

SASD LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS 2011-2012

INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

BELIEF STATEMENT – SASD believes the investment in the education of our youth is vital to South Dakota's future.

1. **SUPPORT** the use of public funds exclusively for students enrolled in public schools.

***RATIONALE:** Resources to adequately support public education are limited and must be protected and utilized efficiently.*

2. **OPPOSE** the implementation of a voucher system.

***RATIONALE:** A voucher system would only tend to polarize student populations. Money and jurisdiction of alternative forms of education must remain under the control of the local school board for the benefit of all children – not select groups of students.*

3. **PROMOTE** legislation that would change the number of votes necessary to pass a bond issue from the current sixty percent to a simple majority of those voting. (SDCL 6-8B-2)

***RATIONALE:** A shift in demographics means that approximately 20% of school district patrons have students in school vs. approximately 80% of patrons NOT having children in school at the time SDCL 6-8B-2 was adopted. Therefore, a simple majority vote is more reflective of the school district's patrons at large.*

4. **SUPPORT** that the portion of special education state aid set aside for extraordinary expenses be adequately funded.

***RATIONALE:** Without adequate set-aside funds in the special education extra-ordinary expense fund, school districts will be subject to pro-rata distributions for extra-ordinary special education expenses.*

5. **OPPOSE** any statewide tax limitation measures which do not identify and secure replacement revenue sources

***RATIONALE:** Limiting or eliminating tax revenues without securing other equitable funding sources leads to deficit spending and less revenue for school programs.*

6. **SUPPORT** incentives for school districts to consolidate and/or enter into collaborative agreements with other education entities in order to improve educational opportunities for students.

RATIONALE: *Financial incentives encourage communities to deal with the difficult issues that emerge when they engage in consolidation and/or cooperative ventures.*

7. **SUPPORT** a state budget that adheres to the South Dakota funding formula as it is defined in state law.

RATIONALE: *Even though last year the Governor and legislature deviated from the formula, SASD feels that it is imperative that the state follow existing legislation, providing schools a minimum of 2.3%, which we understand is CPI for the current year.*

8. **SUPPORT** legislation or proposals to replace general fund state aid cut during the 2011 legislative session.

RATIONALE: *the state reduced general fund per pupil state aid by 8.6% during the 2011 session, from \$4,804.60 to \$4,389.95. A one-time state aid allocation reduced the cut to approximately 6.6%. If the one-time state aid money is not replaced this year, the on-going state aid reduction will not be totally replaced for over eight years if the legislature increases state aid by 3%. The state aid reduction should be replaced promptly.*

9. **SUPPORT** efforts to secure funding from the federal government, sent through the state government intended for local school districts.

RATIONALE: *Most of the federal stimulus money was kept by the state the past two years, even though it was intended for local school districts. While the state did not violate federal law by supplanting the money for state aid, the intent of the money was clearly intended to flow to school districts. If federal money, like stimulus funds is approved in the future, every effort should be made to flow the money directly to schools over the state supplanting funds.*

10. **SUPPORT** funding for “TTL-like” academies for training of all teachers and administrators in the use of the Common Core Standards and the Danielson Framework of evaluation. This funding shall not impinge on the state formula in any way.

RATIONALE: *The Governor and the DOE have assigned these two burdens to school districts as definitive unfunded mandates. Should the executive branch have strong dedication to these issues and would like to lead South Dakota schools to the prescribed improvement predicted with the implementation of these two mandates, funding for training must accompany the mandates. The technology training of the 90’s enabled South Dakota teachers to reach heights of technology use unseen in other states and continues to show results today. If the Governor is serious in his wish to have South Dakota lead, placing money with the rhetoric is a necessity, and a complete training of all teachers and administrators will exemplify a legislature and state that really does care about education. However, there has to be certitude that this funding does not compete with any funding of the school formula. This must be a separate funding issue*

11. **SUPPORT** the Initiated measure to increase the state general sales and use tax rate from 4% to 5%. The additional tax revenue will be split evenly between K-12 public education and Medicaid. The education funds will be provided to school districts based on enrollment, to be spent on improving education as school boards determine. The Medicaid funds will be spent only on payments to Medicaid providers and related state expenses. The additional funds cannot replace or reduce state funding levels set for fiscal year 2012 relating to existing Medicaid and K12 public education programs, including state aid to education. Currently, state aid is to be adjusted annually by 3% or the rate of inflation, whichever is less. Under the measure, this annual adjustment cannot exceed the growth rate in state general fund revenues. Any resulting shortfall in state aid will be made up in subsequent years.

***RATIONALE:** State funding for education has become less of a priority in recent years. The drastic cuts made during 2011 forced many school districts to the tipping point. The initiated measure replaces the \$75 million dollars cut since 2009. The overall cut to education in 2011 was \$52 million, or \$415 less per student. The language contains protections to prevent the increased revenue from being spent in any way, either directly or indirectly, to reduce, supplant or replace appropriations for any state K-12 education program currently in existence.*

SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

BELIEF STATEMENT – Effective public education occurs in consort with local leadership, adequate funding and state support.

1. **OPPOSE** legislation that removes local control from school districts.

***RATIONALE:** Schools share many common concerns and issues. Each district's community has an autonomous approach to educating its children, especially in curricular decision-making. Unfunded mandates, unsolicited directives, general fund cash reserves and mandated curricula from the state inhibit a district's ability to be responsive to local values and preferences.*

2. **OPPOSE** legislation that creates new mandates or reinstates former mandates without full funding.

***RATIONALE:** Per the requirements of SDCL 6-15-1 & 2 and the fact that school district budgets are already limited, it is imperative that any mandate has full funding as a backing to insure that educational programs are not adversely affected.*

3. **OPPOSE** the establishment of arbitrary limits for specific areas of the school budget such as: student instruction, personnel, and student services

***RATIONALE:** School districts need to retain the ability to determine the needs of their school community and make budget appropriations accordingly. Arbitrary proposals such as requiring district spending to be held to a particular percentage (i.e. 65%) is contrary to this, and hamper's school districts efforts to make choices which are best for their community.*

4. **SUPPORT** for flexibility in the policies of the Bureau of Information and Technology (BIT) to allow school districts to seek competitive and high quality vendors for greater accessibility for all students to contemporary technology.

***RATIONALE:** Schools should never undergo penalty or consequence for seeking the best service and value in technology. There should actually be incentive and motivation to work jointly with schools to use both public and private entities to maximize the potential use of technology for student achievement. BIT should be entirely open to district proposals and adjust policies to allow for the most effective and efficient use of 21st Century tools.*

5. **SUPPORT** permissive legislation to allow school districts to establish a fee for any voluntary program, other than extra curricular activities, offered in schools to benefit students.

***RATIONALE:** In recent years state aid allocations have not met the budgetary demands of K-12 education and parents' needs/requests.*

6. **SUPPORT** legislation which would include definitive sanctions against a school which chooses to not adhere to the current bussing laws on picking up students outside their school boundaries.

***RATIONALE:** A very good compromise was reached last year by all parties to try to avoid more restrictive laws on open enrollment and bussing of open enrollment students by the legislature. Without definitive sanctions the current law has no teeth.*

7. **PROMOTE** legislation making it permissible for schools to pay for background checks and/or bus driver training.

***RATIONALE:** Currently school districts are prohibited from paying these costs. This should be a local control decision.*

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

BELIEF STATEMENT – SASD believes that administrative leadership and educator competence are critical to educational excellence.

1. **SUPPORT** the employment of certified education administrators and teachers in each local school district

***RATIONALE:** All effective school research supports the important role appropriately trained and certified school administrators and teachers play in providing quality educational opportunities for all children. NCLB requires schools to hire highly qualified and certified administrators and teachers. We support this concept for all students and all schools in South Dakota.*

2. **SUPPORT** programs designed to assist educational leaders in their professional development and school improvement efforts.

RATIONALE: *Quality professional development activities for South Dakota’s educational leaders must be promoted and financially supported.*

- SUPPORT** actuarially sound improvement to the South Dakota Retirement System (SDRS) and oppose unfunded liability to the South Dakota retirement system.

RATIONALE: *Recommendations to improve the retirement system should be made by the SDRS Board of Trustees and supported by members. The balances within the SDRS were accumulated for the specific purpose of providing an adequate income for retired members. Any use of these funds in a manner not consistent with the original intent could erode the SDRS and member benefits.*

- SUPPORT** the continuation of an active public school administrator, a public school teacher and public school board member on the South Dakota State Board of Education.

RATIONALE: *The education of South Dakota’s children must remain a high priority item for all South Dakota citizens. A benefit to the State Board of Education would be to include a school administrator, teacher and local school board member who have education, expertise and experience to aid in the decision making process.*

STUDENTS AND LEARNING

BELIEF STATEMENT – SASD believes that international developments and advanced technologies require an educational system that enables students to compete globally in the information age.

- SUPPORT** early childhood education programs if funding for the program comes from a new funding source and does not affect K-12 funding of current education programs.

RATIONALE: *Early childhood education is needed for South Dakota’s youth. Educational research clearly demonstrates the value of early childhood education, particularly when teachers are certified and age appropriate curriculum and activities are provided for students in a proper educational environment. Schools support the addition of early childhood educational programs in public school if the necessary new sources of funding are provided to schools to cover the cost.*

- SUPPORT** the adoption of early learning standards.

RATIONALE: *The adoption of content standards for Pre-K Programs encourages accountability in preparing South Dakota’s children who will soon enter kindergarten. Access to quality Pre-K programs which are established with high standards assist children in elementary school to meet learning benchmarks. Thirty-eight states have already adopted minimum quality standards as a means to promote quality Pre-K programs.*

3. **SUPPORT** legislation that would require all school districts to have a bullying policy on file.

***RATIONALE:** School administrators recognize and understand the need for all school districts to have harassment and bullying policy. Because of societal issues and technology the challenge to control and prevent harassment and bullying issues are a challenge for our schools. Due to the severity of this issue we encourage the adoption of legislation that simply states that all schools must have a Harassment and Bullying policy. It should be the schools responsibility to determine the content and makeup of the policy. We also believe that a policy in of itself is not the solution to this problem. Schools and communities must work jointly to address this issue. SASD has always believed that local control should be followed regarding the development and adoption of policies.*

4. **SUPPORT** legislation that would adequately support 21st century learning opportunities in schools including enough bandwidth for schools to be able to use technological devices without interruption, training opportunities for school staff to proficiently implement the new common core standards and academics that help teachers and administrators teach and support instruction using 21st century learning strategies.

***RATIONALE:** Schools are increasing the use of various technological devices for instruction that require greater amounts of bandwidth. Interruption of instruction and learning can occur if allocated bandwidth does not keep up with the demand. Districts need flexibility in funding and obtaining proper bandwidth to support the district's needs. Schools also need statewide support and training to implement the new common core standards using 21st century technology tools and instructional strategies.*

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

BELIEF STATEMENT – SASD believes that accountability for student performance is an important and complex policy issue. Growth model assessments are fair for all groups of students and measures learning progress.

1. **SUPPORT** an appropriate statewide accountability system that includes participation and input from the education community.

***RATIONALE:** Schools, educators, parents and students should be held accountable for continued student achievement. The statewide accountability system must be reviewed on a regular basis with input provided by the entire education community.*