

Board of Directors Sets WASB's Legislative Agenda

With the 2017-18 Legislative Session winding down, it is not too early to begin looking ahead



The 2018 WASB Legislative Agenda has been developed and is now posted on our website at WASB.org. The agenda outlines the top priorities for the government relations (GR) team to focus on in our advocacy efforts during the coming year.

This year's Legislative Agenda outlines four broad areas of focus. The corresponding WASB resolutions, approved by prior WASB Delegate Assemblies, are in parenthesis.

1. Preserving governance of publicly funded schools by locally elected boards.

- Advocating local control of school district referenda (Resolution 1.25).
- Opposing unfunded state mandates (Resolution 3.20).
- Opposing attempts to expand private school vouchers/independent charters at the expense of public education or take over public schools or school districts (Resolutions 1.01(b), 2.70, 2.705, 3.21).

2. Providing necessary resources for public schools.

- Increasing sparsity aid payments to eligible districts and expanding sparsity aid eligibility to districts with sparse pupil populations and membership between 746 and 1,000 (Resolutions 2.16, 2.16(a) and 2.17).
- Increasing the low-revenue ceiling to allow the state's lowest revenue (lowest spending) districts an opportunity to catch up with higher revenue districts (Resolutions 2.43, 2.425).

- Linking annual adjustments to per-pupil revenue limits, per-pupil aid and the low-revenue ceiling to inflation (if positive) in future years (Resolutions 2.19, 2.43).
 - Changing the distribution schedule for state general aids so districts receive more of their aid earlier in the school year and/or via more than four aid payments (Resolution 2.20(d)).
 - Restoring the revenue limit exemption for energy efficiency projects, and, if necessary, with guidelines to tighten up the program to prevent abuse or misuse (Resolution 2.41(r)).
- ## 3. Helping to lead a state effort in response to the "No Time To Lose" report issued by the National Conference Of State Legislatures (NCSL).

4. Implementing strategies to achieve the state's goals under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The Legislative Agenda is approved annually in November by the WASB Board of Directors and is guided by the resolutions adopted over the years by Delegate Assemblies and compiled in the WASB Resolutions book. It is developed with input from the WASB staff taking into account factors such as the makeup of the Legislature and governor's office, the state's fiscal condition, and the stated priorities of legislators and the governor, as well as the likelihood that we can partner with other organizations to form a coalition to advocate for certain items.

The Legislative Agenda typically changes from year to year. What remains constant, however, is that it is guided and informed by the resolutions put forward and approved by our membership. Once adopted by board member delegates at a WASB Delegate Assembly, resolutions are permanent. They remain the official position of the WASB until amended or repealed.

On January 17, in conjunction with the WASB-WASDA-WASBO State Education Convention, a representative of each school board and CESA board of control in the state, or delegate, will meet to vote on proposed resolutions put forth by the WASB Policy and Resolutions Committee. Your board's delegate will be receiving a packet of Delegate Assembly-related materials from the WASB shortly if they haven't already received them. If approved, these proposed resolutions will be added to the WASB Resolutions book.

While the resolutions generally determine or help to inform the WASB's positions on policy issues, *they are not the same* as the Legislative Agenda.

Instead, the resolutions set forth general guiding principles for the GR team to follow in its legislative advocacy. Ideally, resolutions do not define our position so rigidly that we cannot respond to lawmakers or state agency staff when they offer alternative solutions or compromises that may accomplish an end result that is supported by our resolutions. Having some flexibility is as helpful to the GR team as it is to you at the local school board level. ■