



2009-10 ASBSD Standing Positions

** RECOMMENDED AND NOT FINAL **

Overview

ASBSD Standing Positions are policy statements that act as an extension of ASBSD's core beliefs and are valuable in the association's advocacy efforts. A subcommittee of the ASBSD Board of Directors – called the ASBSD Policy and Resolutions Committee – develops draft policy statements for consideration by the full membership at the ASBSD Delegate Assembly.

New or Amended Standing Positions for 2009-10

The ASBSD Policy and Resolutions Committee recommends one amendment and three new standing positions for 2009-10, including:

- An amendment to the Student Achievement standing position
- A position on Indian Education
- A position on Investment in Education
- A position on Open Government and Transparency

Continuing Positions for 2009-10

In addition to the positions listed as new or amended, the following standing positions will remain as standing positions for the 2009-10 school year.

- Local Governance
- School District Reorganization
- School Finance
- School Choice
- Technology in Education
- School Facilities
- School Wellness



Student Achievement

*** AMENDMENT PROPOSED ***

1 One of a local school board's core responsibilities is to develop, adopt and oversee policies focused on
2 improving student achievement and eliminating achievement gaps between low-achieving students and
3 students performing at or above grade level. ~~and to support policy implementation and practice.~~ Policy
4 makers at all levels must understand and embrace that students must possess 21st century skills to
5 succeed in today's highly competitive, global economy.

6
7 While students have diverse educational needs, every student, regardless of their differences, can
8 achieve at high levels when the state, local school boards and communities establish high expectations
9 for students and provide necessary resources and support. As community leaders, school board
10 members focus on providing programs and working collaboratively with other agencies to secure
11 necessary services.

12
13 ~~Local school boards develop, adopt and oversee policies intended to benefit all students while working to~~
14 ~~eliminate gaps between low-achieving students and students performing at or above grade level.~~ Student
15 achievement should be gauged measured using an accountability system based on multiple ~~measures~~
16 assessments that are defensible, credible and diagnostically meaningful to a variety of stakeholders
17 (students, parents, staff, community members and policymakers).

RECOMMEDATION:

Adopt as amended.

HISTORY

Standing positions are extensions of ASBSD's core beliefs, providing long-term guidance to ASBSD's advocacy efforts. The power to approve standing positions rests with the ASBSD Delegate Assembly. Position revised by the ASBSD Delegate Assembly in 2008. Position originally adopted by the Delegate Assembly in 2007.



Indian Education

*** NEW POSITION ***

1 South Dakota's public education system, for all its successes, consistently struggles to serve American
2 Indian students.

3
4 A range of statistical indicators reveal persistent and dramatic achievement gaps between American
5 Indian students and their peers, depriving a significant portion of South Dakota's children with an equal
6 opportunity to claim a more prosperous personal, social and economic future.

7
8 All students can face barriers to learning, but many of South Dakota's American Indian children are
9 surrounded by a concentrated and generationally pervasive poverty that jeopardizes an individual's
10 health, safety and personal belief in the value of education.

11
12 ASBSD believes all students can learn and achieve. South Dakota's American Indian students deserve
13 the attention of state, local and tribal leaders who are willing to deliver on the promise of public education.
14 South Dakotans must work toward solutions while embracing the pride, heritage and dignity of American
15 Indian culture.

16
17 ASBSD supports South Dakota's recent efforts to make Indian education a priority, including the official
18 creation of a state Indian education director within the Department of Education. ASBSD encourages
19 state policies that foster collaboration and establish long-term commitments to improving educational
20 outcomes for American Indian students.

21
22 While grant funding can be a powerful incentive, state leaders must recognize that effective programs
23 deserve reliable funding streams. ASBSD believes state aid formula funding needs to address the unique
24 learning challenges of at-risk students to allow local districts to better serve American Indian students
25 through instructional strategies focused on student results.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt.

HISTORY

New standing position.



Investment in Education

*** NEW POSITION ***

1 Devoting public funds to elementary and secondary education is an investment in the social and
2 economic future of our children, our communities, our state and our nation.

3
4 The data is indisputable: the personal and economic benefits of a quality education have a direct and
5 dramatic impact on individuals, families and communities. Investments in the public education system
6 serve multiple ends, but none are more important to the economic future of our country than ensuring
7 every child graduates from high school ready for the postsecondary education or the workplace. Personal
8 earning power is closely linked to educational attainment, and the academic foundations created through
9 elementary and secondary education are essential to long-term economic prosperity, both for individuals
10 and for our society.

11
12 A growing body of research makes clear that increased investments in elementary and secondary
13 education leads to improved student outcomes, particularly when investments strengthen teacher quality,
14 improve access to high quality pre-kindergarten programs and provide extended learning opportunities for
15 students at-risk of dropping-out.

16
17 In South Dakota, public schools deliver an outstanding return on investment. Despite having the lowest
18 level of state investment in public education in the nation, students continue to perform well on state
19 assessments. Though South Dakota students compare favorably to their peers on national assessments,
20 the performance of American public school students lags behind education systems around the world.

21
22 Given that South Dakota schools continue to perform with limited resources, it's clear that South Dakota's
23 locally elected school boards can be entrusted to allocate new investments in education that would
24 empower the state's already strong public schools, creating an education system that would serve as a
25 model for restoring America's economic competitiveness

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt.

HISTORY

New standing position.



Open Government and Transparency

*** NEW POSITION ***

1 As public bodies, school boards should operate in a transparent manner that promotes active civic
2 engagement and public discourse. Effective and efficient governance respects the public's right to
3 observe and petition government while operating under the legal framework of state and federal policy. It
4 is incumbent upon each school board member to have a working knowledge of both transparency and
5 privacy laws.

6
7 Public school boards, as government entities closest to citizens, provide a wealth of public information,
8 including thorough financial records. ASBSD supports state policies that will broaden access to
9 government records, including allowing school boards the local option to post official minutes and public
10 notices online, provided the laws appropriately balance the public's right to know with the efficient use of
11 taxpayer resources and school personnel.

12
13 Expenditure of public funds requires that public officials adhere to state conflict of interest laws. ASBSD
14 supports the judgment and integrity of South Dakota school board members and opposes initiatives or
15 legislation that impedes a school board's ability to govern.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt.

HISTORY

New standing position recommended for adoption by the ASBSD Policy and Resolutions Committee. Standing positions are extensions of ASBSD's core beliefs, providing long-term guidance to ASBSD's advocacy efforts. The power to approve standing positions rests with the ASBSD Delegate Assembly.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

School districts are governed by boards that, as elected leaders, must be responsive and accountable to local citizens. An informed, active citizenry is essential to our democratic and representative form of government.

Local boards, within guidelines established by state law, are vested with authority to make local education decisions. Local board members, as the elected representatives closest to the students, families and communities in which they live, are best positioned to understand student needs and identify effective solutions. A local school board cannot delegate statutory duties and responsibilities. State law must allow governance flexibility to ensure all school boards are positioned to meet the needs of their community and the changing public school environment.

School boards are accountable to students, citizens and staff for: providing education programs; striving for excellence; identifying needs; adopting clearly defined written policies; measuring program success; and interpreting and disseminating information to the public.

School boards function best in a non-partisan, broadly representative, team-spirited manner while putting district needs ahead of partisanship and special interest - be they political, racial, religious, geographic, economic, social, civic or any other form.

The board and superintendent, along with other key personnel, serve as a local governance leadership team that works together to effectively and efficiently operate a school district.

CONTINUING POSITION; ADOPTED: 2007

SCHOOL FINANCE

School finance decisions - whether at the local, state or federal level - should build the capacity of the public education system to expand learning opportunities for students. Positive school finance reform does not shift existing resources away from or between school districts. Policy makers at all levels should fulfill commitments and obligations to public schools before providing financial support to non-public schools.

South Dakota's public school students deserve a comprehensive school finance system. ASBSD supports a school finance system that:

- Provides adequate, equitable, predictable and timely funding;
- Provides equal opportunities to all students while addressing South Dakota's diverse student needs;
- Provides relief for enrollment fluctuations; and
- Is fair and equitable to all students and taxpayers irrespective of their school district of residence.

State funding must support local governance. Locally elected school boards should have authority and responsibility to prioritize and allocate funding to best meet student needs.

CONTINUING POSITION; ADOPTED: 2007

- CONTINUED -

SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

School district reorganization, resource sharing and cooperative arrangements are in the best interest of South Dakota's public school students when:

- Educational outcomes, measured in expanded educational opportunities with expectations for improved achievement, is the most important consideration; and
- Geographical issues are considered, including the amount of student travel time and allowing for continued community participation; and
- The state provides incentives to make reorganization financially feasible for school districts;
- Reorganization is voluntary – initiated and voted upon by the citizens of the school districts involved.

CONTINUING POSITION; ADOPTED: 2006

SCHOOL CHOICE

ASBSD supports school choice with accountability. South Dakota's parents and taxpayers deserve transparency in the use of public funds. Individuals or entities receiving tax dollars to support elementary and secondary education – including funds provided to charter schools or to individuals through vouchers or tax credits - should meet the same legislatively established standards and accountability requirements as public schools.

Education entities receiving public funds should uphold the promise of public education, ensuring equal access to a quality public education without charge for tuition. Public funds should support schools that operate as nonsectarian entities open to all students regardless of ethnicity, national origin, gender or disability. To ensure the safety of students and staff, publicly funded education entities must maintain appropriate health and safety standards.

South Dakota's public education system, through South Dakota's open enrollment laws, provides parents and students the choice to attend any of South Dakota's high quality public schools. Local school boards have the responsibility to respond to the needs of their community by authorizing innovative programs and initiatives designed to enhance student outcomes. Charter schools, whether traditionally structured or technologically driven, should only be established under the authority of local school boards.

CONTINUING POSITION; ADOPTED: 2007

SCHOOL WELLNESS

ASBSD believes that wellness is related to students' overall well-being and their readiness to learn. A growing body of research links student wellness to positive academic results, affirming the importance role school wellness plays in student achievement.

Local school boards should work with community stakeholders to promote policies and practices that encourage and enable wellness, including healthy food choices, nutrition education, regular physical activity, and a coordinated approach to addressing health. Comprehensive local policy includes multiple aspects of student well-being, including drug resistance, suicide prevention, violence prevention and all forms of bullying.

ASBSD urges local school boards to adopt policy that promotes healthy lifestyles and student safety, but opposes state mandates, whether funded or unfunded, which would limit the authority of local school districts to design appropriate wellness programs that reflect school and community standards.

CONTINUING POSITION; ADOPTED: 2008

SCHOOL FACILITIES

A growing body of research has linked student achievement and behavior, as well as staff morale, to physical building conditions. Because school facilities are important educational tools, every child deserves a safe, technologically-ready school facility designed for student learning.

School infrastructure in South Dakota has historically been considered a local issue, with nearly all capital funding coming from local property taxes. Reliance on local property taxes to fund capital construction and improvements causes disparities in the local ability to generate capital revenue, creating an inequitable system that prevents some property-poor districts from updating or maintaining facilities.

The state has an important role to play in ensuring equity in the ability of school districts to provide adequate school facilities, but South Dakota is one of a handful of states that has yet to develop statewide policy to address school facility needs. ASBSD supports legislation that improves access to safe, health and adequate learning environments by financially assisting property-poor districts with capital projects.

In cases where local communities are able to fund capital projects, local school boards and communities are in the best position to make capital project decisions. Local school boards, as locally elected leaders representing the students, district and tax payers, must maintain the authority to raise or lower the capital outlay levy to meet the needs of the local district and community. ASBSD supports legislation that allows for a simple majority for a bond issue, rather than the 60 percent majority currently required.

ASBSD encourages local districts to construct energy-efficient school facilities, making use of green energy whenever practical. ASBSD supports state financial incentives that enable local districts to construct or update facilities to energy efficiency standards.

CONTINUING POSITION; ADOPTED: 2008

TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Technology has an essential and expanding role in our global society. Emerging information and communication technologies will reshape how students learn and how they apply their knowledge, skills and abilities later in life.

Technology is a powerful, important tool to be used in combination with proven learning strategies to ensure a high-quality education. Virtual learning strategies, whether to provide remediation, enrichment or alternative scheduling, should be approved under the authority of local school boards.

South Dakota's public school students deserve school systems that leverage technology to promote meaningful, engaged learning. South Dakota's public school students must have equitable access to technology, including hardware, software, technologically literate educators and adequate technology support staff. The state has a role in ensuring equitable access to technology by providing adequate resources to support district-level technology plans.

South Dakota's public school system should embrace technology as a catalyst to improve learning through the collection, distribution and use of assessment data. School district staff need support, through high-quality, embedded professional development, to integrate technology into both instructional and planning time.

ASBSD supports technology initiatives focused on improved student outcomes and that reflect the need for ongoing support and renewal in the ever-changing technological landscape.

CONTINUING POSITION; ADOPTED: 2008