

2007 ASBA POLITICAL AGENDA PRIORITIES

As a governing board, please select the ten (10) legislative action proposals your school district believes are the most important ones for ASBA to pursue in any Special Session on Education and/or in the Forty-Eighth Legislature, First Regular Session. Please bring this packet to your county meeting so that you can fill in your district's priorities. They will be collected and compiled to determine ASBA's Top Ten Priorities. Thank you much.

I. ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN

1. Support legislation or initiatives that will fund programs for children and their families.
2. Oppose efforts to curtail communications, not including instruction, in a language other than English for students, parents and other constituents and advocate for ADE to publish critical items intended for parent distribution in Spanish as well as English.

II. STUDENT NEEDS

1. Seek legislation that adequately encourages, assists and financially supports the curriculum and instructional needs of Arizona's public schools.
2. Seek legislation to increase mandatory school attendance requirements until graduation level competency has been reached or until 18 years of age.
3. Oppose efforts to undermine the authority of Arizona Interscholastic Association and its members to determine eligibility for student participation in interscholastic activities.
4. Seek legislation that would include meaningful requirements and qualifications for home schooling students including an educational plan based on state standards. Included in the legislation would be provisions for enforcement of registration requirements.
5. Oppose any legislation that would limit the access of any students to educational opportunities based on citizenship status of the student or his/her parents or guardians.

III. LOCAL CONTROL/GOVERNANCE

1. Advocate for preservation of community governance of school districts through elected representation and oppose any efforts to erode the authority of governing boards.
2. Oppose any unfunded legislative mandates and advocate for the removal of overly restrictive regulations.
3. Support only those unification or consolidation efforts that: are initiated by the local school districts, protect the rights of local school district electors to make the final decisions on unification and/or consolidation of schools districts, provide adequate funding to cover all costs with unification or consolidation and hold district harmless for any loss of revenue.
4. Support legislation that ensures that all public schools, including charter schools, operate on a "level playing field" and are funded and governed in a manner

consistent with the Arizona Constitution's requirement of a "general and uniform public school system."

5. Support legislative authorization for a school district to adopt and operate under a home rule charter that requires a vote of the school district electorate for implementation.
6. Oppose legislation that would further limit district control of performance pay for teachers under Proposition 301.
7. Advocate for repeal of the Local Education Accountability Program.
8. Seek legislation to clarify that the School Facilities Board does not have statutory authority to override decisions of the locally elected school district Governing board that is acting on behalf of the citizens and students of the entire school district.
9. Advocate the consistent treatment of school districts with other political subdivisions and governing board members with other elected public officials in matters of general governance and public accountability.
10. Support changes to law regarding elections and school district resources that clearly articulate free speech rights of both school employees and school board members.
11. Advocate for repeal of a provision found in 15-424(D) that allows the County Board of Supervisors to cancel an election for school board if the number of candidates that file are equal to or less than the number of positions to be decided in a general election.
12. Oppose efforts by tribal governments to assume authority that now rests with school district governing boards.

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Advocate local, lay control of public schools through the election of school boards and resist attempts, at either the state or federal level, to weaken this local, democratic method of accountability.
2. Seek legislation that requires governing board member training in such areas as the open meeting law, procurement code, public service, public school governance, student achievement, curriculum and finance and that requires the state to reimburse the school district for the cost of the training.
3. Support the continued re-evaluation and refinement of the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards.
4. Seek legislation to ensure that all charter schools are accountable, both financially and in their governance structure, to the public.
5. Advocate for legislation requiring the development of an awards system for schools that are identified as excelling, highly performing or performing.
6. Seek legislation to continue the removal of site based accounting requirements for reporting to the State.
7. Seek legislation to allow for streamlining and centralizing the reporting process for public school districts.
8. Advocate for the adoption of a single software package for student accounting and data collection (ADM, address, phone, etc.) for the entire state of Arizona, the cost of implementation to be funded and provided to each district by the state.

9. Seek legislation that would support AIMS testing for graduation while providing an alternative route that is educationally credible.
10. Advocate for testing that evaluates English Language Learners appropriately to ascertain the level of proficiency for these students and make recommendations for intervention programs.
11. Oppose AIMS as a graduation requirement for English Language Learners until such time as the funding and consent items in *F/ores v. Arizona* have been implemented.
12. Advocate for continued local control of school improvement plans created and implemented for underperforming schools.
13. Support efforts to allow special needs students to be calculated separately for AZ Learns school accountability profiles.
14. Oppose efforts to require verification of free and reduced lunch applications beyond federal guidelines.
15. Advocate a change to the Arizona Constitution to state that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction meets the same qualifications as all other local school district superintendents and that the Superintendent of Public Instruction be employed by the State and appointed by the Arizona State Board of Education.

V. TAXATION/REVENUES

1. Advocate structural change to Arizona's tax system through legislation or initiative to support a competitive business climate and funding for public education and other child support services and oppose any change to the existing property tax structure unless a comprehensive tax reform proposal is implemented to adequately address the needs of public education.
2. Seek legislation expanding authority of governing boards to directly seek, obtain and expend funds from local, federal, philanthropic and/or nonprofit corporate sources for special projects or educational programs.
3. Oppose any legislation that prohibits local school district governing boards from supplementing state funding and budget provisions through M&O and flexible capital overrides as well as bond authorizations.
4. Oppose any legislation that results in the direct or indirect use of public funds to support private schools.
5. Seek legislation to clarify A.R.S. 15-915 and require ADE to provide the commensurate state aid revenue to districts that lose assessed value regardless of the cause of the reduction so that there is no loss of revenue to the district.
6. Support legislative or initiative efforts that would serve to maximize the earnings of the school trust lands.
7. Support legislation to ensure all property owners in the state of Arizona are paying the full qualifying tax rate to support education.
8. Support legislation that allows the use of M&O interest for current year budget increases for technology maintenance and training.
9. Oppose any measure that would require a two-thirds vote or supermajority to increase state or local revenues.

10. Advocate for an investment strategy that maximizes the growth, with an appropriate level of risk, of proceeds from State Trust lands.
11. Advocate that ARS 9.500.1 8 needs to be changed to remove “This prohibition does not include fees assessed or collected for streets and water and sewer utility functions.”
12. Oppose Conserving Arizona’s Future initiative.

VI. FUNDING

1. Advocate a complete revision of the school finance formula.
2. Seek legislation to provide for a comprehensive study on transportation funding and implement the study recommendations.
3. Seek legislation that addresses issues related to the implementation of Students FIRST.
4. (oops -- didn’t catch this before going to print)
5. Oppose any efforts to legislate school-by-school funding with the result that governing boards cannot meet district-wide obligations or equitably distribute funds where needed.
6. Support full funding for all-day kindergarten and/or preschool including, specifically, all necessary capital costs.
7. Support legislation that would assist districts declining at a rate of less than 5% over consecutive (2% or more) years to have the same fiscal assistance as those with a 5% or more decline in one year.
8. Seek legislation for full funding for English Language Learners including the funding necessary for the implementation of the consent order as agreed to by the State of Arizona in the settlement of the *F/ores v. Arizona* case.
9. Continue to work with the legislature to ensure full funding for inflation, especially in years in which the rate of inflation is greater than two percent.
10. Oppose legislation that takes away district authority to comply with federal desegregation court orders and OCR agreements.
11. Seek legislation to fully fund excess utility cost inside the RCL.
12. Oppose any effort to divert Medicaid in Public Schools (MIPS) reimbursement dollars from school districts to the state general fund.
13. Advocate for the continuation of funding vocational education at both the State and Federal level.
14. Support legislation that maintain M&O funding requirements as ratified by the passage of Prop. 301.
15. Oppose any measure that would require a certain percentage of district budgets to be allocated to classroom expenditures, as defined by the Auditor General, with the recognition that some “outside the classroom” expenditures directly benefit classroom learning of students.
16. Seek legislation to increase the number of days used in the transportation support level calculation to 180 days from the current 175 to reflect the change in instructional days as required by ARS 15-341.01.
17. Support legislation to promote and expand Career and Technical Education programs, including summer programs, for high school students through Joint Technological Education Districts (JTED’s) central campus programs and allow

communities wishing to form a JTED to do so following all regulations as required by law.

18. Encourage legislation to adopt the strategies identified in the recently completed "Lead with Five" study.
19. Seek legislation to eliminate the Budget Balance Carry Forward limit in the M&O funding calculation.
20. Support funding of programs that are proven to enhance school safety.
21. Seek and support legislation to extend free public education in Arizona through grade 14.
22. Support legislation that would move the determination of the construction inflation costs from the Joint Legislative Budget Committee to the School Facilities Board.
23. Advocate for full state funding of ASRS employer contribution increases.

VII. PERSONNEL

1. Seek legislation that provides increased funding for teachers' salaries.
2. Seek legislation providing all school districts with 5.5% in revenue to fund a career ladder program or other locally-determined professional development program.
3. Oppose any legislation that would further restrict the local board's ability to terminate non-certificated personnel.
4. Oppose any legislation to impose mandatory collective bargaining as a method of determining salaries and working conditions for employees.
5. Support legislation that encourages recruitment of minority or ethnically diverse students into the teaching profession.
6. Oppose any legislative attempts to reduce the governing board's authority to use lawful forms of affirmative action.
7. Seek legislation that prevents the award of unemployment compensation to substitute teachers and other substitute employees.
8. Seek legislation providing that the school district may require medical or psychological examination of an employee by a physician of the board's choosing and at the district's expense.
9. Seek legislation to relieve school districts of the duty to hire a teacher who chooses to leave the district to teach in a charter school and later wishes to return to the district.
10. Advocate that the Legislature revise A.R.S. 15-544 to allow non-continuing certified staff to be recalled from a reduction in force not solely based upon seniority.
11. Expand existing programs for the provision of instruction from proficient teachers through technological means such as interactive classes, video, video-conferencing, or computerized, on-line classroom settings to offset shortages in prioritized areas of math, science, reading and languages, in multiple school districts.
12. Support legislation that provides incentives for teachers to delay retirement.
13. Encourage legislation to provide for signing bonuses to help low income and small rural/isolated schools attract and retain highly qualified teachers based on

the percentage of students participating in the free- or reduced- lunch program and/or the school designation as a small rural/isolated school.

14. Encourage legislation which allows public colleges and universities to offer a tuition discount to teachers who need to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) criteria for becoming “highly qualified” and continue to teach in schools that have a high concentration of economically disadvantaged students.
15. Promote legislation to give school boards flexibility when notifying certificated employees of non-renewal of employment contracts.
16. Support comprehensive legislation to revise employee discipline and termination laws.
17. Seek legislation that would set a mandatory minimum contribution rate for the Arizona State Retirement System that would be based on historical averages and prevent large variant increases or decreases from year to year.
18. Encourage the development of a comprehensive professional education certification system to establish an independent Professional Licensing Board.
19. Encourage legislation to strike the requirement of a videotape after two (2) years of teaching to determine eligibility for a standard teacher certificate.