

# ASBA 2024 Political Agenda

Approved by the ASBA Delegate Assembly, September 10, 2023

The Arizona School Boards Association represents and advocates for the diverse interests of the state's school district governing boards and the approximately 1 million Arizona children whose education is entrusted to their care. ASBA's legislative, regulatory and legal advocacy is based on the association's Political Agenda. A member-developed document, the Political Agenda is discussed, debated and approved by ASBA membership at the annual Delegate Assembly. Every district member board has the opportunity to influence the yearly agenda.

## Adequately and Equitably Fund District Schools to at least the National Median per Pupil Funding

- Maximize state funding for competitive salaries to attract, recruit, and retain talented teachers and staff, increase the pipeline of certified teachers, increase the diversity of the teaching workforce, and for difficult to fill positions.
- Provide consistent, dedicated sources of base funding that equips all Arizona public schools with adequate support to address the academic, social and emotional needs of its students, including:
  - Up to date curriculum, technology, and classroom support to enrich academic success and engagement.
  - Student support staff dedicated to enhance safe and effective learning environments;
  - Exceptional student services, gifted students, and early intervention programs;
  - Before and after school programs;
  - Arts education; and
  - Transportation.
  - Ensure the formula addresses the unique financial needs of schools serving students in poverty and in rural & remote schools.
  - Fund distance learning at 100%
- Repeal the constitutional aggregate expenditure limit via legislative referral to the voters.
- Fully fund full-day kindergarten and include kindergarten students in the override calculations.
- Advocate to preserve and protect the voters' original intent of prop 301. Protect voters' intent in funding k-12 education and oppose legislation that attempts to supplant or divert additional voter-approved funding streams.
- Index district additional assistance (DAA) funding for inflation.
- Provide funding for new space before existing schools exceed their maximum capacity and become overcrowded and provide dedicated and flexible ongoing maintenance funding, advocate for the SFOB to set a standard for replacement of buildings that have exceeded their useful life; advocate for capacity standards that reflect the design of instructional space.
- Eliminate unfunded mandates and administrative burdens.
- Protect desegregation funding and return it to a primary tax levy.
- Formalize the exceptional student services cost study to determine and provide adequate funding levels, including for rural or remote areas, gifted students, and early intervention programs.
- Adequately fund the cost of student transportation including adequate maintenance of school bus routes for CTEDs and rural schools.
- Provide full-time funding for preschool programs in the k-12 funding formula.
- Replace current year funding with a system that provides districts appropriate stable annual budgeting ability and technical reliability.
- Prorate funding over the entire school year among all public schools that a student has attended during the year.
- Give all districts the authority to provide affordable housing options to faculty and staff.

## Preserve and Strengthen Local Control

- Ensure local control and flexibility in managing funds and programs, given the Arizona constitutional requirements of a general and uniform public school system.
- Change "override/budget increase" language to better reflect what voters are being asked to support. Update requirements associated with school district voter-approved bonds and overrides to improve efficiency and permit more accurate presentations of estimated property tax rates.
- Allow school districts full flexibility in the divestiture or use of taxpayer-funded assets.
- Oppose legislative intrusion on school site budgeting decisions.
- Maintain exclusive local authority over any measure that would propose to consolidate and/or unify any number of school districts into a larger district.
- Support local board authority for student suspensions and to adopt open enrollment policies based on capacity.
- Amend current statute to allow school board members to use the e-equal system in addition to in-person signatures to appear on the ballot.
- Oppose any legislation that intends to lessen or curtail the legal authority of locally elected school boards including their authority to approve curriculum.
- Oppose legislative efforts to ban educational and supplemental materials that provide an inclusive and historically accurate, well-rounded education.
- Modify the number of signatures required for CTED board to align with similar school board candidates.

OUR MISSION IS TO CULTIVATE EXCELLENCE IN LOCALLY-GOVERNED SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

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## Improve Outcomes For All Students

- Increase the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18 years or the attainment of a high school diploma or GED before the age of 18.
- Continue reforming English Language Learner models of instruction to increase integration of English Learners and give schools flexibility and resources to administer them. Advocate for the repeal of Prop. 203 and replace it with research-based bilingual education.
- Fully restore 9th and 13th grade CTE/CTED eligibility and funding to increase access to work-based learning and expand the window of opportunity students have to complete industry-recognized CTE programs.
- Allow CTEDs to serve students through age 21 regardless of graduation status.
- Support policy that recognizes, respects, and promotes teaching as a profession.
- Defend against efforts to limit the free speech rights of school employees.
- Oppose regulations, policies, and restrictions that overburden or unreasonably penalize educators and support staff as they educate and care for students.
- Rethink and redefine the role and purpose of standardized testing and develop meaningful assessments and other measurable outcomes.
- Support policy that protects school district employees and students from discrimination including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Support legislation and access to funding that would allow school districts to offer school meals to all students free of charge.

## Require Public Accountability for Taxpayer Dollars Spent on Education

- Establish financial and academic transparency for all institutions and individuals that accept public funds. Enforce financial requirements and seek recovery of improperly received and/or expended funds by individuals, charter and public schools, private schools, and organizations.
- Repeal any program that gives public funds for private schools, vouchers (Empowerment Scholarship Accounts) and private school subsidies (School Tuition Organizations) and prevent any future expansion.
- Require comparative classroom spending audits for school districts and all other institutions that accept public funds and define “classroom spending” as both instructional spending and student support spending.
- Support policy that encourages all eligible voters to exercise their right to participate in elections.

## Arizona’s Rural and Remote Schools

- Ensure that students in Arizona’s small, rural and remote schools are considered by policymakers alongside students in large metropolitan schools.
- Equitably invest in technology modernization, reliable internet broadband access, technology support capability and professional development.
- Protect rural and remote school districts from inequitable impact due to formula adjustments, including transportation.

## School Safety and Security

- Provide funding to individual districts to implement locally directed research-based school safety programs and mental health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Support policy that promotes social-emotional wellness as a critical component of improving social climate, safety and learning for all students and staff.
- Arizona’s school boards call upon all state, federal, tribal and local officials to address the causes and impact of increased self-harm and violence at K-12 schools.
- Arizona’s school boards call upon all state, federal, tribal and local officials to address the causes and impact of increased gun violence directed at K-12 schools.
- Advocate for funding and programming to engage and support families and caregivers in culturally relevant and appropriate ways.

## Federal Advocacy

- Advocate for federal and tribal assistance for bus routes on tribal land and federal land.
- Advocate for full funding of the individuals with disabilities education act (idea)
- Oppose efforts that would reduce or interrupt impact aid funding and the secure rural schools program to Arizona school districts that receive it.