



SOUTH DAKOTA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2009

Each year, the South Dakota Education Association through its Representative Assembly sets our legislative advocacy program with a legislative agenda.

Our 2009 Legislative Agenda falls under four broad categories of vital interest to our members:

- ◆ ENSURING CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY
- ◆ PREPARING STUDENTS FOR JOBS OF THE FUTURE
- ◆ STRENGTHENING PUBLIC EDUCATION
- ◆ RESPECTING EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

**MAKING OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GREAT FOR EVERY CHILD**

2009 SDEA/NEA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Public Education Funding Remains Top Priority

While each of the four categories contains important proposals to support our members, SDEA has put forth its strongest efforts in the area of strengthening public education and respecting education employees. With our collaborative efforts with the Alliance for Education, SDEA has made securing marked increases in public education funding our number one priority. Two of our specific proposals in this area are:

- Increasing state funds for public education to the regional average to meet the level reflected in the Alliance Adequacy/Equity 2005 study or above: preK-12, career and technical institutes, and post-secondary at both undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Increasing the salaries of all education employees to the regional average or above.

The Alliance for Education, made up of SDEA, School Administrators of South Dakota, Associated School Boards of South Dakota and coalition groups of the small, middle and large sized school districts in our state, has commissioned an Adequacy and Equity Study of South Dakota's public school funding formula. This landmark research project found that our state needs to invest \$133 million to bring our school funding formula up to an adequate level. To examine the entire report, go to www.sdea.org. SDEA as well as the Alliance will work to update state legislators on the importance of the Adequacy Study findings.

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2009 SDEA/NEA Legislative Agenda

ENSURING CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

SDEA/NEA supports:

- Sufficient funding provided by the state and other sources to ensure that buildings are structurally and environmentally safe, adequate, and meet the technology needs of the future.
- A drug-free, tobacco-free, and weapon-free learning environment.
- Funding based on costs, not averages, for serving those with disabilities (ages birth-21)
- The requirement that school districts provide safe and well-regulated transportation or reimbursement to parents/guardians for transportation of students to and from public school.
- A learning environment free from intimidation and harassment.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR JOBS OF THE FUTURE

SDEA/NEA supports:

- A full curriculum supported by a complement of services that prepare students for life-long learning.
- The implementation of forward looking career preparation programs.
- State funding for post-secondary scholarships across a broad spectrum of student abilities.
- The use of assessments as part of a comprehensive plan to determine individual student growth, but opposes paying students for individual or class-based performance.

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC EDUCATION

SDEA/NEA supports:

- Increasing state funds for public education to the regional average to meet the level reflected in the Alliance Adequacy/Equity 2005 study or above: preK-12, career and technical institutes, and post-secondary at both undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Keeping public dollars for public education students.
- The adoption of accreditation standards by the State Board of Education and urges their use in the school accreditation process.
- Efforts to have appropriately certified and endorsed educators in all positions.

- The limitation on the amount of money school districts can maintain or carryover in their fund balances.
- A long-term solution, which includes a balanced tax structure, to fund preK-12 public education in South Dakota.
- School terms that include student contact days and/or hours, professional development/curriculum days and family conferences.
- The rejection of taxation plans that adversely affect education funding such as TABOR and 65% "solution".
- A full-time all day kindergarten program.
- Sufficient funding for the programs and resources needed to address the change in compulsory attendance.

RESPECTING EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

SDEA/NEA supports:

- Increasing the salaries of all education employees to the regional average or above.
- Legislation which would fund family health benefits for public school employees.
- Efforts to strengthen collective bargaining rights and to achieve greater equity at the bargaining table (i.e. binding arbitration).
- Legislation that would require rationale be given on decisions by the South Dakota Department of Labor regarding bargaining issues.
- Efforts and legislation to maintain and/or increase the South Dakota Retirement System benefit factor and the COLA and to protect the SDRS Pension Trust Fund. These efforts shall include, but not be limited to, building a coalition including all organized employee groups covered under SDRS.
- Legislation that ensures that there are salaries and incentives to attract and retain quality educators, that support performance enhancement or increased pay for increased work, but not performance pay systems such as those linked to standardized test scores or a single evaluation.
- Providing a negotiated per diem increase in pay for all school employees if there is an increase in the school term.
- The increase of support personnel salaries to equal or surpass the national livable wage.
- The representation of all levels of instruction preK through 20 in the planning/development and implementation of educational policy.
- Maintaining continuing contract provisions in the law.