

Illinois Principals Association Legislative Platform Statements

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

PRINCIPALSHIP

IPA supports for the need for positive leadership from the State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Education. The IPA pledges active support to the State Board of Education and the 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*.

IPA supports the belief that effective leadership can occur only if there is job security and protection of the rights and welfare of the principal. Involuntary reassignment, transfer or dismissal of principals shall be made with just cause and due process.

IPA supports the expanding role of the principalship that 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. Each school needs a full-time building principal and, as a minimum standard, a full-time assistant principal for each 400 students, or fraction thereof, enrolled in the 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. Principal evaluation systems must rely on a core set of competencies in school leadership, or research-based evidence of the capabilities every principal or school leader must demonstrate in addition to student performance measures.

- **Federal** – IPA supports professional development opportunities for principals to be included in reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

- **Federal** – IPA believes that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act’s procedures for restructuring schools that do not meet academic standards are arbitrary and subjective. IPA supports school restructuring that is well thought out and accounts for the needs of students, parents, and school staff, and does not include 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 building leaders and an investment in continued professional development. Educational reforms such as Common Core, Response to Intervention, the Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2011, among other reforms, will place an even greater emphasis on leadership at the building level. The State of Illinois and the Illinois State Board of Education must support principals and teachers to ensure effective implementation of these programs.

SCHOOL FUNDING

IPA opposes legislative initiatives including, but not limited to, vouchers and school choice that have the effect of diverting public education funds to support privately provided education.

- **Federal** – IPA opposes payments of Federal funds directly or indirectly to nonpublic elementary-secondary schools.
- **State** – IPA supports funding the General State Aid formula at a level that reflects the cost of providing quality education for Illinois students.
- **State** – IPA supports meeting the costs of funding quality public education by making education the State's primary budgetary program. We recognize that this priority may require the increase of existing taxes or establishment of new taxes to generate necessary State revenues.
- **State** – IPA supports adopting a fair, appropriate, accurate and timely means of determining the count of low income students as used for the general aid distribution formula.
- **State** – IPA supports the general concepts regarding school funding reform, including, but not limited to, researching diversions from property taxes for equitable school funding.
- **State** – IPA supports legislative action that increases funding to such levels necessary to implement the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; understanding the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education is left to individual states.

- **State** – IPA supports state funding and options to assist school districts in addressing the growing costs of health insurance, including the option for school districts to participate in the state group health insurance and prescription drug program.
- **State** – IPA supports legislation that does not encroach upon local control of public schools. The IPA urges the General Assembly to adopt legislation which would allow school districts greater flexibility in regard to state mandates and the use of grants, which would support instruction and educational improvement.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

IPA further supports equal access to free public education, including students with special needs.

- **Federal** – IPA supports Congress in adequately funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, commensurate with the mandates required by the Act. We strongly encourage all government agencies to totally fund with new monies, in a timely manner, the extra costs of educating children with special needs including transportation and accessibility costs; shall seek changes in current practice to fund local districts for special education professional personnel at 51% of the prior year's average salary for such professionals, and shall continue to oppose any requirement that local public school districts pay room and board costs for any child with a disability placed in private facilities.
- **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 reenact and fund opportunities that focus on the unique learning needs of all students.

MANDATES & REFORMS

IPA supports local control of public schools and believes any programs or services mandated by federal or state governments should provide sufficient new revenues to fully reimburse the additional costs by those programs.

- **Federal** – IPA believes that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act's procedures for restructuring schools that do not meet academic standards are arbitrary and subjective. IPA support school restructuring that is well thought out and takes into account the needs of students, parents, and school staff.
- **Federal** – IPA supports Congress 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 concept of school breakfast and milk programs in each local school district for all children and urges federal and State governments to not reduce financial support 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 Common Core State Learning Standards to better prepare students for success in a competitive economy. This initiative provides a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so that administrators, teachers and parents know how to best educate and support students.
- **State** – IPA supports compliance with and non-exemption from the State Mandates Act for statutory enactment of new mandated programs.
- **State** – IPA supports the enforcement of the Instructional Mandates Task Force moratorium (Public Act 96-1374) which provides a moratorium on the passage of legislation that would impose instructional mandates on public schools until July 1, 2011. In addition, the IPA supports the enforcement of Public Act 96-1441 which prohibits unfunded mandates.
- **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 they are placed in temporary shelters and foster homes operating within school districts.

CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENTS

IPA supports that, as a measure of school time, quality is more important than quantity in effective educational programs. IPA further recognizes that innovative scheduling practices, including year-round schools and trimester programs, may be instrumental in improving the quality of time devoted to the educational program. IPA supports discussion and potential implementation from the General Assembly on this issue.

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 data driven 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 address special education in the testing of special populations. IPA also believes that computer-based and online assessment should be explored and that these tools may allow for a timelier reporting of assessment data.

- **State** – IPA believes that student learning standards should guide student instruction. IPA further believes that serious consideration should be given to regularly reviewing & revising the current State standards 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.
- **State** – IPA believes that student assessments should be made objectively and results should allow educators to provide appropriate student support where needed.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT & CONSTRUCTION

IPA supports the concept that all students have the right to attend school in a safe, clean and healthful 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.