

UEN Legislative Priorities for 2019 Session

Invest in Iowa's Future: Public schools are the answer to Iowa's workforce challenge. Public schools educate a diverse workforce with the skills necessary to fuel our future. Adequate funding is required to:

- reinstate Iowa's first in the nation education status,
- deliver world-class learning results for all students,
- develop a world-class workforce to secure Iowa's economic future, and
- recruit, retain and reward Iowa's excellent educators today and in the future.

The cost per pupil must fuel school districts and AEAs. Equity requires our formula to meet student need as poverty in Iowa has nearly doubled in the last two decades. Iowa's school formula must recognize and fund programs designed for student success including but not limited to the needs of students from low-income families, non-English speaking students, and students at-risk of dropping out. Early investment increases access to quality preschool programs which prevent higher costs later.

A strong school finance system requires commitment to the principles of primacy, adequacy, equity, and flexibility. Iowa's investment in public education should mirror economic growth and make up for shortfalls when the economy is robust. New state resources must supplement, not supplant existing resources. Iowa's future depends on a stable and balanced tax policy that generates enough money to fund Iowa's priorities, including the education of Iowa's children.

Extend State Penny Sales Tax: Eliminate the sunset permanently thus allowing districts to maintain facilities and technology without needlessly increasing property taxes. Future state penny revenues should remain dedicated to schools and property tax equity/relief.

Resolve Formula and Transportation Inequalities: Eliminate the \$170 difference in the district cost per pupil in the school foundation formula and close the expenditure gap in school transportation costs.

Teacher and Administrator Shortage: Iowa has an educator shortage. Adequate funding is essential for public schools to compete with the private sector for employees. Flexibility in certification requirements, elimination of licensure barriers, acceptance of alternate evidence to demonstrate mastery, loan-forgiveness and creation of a public service track within Iowa's CTE plan will help schools meet the challenge of attracting and retaining tomorrow's educators.

Student Mental Health Services: Students with mental health challenges need Iowa to fund services, eliminate barriers, and clarify funding sources and responsibilities, which must include critical partners and wrap-around services. Medicaid and private insurance must pay for telehealth counseling provided virtually to students while at school.

School Safety: Urban schools need the resources, training and support necessary for school safety including; 1) resources for technology and facilities through extension of the state penny, and 2) state funding for security personnel and training to protect against active shooter and other emergency situations presenting harm.

Financial Literacy: It is essential for students in today's world to master financial literacy but implementation of the 2018 mandate is impossible for urban schools. An intelligent phase-in of the requirements would first apply to incoming freshman July 1, 2019, include local flexibility in content delivery, and remove the explicit standards from Iowa Code as they would be better set by the Iowa State Board of Education.

District Authority: School boards are responsible to make decisions on behalf of their students, staff and communities to meet the goals of their district.