

## **Positions and Belief Statements Adopted at NDCEL 2014 Representative Assembly**

*(To be approved by the NDCEL board at their October meeting)*

### **1. FINANCE**

- A. The NDCEL opposes any legislation that creates new mandates without full funding.
- B. In order to improve equity and adequacy of school funding in North Dakota, the NDCEL supports legislation that provides equity and adequacy in per pupil payments over the coming biennia. In addition, the NDCEL supports funding this formula with provisions for increased costs of educating children that will:
  - (1) Annually provide for adequate and equitable funding of the cost of education as defined by current law.
  - (2) Remove or increase tax levy caps and other restrictions on school district levies.
  - (3) Support foundation aid payments to declining enrollment districts based on previous year's ADM.
  - (4) Support full per pupil payment for all students enrolled in the year they are served.
  - (5) Correlate the funding of high cost students more by changing the current high cost risk pool for special education to an overall education cost risk pool.
  - (6) Support state reimbursement for costs over 1.0 times the cost of education for non-special needs student placements.
  - (7) Increase state's share of special education funding from the current % to a weighting factor that more accurately reflects cost.
  - (8) Support state reimbursement for excess costs that more accurately reflects the highest (2%) of special needs cost students at three and one-half times the state average cost of education per student and that all related costs over that amount be reimbursed by the state.
  - (9) Distribute remaining funds from the excess cost pool, each biennium, for high cost students on a per pupil basis.
  - (10) Increase the state's share of ELL funding to a weighting factor that more accurately reflects cost or additional and separate funding to adequately address ELL student needs.
- C. The NDCEL supports the reestablishment of the Commission on Education which is comprised of representation as adopted by 2009 legislative assembly as a vehicle for recommending adequate funding and sound educational policy for adoption by the North Dakota State Legislature.
- D. The NDCEL supports a transportation funding system, outside of the per pupil payment targeted at 80% level of support. (60% level for 15-17 biennium, increased to 80% for subsequent biennium). Increases for rates paid per mile should be commensurate with increases, as a percentage of cost, in state mileage rates made by the state legislature as of 2014. A \$15 million dollar increase in transportation would provide an appropriation of \$68.5 million dollars for the 15-17 biennium – (Current appropriation is \$53.5 million).
- E. The NDCEL opposes public funding of charter, private, parochial, or home schools through such mechanisms as state funded per pupil payments, vouchers, tax credits, tax-free savings accounts, etc.

F. Taxation:

- (1) The NDCEL supports a funding protocol that provides for a balanced mix of sales tax, income tax, energy tax, and property tax to adequately fund PK-12 education resulting in an adequate and equitable funding mechanism which will meet the challenges of universal proficiency and provide a stable funding base for a system focused on proficiency.
- (2) The NDCEL supports property tax relief legislation that assumes adequate and equitable funding of the cost of education and is based on an adequacy model, provided it does not reduce the money budgeted for PK-12 education for the coming biennium, does not eliminate the collection and local control of property tax by legislative action, or supplant state general fund PK-12 monies with Common Schools Trust Fund money to accomplish property tax relief.
- (3) The NDCEL opposes any legislation or initiated measure which would restrict the number of tax dollars from going into the general fund, would limit a school district from capitalizing on any property valuation increase, or would eliminate property tax as a locally controlled source of revenue.
- (4) The NDCEL supports a simple majority vote to pass mill levy increases and bond issues.
- (5) The NDCEL opposes increases to the Foundation Aid program that are used solely for Property Tax Relief, unless the overall funding level has been increased to meet the existing needs of school districts.
- (6) The NDCEL opposes any proposal to further limit the general taxing authority of school districts
- (7) The NDCEL supports the restoration of an amount equivalent to the Financial Institutions Tax that was distributed to school districts during the 2011-13 biennium and distributing this non-imputed amount on a per student basis through the Foundation Aid formula.
- (8) The NDCEL supports allowing school boards to vote on all city and county tax abatement
- (9) The NDCEL opposes any attempt to prohibit school districts from purchasing or leasing land for the purposes of providing playgrounds, recreation centers, or other character-building purposes and community centers, lands or buildings, or both that is for the common good of the community.
- (10) The NDCEL opposes any attempt to prohibit school districts from entering into Joint Power Agreements with park districts or municipalities for the purchasing or leasing land for the purposes of providing playgrounds, recreation centers, or other character-building purposes and community centers, lands or buildings, or both for the common good of the community.
- (11) The NDCEL opposes any effort to require school districts to pay back or credit taxpayers' money they currently hold in their unobligated Ending Fund Balance (EFB).

G. The NDCEL opposes any attempt to supplant interest income or principal of the Common Schools Trust Fund outside of PK-12 public education.

H. The NDCEL supports continued state funding for the Educational Technology Council and the statewide network.

- I. The NDCEL supports legislation allowing incentives including but not limited to student loan percent reduction to attract and retain certified personnel. The NDCEL supports incentives such as:
  - (1) State supported student loan repayment and percent rate reduction.
- J. NDCEL recognizes the positive impact that career and technical education has on students and the state's economy. Therefore NDCEL supports state funding for career and technical education which will reinstate the level of state support for CTE programming to 1984 levels which would move the current rate of reimbursement from 27% to 40% for comprehensive schools and from the current 40% to 50% for Area Centers at a cost of \$8.5 million. Additionally support the request of \$3.5 million of one-time equipment funding to upgrade existing and purchase new CTE equipment.
- K. The NDCEL supports the maintenance and startup funding needed to initiate or maintain STEM programs in local school districts.
- L. The NDCEL supports school district budget revisions within 10 working days following notification of the new taxable valuation,
- M. The NDCEL supports the funding of the 2015-17 REAs at a level sufficient to fund delivery of new core offerings, additional services needed regionally, and meeting staffing needs and that it be included as a part of the state budget and not funded from the contingency fund.
- N. The NDCEL supports the legislative consideration of funding future school construction projects through a district/state cost sharing formula.
- O. The NDCEL supports buy-down of the interest rate for the schools utilizing the School Construction Loan program to zero percent, ultimately resulting in property tax savings.
- P. The NDCEL supports excluding the Local Contribution calculations in the Foundation Aid formula if the funds are committed to building construction or debt service payments.
- Q. The NDCEL supports development of a funding formula that will pay for a greater share of the cost of PK-12 education by the state based on the funding recommendations of the 2014 Picus report (pro-rated for inflation) which will:
  - (1) Reduce the amount of local contribution from local property taxes;
  - (2) Provide for districts to levy a set number of maximum mills (cap) by a majority vote of their board;
  - (3) Allow districts to increase mill levies above any set mill cap by a simple majority vote of the electorate;
  - (4) Ensure that no school district will receive less per student;
  - (5) Allow school districts to access additional funding in future years;
  - (6) Provide per student funding based on the greater of fall enrollment or the preceding year's ADM; while ensuring the comparison numbers are counting the same pupil population.
- R. The NDCEL opposes any initiated measure that would restrict or eliminate property taxes for school districts and municipalities.

- S. The NDCEL supports raising the bid limit for capital projects when nationally bid contracts are used provided a licensed architect or engineer is used as project manager.
- T. The NDCEL supports local control to determine an Ending Fund Balance to allow a school district to operate within a reasonable business model.

## **2. REFORM**

- A. The NDCEL supports the implementation of the North Dakota State Standards.
- B. The NDCEL supports a combined system of school approval and accreditation based on a state funded school improvement model (AdvancEd) that includes the development of areas of learning, educational core curriculum standards, environmental and facilities standards, local implementation plans, and holds schools accountable for performance. This system of approval and accreditation standards should be related to a district's mission, goals, and objectives.
- C. The NDCEL supports state-federal-mandated assessments, however, these tests must:
  - (1) Allow results from multiple assessments and opportunities to retake assessments to be used in gauging school success.
  - (2) Allow ELL students to develop language proficiency as determined by a language proficiency assessment before using their scores in determining AYP.
  - (3) Employ a targeted "growth" model to determine student progress/achievement from year to year (longitudinally) to allow the tracking of students and student sub-groups
    - (a) Enrolled in a single school district continually for at least two years;
    - (b) Similar consideration for how we monitor and report graduation rate.
  - (4) Not be administered to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students.
  - (5) Be useful to educators concerned about improving the instruction of children and allow educational agencies direct input into this process with a turn around time of four to six weeks.
  - (6) Be fully funded including research required for the development of the assessment and the technology necessary for the administration of the assessment by the state and federal agencies.
  - (7) Not support any state mandated assessment above and beyond federal requirements unless the assessment is tied to scholarship eligibility for students such as the ACT/WorkKeys.
  - (8) Be electronic assessments such as the SBAC or NWEA MAP.
  - (9) Allow appropriate state funded accommodations and/or tiered assessments for special needs students to include RTI, 504 and IEP students.
- D. The NDCEL supports quality schools, which are defined as locally driven with a plan for school improvement. Locally derived performance and core standards should be a part of the curriculum, and they should be related to a district's mission, goals, and objectives. Schools should:
  - (1) Provide educators who are role models who are trained and current in research and instructional methods.
  - (2) Be supported financially and emotionally by a community interested in collaboration for children.
  - (3) Be focused on teaching and learning.

- E. The NDCEL supports quality schools, which are defined as locally driven with a plan for school improvement. Locally derived performance and North Dakota state standards should be a part of the curriculum and they should be related to a district's mission, goals, and objectives.
- (1) A school should be linked to a School Improvement Planning process via AdvancEd or the Department of Public Instruction.
  - (2) Performance and North Dakota state standards should serve as guides within the improvement process. Local schools shall retain the right to select and approve local curriculum.
  - (3) Locally selected curriculum should be adopted based on a district's mission, goals, and objectives.
  - (4) There shall be high standards for all students that are aligned to curriculum and instruction and in conjunction with assessments to measure and reward academic progress.
- F. The NDCEL supports quality schools which are defined as containing high standards and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for all students that are aligned with curriculum and instruction in conjunction with assessments that reward and measure academic progress. Students should:
- (1) Learn to be good citizens by understanding and practicing democracy.
  - (2) Learn to respect and get along with others amid an atmosphere of learning and individual comfort.
  - (3) Practice and understand health and safety.
  - (4) Prepare for the world of work.
  - (5) Seek to be good managers of time and resources.
  - (6) Develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics, and problem solving.
  - (7) Learn to examine and use information.
  - (8) Appreciate culture and beauty.
  - (9) Respect and understand the world around them.
- G. The NDCEL supports locally controlled quality schools, which are defined as an "educational experience" which attempts to provide activities designed to further the progress of the whole student in relation to his/her needs, abilities, interests, and achievement. The high school education offering should include:
- (1) 4 units of Language Arts (English) that includes literature, composition, and speech;
  - (2) 4 units of Mathematics including 1 unit of algebra II and one unit for which algebra II is a prerequisite;
  - (3) 4 units of Lab Science including 1 unit of physical science, 1 unit of biology;
  - (4) 4 units of Social Studies including 1 unit of world history, and 1 unit of problems of democracy or ½ unit of United States government and ½ unit of economics;
  - (5) ½ unit Health Credit;
  - (6) ½ unit (courses) of Physical Education during each year that includes at least once every four years a concept based fitness class that includes instruction in the assessment, improvement, and maintenance of personal fitness;
  - (7) 2 units of fine arts, at least 1 of which must be-music;
  - (8) 2 units of the same foreign or Native American language;
  - (9) 1 unit of advanced placement or dual credit courses;

- (10) 2 units career and technical education from a coordinated plan of study recommended by the CTE department and approved by the superintendent of public instruction;
  - (11) Make available once every 2 years ½ unit of ND studies with an emphasis on geography, history, and agriculture.
- H. The NDCEL supports a rigorous and adequately funded standards based curriculum which ensures North Dakota students are educated in an innovative, relevant, integrated and challenging system which prepares them as good citizens and take full advantage of employment opportunities.
- I. The NDCEL supports quality schools, which are defined as performance and content standards in North Dakota:
- (1) A school should be linked to a School Improvement Planning process via AdvancEd.
  - (2) Performance and Content Standards should serve as guides within the improvement process. Local schools shall retain the right to select and approve local curriculum.
  - (3) Locally selected curriculum should be adopted based on a district's mission, goals, and objectives.
  - (4) There shall be high standards for all students, which are aligned to curriculum and instruction and in conjunction with assessments to measure and recognize academic progress.
- J. The NDCEL opposes using economic sanctions, rewards, student transfers, vouchers, and ranking of schools based on performance to “punish” schools to become excellent.
- K. The NDCEL supports local control and opposes any legislative mandates regarding how schools should achieve outcomes. The educational decision making is best left to the local school system.
- L. The NDCEL opposes home education or private schools that are not accredited by NDDPI and are not taught by licensed teachers.
- M. The NDCEL supports funding for local and/or regional engagement for alternative education, settings, methods and resources to allow students to graduate.
- N. The NDCEL opposes any federal and state mandates that require the removal of principals or teachers as a part the “turnaround schools” requirement as outlined in the “BluePrint for Reform” for the reauthorization of ESEA or as a requirement for Title 1a school improvement grant (SIG) eligibility.
- O. The NDCEL Supports the development of a state sponsored and funded Teacher/Principal Evaluation system charged with developing minimum statewide standards for a fair, thorough, consistent and efficient system for evaluating teacher and principal performance. This system should be based on a framework for a teacher and principal evaluation system from which individual school districts will implement fair, objective, reliable, valid and transparent evaluation processes.

### **3. ADMINISTRATIVE CREDENTIALS**

- A. The NDCEL supports the current rules for administrative credentials provided it allows state programs in educational leadership to allow required course preparations which are PK-12 in content (curriculum, school administration, etc.) and can be taught in any sequence order as long it is an approved program of study. The NDCEL also supports basing credential decisions on agreed-upon outcomes and not just inputs.
- B. The NDCEL supports the creation of an “Administrative Standards and Practices Board” for the purpose of setting and reviewing standards for training and credentialing of school administrators if attempts are made to change the current rules or move the process to the ESPB.
- C. The NDCEL supports studying and implementing creative modalities to help deal with teacher shortages such as an accelerated credentialing process from degreed professionals in other fields.

### **4. RETIREMENT**

- A. The NDCEL supports the use of TFFR funds to be used for contributing members’ retirement only.
- B. The NDCEL supports pension portability and license reciprocity to encourage the free flow of professional leadership.
- C. The NDCEL supports the current defined benefit plan used by TFFR and is opposed to any defined or hybrid contribution plan.
- D. The NDCEL supports allowing retired members of TFFR to return to work at full salary with full benefits as long as contributions and assessments are paid to TFFR with no additional service credit earned.
- E. The NDCEL supports insuring TFFR’s funding level and overall financial health without impairing legally protected contractual obligations by allowing school districts, for purposes of determining minimum salary, to include the employee’s half of TFFR in the determination of minimum salary for school districts paying both sides of TFFR.
- F. The NDCEL supports efforts to support an actuarially sound TFFR fund.

### **5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- A. The NDCEL supports increased funding for ND LEAD and Teacher Centers so that appropriate professional development activities can be provided to administrators.
- B. The NDCEL supports the local control of design and schedule of professional development programs for teachers and administrators that are state funded.

### **6. SCHOOL CALENDAR/YEAR/DAY:**

- A. The NDCEL supports local school boards maintaining the authority to establish the school calendar, school year, and school day. In the interest of student safety, schools should be able to start school two hours late or dismiss school two hours early without loss of a student contact day.

- B. The NDCEL supports moving to a minute or hourly model to track student contact/school calendar.
- C. If there is a mandated after Labor Day school start the requirement must also be imposed on all educational institutions including ND public institutions of higher education.
- D. The NDCEL believes that the minimum school day should be 360 minutes for high school students and 330 minutes for elementary students.

## **7. OTHER**

- A. The NDCEL supports authorizing and funding of voluntary developmentally appropriate early education programs for 4-5 year old children.
- B. The NDCEL supports expanding and funding at the same foundation (ADM) rate as alternative high school students for an alternative school or alternative school day treatment programs at the elementary, middle, and high school level. Middle school alternative students are defined as 13-14 and 15-year students.
- C. The NDCEL supports legislation that would provide for the future sustainability of the state scholarship fund but that it not be funded from the Foundation Aid Stabilization Fund or the Common Schools Trust Fund.
- D. NDCEL supports legislation that requires mandatory school attendance upon enrollment in a K-12 system.
- E. The NDCEL supports the use of state general funds to fully fund school nurse programs and school resource officers (SROs).
- F. The NDCEL supports a comprehensive state funded solution to provide school health personnel support to meet the needs of students and the statutory requirements regarding the disbursement of medication to students.
- G. The NDCEL supports a comprehensive system to support the Behavioral and Mental Health needs of PK-12 school students, including funding for appropriate school staff, as well as funding or incentives that develop and foster community-based programs and facilities to meet these needs.
- H. The NDCEL supports an increase in the availability of Dual Enrollment, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement courses offered and tested by offering professional development for qualified teachers and scholarships/reimbursements to students/parents.
- I. The NDCEL supports the removal of regulatory barriers to standards based pilot programs that integrate courses and allow credits to be earned for science, math, and English across curriculum. (i.e. proficiency/competency v. seat time/Carnegie unit).
- J. The NDCEL supports closing the achievement gap of at risk students in part by increasing the number of CTE courses available.



- K. The NDCEL supports the accreditation of REA's by the NDDPI's delegated accreditation entity (AdvancEd) by 2018.
- L. The NDCEL supports the delivery of AP classes and opportunities through the ND Center of Distance Learning or other accredited North Dakota programs to meet demand.
- M. The NDCEL supports the delivery of developmental/remedial courses for eligible high school students so long as the result of passing said course results in the ability for the student to enroll in credit bearing collegiate coursework after completion.
- N. The NDCEL supports initiatives which would streamline reports and align deadlines amongst entities that require them (i.e. NDDPI, Federal Reporting, Legislative Reporting, etc.)