



ASBSD Standing Positions

OVERVIEW

Standing positions are broad policy statements that reflect the core beliefs of South Dakota's locally elected school board members. Standing positions provide your school board association with general direction and guidance on a range of education policy issues.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

One of a local school board's core responsibilities is to develop, adopt and oversee policies focused on improving student achievement and eliminating achievement gaps between low achieving students and students performing at or above grade level. Every student, regardless of individual differences, can achieve at high levels when the state, local school boards and communities establish high expectations for students and provide necessary resources and support.

Today's school boards strive to develop instructional policy that provides for multiple paths to knowledge that moves students to develop more critical thinking, collaborative problem solving and self-reliance skills.

As community leaders, school board members focus on providing programs and working collaboratively with other agencies.

Student achievement should be gauged using an accountability system based on multiple assessments that are valid, reliable, defensible, credible and diagnostically meaningful to a variety of stakeholders.

ASBSD urges policymakers at all levels to support programs that promote high level skills such as digital literacy, innovative thinking, and interactive communication to engage learners leading students to succeed in today's highly competitive, global economy.

Adopted: 2010

Revised: 2016

NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

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

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

South Dakotans must continue to work toward solutions, which include but not limited to the Native American Achievement Schools Grant Program and the Paraprofessional Tuition Assistance Scholarship Program (SB 9), while embracing the pride, heritage and dignity of Native American Indian culture and fostering collaboration and establishing long-term commitments to improving educational outcomes for Native American Indian students.

Adopted: 2010

Revised: 2016

HEALTH & WELLNESS

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

ASBSD believes local school boards should work with community stakeholders in a coordinated approach to promote policies and practices that encourage and enable wellness, including healthy food choices, nutrition education, and regular physical activity.

Comprehensive local policy includes multiple aspects of student/staff 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.

Adopted: 2008

Revised: 2015

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.

ASBSD believes technology is transforming K-12 education. The infrastructure, hardware, software, and platforms are either available or being developed that will change the nature of how we teach our children in profound and far-reaching ways.

ASBSD believes technology is a powerful, important tool for public education to be used in combination with proven teaching and learning strategies to ensure a high-quality education.

ASBSD supports technology initiatives that are focused on improved student outcomes and that reflect the need for ongoing support and renewal in the ever-changing technological landscape. Digital technology using virtual learning strategies, blended learning, and other cutting edge teaching coupled with quality training, will advance our students in the highly competitive global environment.

South Dakota's public school systems should embrace technology as a catalyst to improve teaching and learning. School district staff need support, through high-quality, embedded professional development, to integrate technology into their instruction. Technology integration is a critical tool to prepare our students for digital world that is transforming around them.

Adopted: 2012

Revised: 2015

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

School districts are governed by elected leaders, who are 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; and setting the school calendar that best fits their district.

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.

ASBSD supports the judgment and integrity of South Dakota school board members and opposes initiatives or legislation that impedes a school board's ability to govern.

Adopted: 2007

Revised: 2015

SCHOOL REORGANIZATION

ASBSD believes 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
- Reorganization is voluntary – initiated and voted upon by the school board, or by the citizens of the school districts.

Adopted: 2006

Revised: 2014

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

ASBSD believes South Dakota's public education system, through South Dakota's open enrollment laws, should provide parents and students the choice to attend any of South Dakota's public schools.

ASBSD supports open enrollment laws that work to promote cooperation among public school districts that help meet the educational needs of ALL students and families.

Adopted: 2007

Revised: 2016

OPEN GOVERNMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

As public bodies, school boards operate in a transparent manner that promotes active civic engagement and public discourse. Effective and efficient governance respects the public's right to observe, respectfully record a board meeting and petition government while operating under the legal framework of state and federal policy. Public school boards, as government entities closest to citizens, provide a wealth of public information, including thorough financial records.

ASBSD believes it is incumbent upon each school board member to have a working knowledge of both open meeting laws and privacy laws.

ASBSD supports state policies and potential legislation allowing school boards the local option to post official minutes and public notices online.

Adopted: 2009

Revised: 2016

SCHOOL FINANCE

South Dakota's public school students deserve a comprehensive school finance system. 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. Policy makers at all levels should fulfill commitments and obligations to public schools before providing financial support to non-public schools.

ASBSD supports a school finance system that:

- Provides necessary equitable, predictable and timely funding; and
- Provides equal opportunities to all students while addressing South Dakota's diverse student needs; and
- Provides judicious funding based on relief for enrollment fluctuations; and
- Provides locally elected school boards the authority and responsibility to prioritize and allocate funding, within the mandates and parameters of each fund set in state statute, to best meet student needs; and
- Provide additional funding to meet state and federal expectations.

Adopted: 2007

Revised: 2016

SAFE AND SECURE SCHOOLS

ASBSD believes South Dakota public school students deserve to learn in a safe and secure school environment.

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

ASBSD believes local school boards are responsible for the adoption of plans to prevent and respond to situations that threaten the safety or well-being of students and staff. School districts are encouraged to work with government agencies, public safety officials and other first-responders to prepare effective emergency response plans.

ASBSD believes local school boards, acting in compliance with federal and state law, must have the authority to enact and implement policies and procedures that maintain safe, orderly schools and create supportive learning cultures.

ASBSD supports current laws designed to keep convicted criminals from employment in schools and illegal drugs and weapons away from school buildings.

ASBSD urges parents, businesses and communities to work with local school boards to provide safe, crime-free schools.

Adopted: 2010

Revised: 2015

INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

ASBSD believes devoting public funds to elementary and secondary education is an investment in the social and economic future of our children, our communities, our state and our nation.

In South Dakota, public schools deliver an outstanding return on investment. The personal and economic benefits of a quality education have a direct and dramatic impact on individuals, families and communities. Investments in the public education system serve multiple ends, but none are more important to the economic future of our country than ensuring every child graduates from high school ready for the postsecondary education or the workplace.

ASBSD believes investing in elementary and secondary education leads to improved student outcomes, particularly when investments strengthen teacher quality, improve access to high quality pre-kindergarten and K-12 programs and provide extended learning opportunities for students at-risk.

Adopted: 2011

Revised: 2016