

ASBSD Delegate  
Assembly



## ASBSD Standing Positions

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### OVERVIEW

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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.

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### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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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. While students have diverse educational needs, every student, regardless of their 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. As community leaders, school board members focus on providing programs and working collaboratively with other agencies to secure necessary services.

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

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.

Adopted: 2010

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## INDIAN EDUCATION

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A range of statistical indicators reveal persistent and dramatic achievement gaps between American Indian students and their peers, depriving a significant portion of South Dakota's children with 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 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.

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

ASBSD supports South Dakota's recent efforts to make Indian education a priority, including the passage of the Indian Education Act and the creation of an Indian education coordinator within the Department of Education. ASBSD encourages state policies that foster collaboration and establish long-term commitments to improving educational outcomes for American Indian students.

While grant funding can be a powerful incentive, state leaders must recognize that effective programs deserve reliable funding streams. ASBSD believes state aid formula funding needs to address the unique learning challenges of at-risk students to allow local districts to better serve American Indian students by integrating instructional curriculum that focuses on student results.

Adopted: 2010

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## HEALTH & WELLNESS

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

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## TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

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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. A high-tech wave is here and sweeping through the educational world largely driven by technology and innovation. ASBSD believes technology is a powerful, important tool for public education to be used in combination with proven 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 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

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## LOCAL GOVERNANCE

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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.

Adopted: 2007

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## SCHOOL REORGANIZATION

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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 citizens of the school districts involved.

Adopted: 2006

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## SCHOOL CHOICE

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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.

Adopted: 2007

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## OPEN GOVERNMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

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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 and petition government while operating under the legal framework of state and federal policy. It is incumbent upon each school board member to have a working knowledge of both transparency and privacy laws.

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

Expenditure of public funds requires that public officials adhere to state conflict of interest laws. 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: 2009

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## SCHOOL FINANCE

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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.

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; and
- Provides equal opportunities to all students while addressing South Dakota's diverse student needs; and
- Provides relief for enrollment fluctuations.

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.

Adopted: 2007

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## SAFE AND SECURE SCHOOLS

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South Dakota public school students deserve to learn in a safe and secure school environment. ASBSD urges parents, businesses and communities to work with local school boards to provide safe, crime-free schools.

Local school boards are responsible for the development 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.

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.

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. 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.

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

Adopted: 2010

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## INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

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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.

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. 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.

In South Dakota, public schools deliver an outstanding return on investment. South Dakota's locally elected school boards must be entrusted to allocate new investments in education that empower the state's already strong public schools.

Adopted: 2011