

## **Illinois Principals Association Legislative Platform Statements**

Revised January 2018

IPA supports the concept that every child in the State of Illinois should have equal access to a free public education.

### **PRINCIPALSHIP**

IPA supports positive and proactive leadership from the Illinois State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Education. The IPA pledges active support to the Illinois State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Education in their efforts to seek and promote enlightened leadership.

IPA supports the legal definition of the principal in the Illinois School Code and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

IPA supports the belief that effective leadership can occur only if there is job security and protection for all principals and assistant principals. Involuntary reassignment, transfer or dismissal of principals and assistant principals should occur only with just cause and adequate due process.

IPA supports the expanding role of the principalship, which demands a high level of professional preparation and continuing growth.

IPA supports the role of the principal as an instructional leader who is vital to the development of sound educational programs. We support the Illinois Evidence-Based Funding model which includes core state investments of one full-time principal and assistant principal for each 450 students at an elementary/middle school, one full-time principal and assistant principal for each 600 students at a high school. Sufficient support staff should also be employed to enable the principal to function as the instructional leader.

IPA supports quality and rigorous principal preparation programs in the State of Illinois and encourages appropriate financial support for such training from the Governor and Illinois General Assembly.

### **PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT**

IPA supports comprehensive, fair, and objective performance evaluations of principals. In addition to student performance measures, principal evaluation systems must rely on a core set of competencies in school leadership, or research-based evidence and competencies in school leadership.

- **Federal** – IPA supports professional development funding and opportunities for principals to be included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and any reauthorization thereof.
- **Federal** – IPA supports school restructuring that is well thought out and accounts for the needs of students, parents, and school staff. IPA does not support school reform models that cannot be substantiated by evidence-based research.
- **State** – IPA supports full funding of the Illinois New Principal Mentoring program in order to support school leaders and an investment in continued professional development. The State of Illinois and the Illinois State Board of Education must support principals and teachers to ensure effective implementation of Federal and state programs.

## **SCHOOL FUNDING**

IPA supports a school funding formula that is research-based and considers the needs of all students in the State of Illinois. IPA further supports adequate state funding in order to reduce the reliance on property taxes and ensure equitable funding for all Illinois students.

- **Federal** – IPA opposes payments of Federal funds directly or indirectly to non-public schools.
  - **State** – IPA supports funding the Illinois Evidence-Based Funding (EBM) model and Mandated Categorical programs at levels that reflects the cost of providing an adequate and equitable education for all Illinois students.
  - **State** – IPA supports meeting the costs of funding quality public education by making education the State's primary budgetary program. IPA recognizes that this priority may require the increase of existing taxes or establishment of new taxes to generate necessary State revenues.
  - **State** – IPA opposes legislative initiatives including, but not limited to, vouchers, tax credits, and programs of choice, that have the effect of diverting public funds from public schools. Further, any program of school choice that receives public funding directly or indirectly should be subject to the same laws and regulations as all public schools in Illinois.
- State** – IPA opposes legislative initiatives to require school districts to account for inaccessible property tax wealth (including, but not limited to, Property Tax Extension Law Limitations and Tax Increment Financing districts) as part of a Local Capacity Target for the Illinois Evidence-Based Funding Model.
- **State** – IPA supports legislative action that increases funding to such levels necessary to implement the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and any

reauthorization thereof; understanding the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education is left to individual states.

- *State* – IPA does not support legislation that encroaches upon local control of public schools. The IPA urges the General Assembly to adopt legislation which would allow school districts greater flexibility regarding State mandates and the use of grants.

## **EDUCATOR PREPARATION**

IPA supports efforts to encourage individuals to enter the field of education through the development of a comprehensive teacher and administrator recruitment and retention system that includes clubs, scholarship programs, residency programs, financial and social support for students pursuing post-secondary education degrees, continued professional development, and alternative pathways into the field of education.

- *State* – IPA supports efforts to improve early positive exposure to the education profession through programs such as education pathways programs in high schools and partnerships with higher education institutions.
- *State* – IPA supports efforts to streamline educator licensure reciprocity agreements with other states.
- *State* – IPA supports efforts to expand alternative licensure programs to serve rural and high-poverty areas, and underserved content areas across the state.
- *State* – IPA supports the expansion of student loan forgiveness to all licensed educators.
- *State* – IPA supports efforts to develop educator workforce reports, including information about vacancies and the workforce itself.
- *State* – IPA supports efforts to recruit and retain a diverse educator workforce that reflects the racial and ethnic makeup of Illinois students.
- *State* – IPA supports efforts to expand eligibility for substitute teaching licenses, including alternative licensing requirements for short-term substitute needs.

## **SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY**

IPA believes school leaders and educators should be held accountable for student outcomes within their control, and that measurements should be comprehensive, developed with stakeholder input, and consider school processes and other relevant conditions.

- *State* – IPA believes that data-informed decision-making is the best way to advance student learning. IPA believes that the State testing structure should be revised to assure quality

and reliable formative and summative student assessment data, that test scores should include data on the skills and abilities of individual students, and that tests should be aligned to the State's learning standards. IPA further believes the State should explore a comprehensive assessment system that is aligned Pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade and addresses special education in the testing of special populations.

- **State** – IPA believes that college readiness is a continuous effort and not determined by a single-assessment. State-designated benchmarks for college readiness assessment should closely align with tested benchmarks for satisfactory performance in college-level coursework.
- **State** – IPA believes that student assessments should be objective and results should allow educators to provide appropriate and timely student support where needed.
- **State** – IPA believes that rather than letter grades, multiple performance indicators over multiple years provides more useful school performance information to educators, parents, communities, and policy makers.

## CURRICULUM

IPA supports efforts to shift from “time-based” policies to “competency-based” education structures based on demonstrated mastery of skills and curriculum.

IPA supports efforts to utilize multiple research-based metrics to more appropriately assess students' college readiness, career readiness, and life readiness based on indicators such as Advanced Placement coursework, early college credit, industry credentials, attendance, and community service.

IPA recognizes that we live in a diverse world, and encourages learning of different cultures, languages and customs. IPA believes that student opportunities to learn a second language come too late in the educational process to be fully beneficial to students. IPA therefore encourages that opportunities to learn a second language be made available to students at the elementary school level.

- **State** – IPA believes that student learning standards should guide student instruction. IPA further believes the current State standards should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis in order to better reflect the needs of students and learning in the 21st Century, and that the State standards should include the promotion of good citizenship and civic responsibility. As instructional leaders, principals should be an integral part of this process.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

IPA supports the State constitutional provision providing for the education of all students to the limits of their capacities.

- **Federal** – IPA supports adequately funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and any reauthorization thereof, commensurate with the mandates required by the Act. We strongly encourage full funding of the extra costs of educating children with special needs, including transportation, accessibility, and staffing costs. IPA opposes any requirement that local public school districts pay room and boarding costs for any child placed in a private facility.
- **State** – IPA believes that all students have the right to fully develop their special gifts and talents. IPA therefore encourages the General Assembly and Governor to enact and fund opportunities that focus on the unique learning needs of all students.
- **State** – IPA opposes legislative initiatives, rules, and regulations that impose arbitrary class size limits on Special Education classrooms. We believe that reasonable guidelines could replace mandated rules and reinforce flexibility to lead to improved Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) opportunities for students with disabilities.

## MANDATES & REFORMS

IPA supports local control of public schools and believes any programs or services mandated by the Federal or State government should provide sufficient new revenues to fully reimburse the additional costs by these programs.

- **Federal** – IPA supports Federal funding to provide the best technologies available to help students learn, including affordable Internet access, distance-learning, and other educational programs for school districts and libraries.
- **Federal** – IPA supports the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program and urges the Federal government to provide adequate monetary reimbursement for existing programs.
- **State** – IPA supports the constitutional protection of State pensions for school leaders, and opposes changes in benefits or benefit structure to current pension system members and retirees.
- **State** – IPA supports the Illinois Learning Standards. This initiative provides a consistent, and clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, and allows administrators, teachers and parents to better educate and support students.
- **State** – IPA supports the General Assembly and Governor's Office in providing funding for children who are wards of the State in cases where they create a significant impact on

local school district budgets when placed in temporary shelters and foster homes operating within school districts.

## **SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT & CONSTRUCTION**

IPA supports the concept that all students have the right to attend school in a safe, clean and healthy environment. Such facility should be designed with the students and the educational programs as a focal point.

- *State* – IPA supports efforts to provide educational environments safe from bullying, harassment, and other physical or emotional abuse.
- *State* – IPA supports providing funds to local school districts for purchasing or constructing additional classrooms required to provide instruction for students who reside in State facilities located within the district.
- *State* – IPA supports the establishment of a new, predictable and stable funding source for school construction, renovation, maintenance and repair.