased costs due to inflation and other economic factors.

**Local Control:** State funding must support local control. Locally elected school boards should have the authority to utilize and allocate funding to best meet the needs of students. If the state decides to intervene in local education policy, any mandated changes, particularly those taking energy and focus away from real comprehensive school improvement and student achievement, must be fully funded by the state without a shift from other education resources.

## SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

The state has a role to ensure that all Iowa public school students have equitable access to high-quality educational programs, provided in safe, efficient, accessible, and technology-ready facilities that promote student learning.

Revenues from the Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE) fund provide school districts with a stable, long-term, and equitable funding stream for infrastructure purposes and should not be negatively altered or discontinued.

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Existing, allowable uses of SAVE funds should not be changed to limit their use or impose additional requirements on the local decision-making process of school boards.

## EDUCATION'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Growth focused on economic stability, wealth creation, entrepreneurship and knowledge-based enterprises is a vital objective for the state of Iowa. Our public schools contribute to the growth of Iowa's economy through the education and development of our children and by providing good jobs. Our public school districts are often the largest employer in many Iowa communities.

A quality public education system is both a key factor contributing to Iowa's quality of life and is a critical attractor of business to Iowa. While education contributes to Iowa's economy, it is also dependent upon economic growth for securing sufficient financial resources to provide quality education services.

Public education and economic growth are interdependent. It is therefore imperative that Iowa invest in viable and sustainable economic development and foster partnerships between education and the private sector.

Collaboration between public schools and the business community can enhance students' knowledge of career paths and future employment opportunities.

## EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

It is the responsibility of local school boards to ensure that all students are educated for success in a 21st-century global society. Collaboration between PK-12 and postsecondary institutions should be encouraged to help increase student opportunities.

School boards must ensure that their district operates from clear, measurable student learning standards and improvement goals; sufficient resources are allocated to improve instruction; and there is public accountability for improved results for students.

It is appropriate for the state to establish high and rigorous educational standards for the accreditation of public and nonpublic schools. Standards should be designed to ensure that all students have the opportunity to receive the educational program that meets their needs. The students of Iowa who attend public and nonpublic schools should receive their education instruction from licensed teachers and properly accredited instructors. All public school accreditation standards must also be applied to nonpublic schools.

Data collection and reporting is necessary to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Data collection and reporting is valuable when:

- It is possible to accurately determine student achievement gains, gaps between subgroups and level of attainment for all students;
- Purposes are clearly understood and worthy;
- Assessments are aligned with the intended purposes;
- Results are easily accessible to maximize school district use of the information to provide quality professional development and improve instruction; and,
- Results lend themselves to widespread understanding and evaluation by all school stakeholders.

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The state or federal government must not use single-source data to issue sanctions, make generalizations about student performance or shift resources away from schools that require support to improve learning.

Iowa school districts should have the opportunity to comply with standards using various structures and mediums, including sharing and interactive telecommunications.

IASB supports assessment systems that measure student growth for all students, also known as value-added growth or gain, to improve student outcomes by driving professional development, teacher and administrator evaluation, and school improvement decisions.

## EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

Technology is an important tool in providing a quality public education. School districts must have equitable access to technology. Access includes provision of hardware and software, technological support staff and access to a variety of Internet, broadband and network services including the Iowa Communications Network (ICN).

Home-based learning highlights an ongoing inequity for students who lack adequate broadband internet access. As the learning environment shifts, all students should have high-quality access to the internet. The state plays a critical role in improving high-speed broadband required for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

Administration of the ICN should continue to prioritize educational access above other users. The state has a role in ensuring equitable access to technology and should provide sufficient resources to purchase technology, support school technology plans and include professional development for educators on how to use technology to improve instruction and student outcomes.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

Exposure to early childhood education for all children in the first years of life is critical to increase student achievement and close potential education gaps. Young children have an innate desire to learn and children who participate in high-quality preschool programs are less likely to fall behind and more likely to graduate and attend a post-secondary institution. That desire can be supported or undermined by early experiences.

High-quality early childhood education promotes intellectual, language, mathematical, physical, social, emotional and creative development, cultivates a child's curiosity and desire to learn, and builds a strong foundation for later academic and social success. The state plays a critical role by defining and investing in quality early childhood education programs.

## STUDENTS

All students can achieve at high levels when the state, local school boards and communities provide resources, supports, and an environment to ensure each child's success in school. It is the responsibility of school boards to meet the needs of every student. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians and communities to work collaboratively with school districts to meet the needs of every student.



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## SCHOOL SAFETY

IASB believes that schools must be a safe environment for all students, staff and visitors.

Each member of the school and community must take a holistic approach to school safety by providing schools with resources, quality leadership, and united support for the development of a locally determined approach to ensure a safe and secure learning environment for all children. IASB supports a comprehensive view of safety that considers threats such as:

- Crime and violence;
- Hazards such as natural disasters or accidents;
- Health risks such as pandemics; and
- Internal threats such as bullying, unintentional biases and adverse childhood experiences.

Security planning efforts must include prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and response efforts. These planning efforts must be practiced, evaluated and updated on an ongoing basis. All individuals in the school community must be well-trained and knowledgeable of the best practices in school safety.

While all members of the school community benefit from accurate and timely information on safety efforts, school boards must have the authority to maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality to protect security plans and measures.

## TEACHER QUALITY

IASB believes, and research confirms, that teacher quality is the most important factor in determining a child's academic success.

It is the responsibility of the school board through the superintendent and administrators to ensure teachers in their district are qualified for the job they are hired to do. School boards have the authority to set high performance standards and expect demonstrated academic and instructional excellence from their teachers.

Therefore, boards need to ensure teachers, as a part of their job, continuously and collaboratively study content, instruction and the effect on students based upon identified student needs.

It is a board responsibility to expect and confirm that the district is fully implementing the Iowa Core Standards and Iowa Professional Development Model for the purpose of improving instruction measured by improved student achievement.

Quality teaching is essential to high student achievement. In order to recruit the best and the brightest teachers into Iowa and the profession, keep the best and the brightest teachers we now have, and increase respect for the profession that most impacts our children's future, IASB strongly advocates for school funding levels sufficient to pay competitive wages. In addition, IASB believes school boards must focus on ensuring a school culture that supports engaging educators in decision making, providing teachers with leadership opportunities and professional development, and exploring compensation and evaluation systems designed to enhance performance and retention.



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## EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND LICENSURE

IASB supports improved alignment between teacher preparation and the PK-12 education systems. Preparation programs should be evaluated continually with the objective of providing training that reflects innovative and proven education methods designed to assess and maximize student achievement. Student needs must drive preparation programs. School boards, teacher preparation institutions, and the state must cooperate to ensure teachers obtain the knowledge and skills they need to teach to ensure all children can learn. Educators should be prepared to effectively teach the wide variety of students in Iowa classrooms. All Iowa educators must have the appropriate licensure, endorsements and accreditation from the board of educational examiners.

## PERSONNEL EVALUATION

School employees must be accountable for raising student achievement. An objective evaluation of all employees, performed on a regular basis, benefits the employee and the community and assists students in obtaining a quality public school education. IASB supports the right of school boards to exercise their authority to set standards of performance and establish rules of conduct for all employees.

Administrators or their designees must have the authority and resources to evaluate personnel whom they supervise.

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Positive labor relations enhance the ability of employees and school boards to work together for improved student achievement. Ideally, collective bargaining should end in a voluntary settlement between parties.

School boards should be guaranteed sufficient management rights necessary to operate the school district efficiently and effectively.

The results of collective bargaining should be to:

- Advance excellence and equity in public education with the outcome of improved student achievement for all.
- Reflect sound research and proven best practices with a demonstrated positive impact on improving student achievement.
- Promote accountability by all for improved student outcomes.
- Include a regular evaluation of the impact of changes on student achievement.
- Preserve the constitutionally protected due process rights of school boards.
- Promote safe, healthy, effective and respectful work environments for students and staff.

## BENEFITS

It is important to establish employee benefits necessary to attract and retain qualified employees. Benefits paid and contribution rates should maintain the actuarial soundness and affordability of employee benefit programs.

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Unemployment compensation benefits should be reserved for those who experience sudden and unexpected job loss. It should not be extended between academic terms to employees who have contracts for less than 12 months or who have reasonable assurance of continued employment.

Substitute employees should not be eligible for unemployment compensation.

School district employees whose employment is terminated because of a reduction or realignment of staff, or for other reasons that would qualify them for unemployment compensation benefits, should be eligible to receive such benefits on the same basis as employees in private sector employment.

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A State Board of Education, made up of laypersons, determines and adopts necessary rules and regulations for the proper enforcement and execution of the provisions of school laws, and adopts and prescribes standards for carrying out the provisions of the school laws. The State Board of Education must seek advice and counsel from a broad range of citizens and educational organizations in the formulation of rules and policies.

The Department of Education (DE) plays a significant role in facilitating school improvement efforts and supporting school districts, area education agencies and community colleges.

The DE should cooperate with IASB, area education agencies, community colleges, the federal government and state to streamline requests for information.

The DE should consider other student achievement measures, such as value-added or growth measures, for all students, in defining and negotiating the Iowa plan for school district compliance with federal requirements.

By its very nature, the DE is a state regulatory agency; however, Congress and the General Assembly should carefully consider the number and size of the regulatory tasks assigned to the DE and financially support the tasks assigned, including the provision of sufficient staff.

## AREA EDUCATION AGENCIES

Area education agencies (AEAs) are highly important in helping develop curriculum. AEA assistance to local schools in the areas of emerging technology, professional development and curriculum assessment is of vital importance to assist schools with the mandates of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

AEAs are established to provide school districts with specified services in special education, media and other educational areas. Apart from special education, the Legislature and the Department of Education must not require these agencies to perform services that are regulatory in nature.

AEAs must retain their primary function as support agencies for local school districts, including developing and delivering services and programs to support local school improvement plans.

School improvement is a key strategy to meeting economic, political and societal needs. AEAs can assist public schools with career development and transitions to facilitate business/community collaborations offering further opportunities for students.

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The governance structure of AEAs must continue to be tied closely to PK-12 public school districts with students who receive the benefits of AEA services. AEAs should not be merged with community colleges. Directors of PK-12 school boards should continue to elect AEA directors.

AEAs should be assured of equitable, consistent and timely funding and receive adequate funding for mandated programs and services.

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Community colleges are an integral part of public education and are strong partners with PK-12 schools in the delivery of career and technical education and of enhanced educational offerings at the high school level through concurrent enrollment. As such, they must be funded by both state and local sources in a consistent and equitable manner.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Generally, IASB opposes a centralization of decision making on local and state educational issues in the federal bureaucracy and the United States Congress. Iowa citizens have the ability and desire to make decisions affecting the education of their young people. IASB urges Congress, the President of the United States and the U.S. Department of Education to support local control of school districts, continue the commitment to local flexibility, and reward local efforts to improve student achievement. If the federal government decides to intervene in state and local education policy, any mandated changes, particularly those taking energy and focus away from real comprehensive school improvement and student achievement, must be fully funded by federal dollars without a shift from other education resources.

Iowa schools should receive the federal commitment to help with the cost of educating students with special education needs combined with the federal support equal to other states, based on student needs, to maintain our level of educational excellence. The federal government should not impose intrusive or unnecessarily restrictive or prescriptive laws governing our community schools.

# 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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;
- Student assessment data analysis

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- 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.

# 2021 IASB Legislative Resolutions

## 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.

# 2021 IASB Legislative Resolutions

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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.

# 2021 IASB Legislative Priorities

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## 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.

## 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.

## 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

# 2021 IASB Legislative Priorities

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- 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.

## 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.