



2012 BVSD LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Approved by the Boulder Valley Board of Education December 13, 2011

This platform is intended to guide the interactions between the Boulder Valley School District and the Colorado General Assembly during the 2012 session. It contains a statement of beliefs and guiding principles as well as items targeted at specific legislation. Legislative issues that arise, which are not addressed in this platform or require additional interpretation before a district position can be articulated, shall involve the Board of Education Legislative Liaisons and the Superintendent of Schools.

Beliefs and Guiding Principles

We support the state's efforts to ensure a thorough and uniform system of free public education through the establishment of reasonable standards and assessments, applied equally to all districts and all educational institutions receiving public funds.

We hold the state accountable for providing adequate funding to achieve a thorough and uniform system of education.

We support the state's objective of closing the achievement gap for all of Colorado's children.

We believe that while each district should be held to a uniform standard, we also believe that each district has unique needs and circumstances, and that local school boards are in the best position to create policies and programs that can best achieve those standards. We support the current balance between the setting of uniform standards by the state and the control over implementation of those standards by locally elected school boards.

We believe that any mandates by state authorities should include funding for local school districts to effectively implement new requirements, including new testing requirements. We support deregulation or relaxation of non-essential state reporting and other administrative requirements that would free up more time and resources at the school and district levels.

We believe that the needs of children are best met when the state works collaboratively with local districts in a spirit of continuous improvement.

We support collaborative efforts to address academic achievement from preschool through the postgraduate level to develop a coherent and aligned comprehensive plan for public education for Colorado.

We remain open to exploring new and innovative ways to educate today's children for tomorrow's challenges. We stand willing to be a part of discussions relative to different aspects of educational reform.

GOVERNANCE

1.1 We support legislation that reinforces the responsibility and accountability of the local board of education. We strongly believe that as a local board of education, we are responsible for the organization of the learning environment, the implementation of curriculum, the configuration of school facilities, staffing, and necessary programs that create a safe and academically rich opportunity for all of its students.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:

2.1 We support legislative actions that collaboratively address academic achievement from preschool through the postgraduate level unless such legislation would directly contradict those items in the BVSD Legislative Platform.

2.2 We support the recommended actions of the Governor's P-20 Council from 2007 to 2011 that were enacted into state law and would oppose their repeal or weakening.

2.3 We oppose efforts to increase the total amount of time devoted to state mandated testing. We also believe that as a matter of fairness, parents should be assured that students will not be punished through denial of course credits, of grade to grade promotion or of a diploma, as a result of taking or failing to take the CSAP test.

2.4 We support funding and requiring the State Board of Education to administer the ACT writing test so that students applying to institutions of higher education that require the writing test will not need to take the ACT test battery a second time at their own expense.

2.5 We support legislation modifying the Colorado English Language Assessment (CELA) so that the CELA exam would serve as a substitute for the CSAP reading and writing tests until a student has been determined English proficient as measured by CELA.

2.6 We oppose legislative efforts to establish mandatory state-wide uniform high school graduation requirements. However, we do support legislation that sets forth state-wide high school graduation standards that clearly articulate what students will know, do and understand as long as a local school district can determine how such standards will be achieved and reported.

2.7 We support legislation that ensures all educational organizations receiving any public funding to educate students whether online, public, private or parochial, meet the requirements of state accountability, accreditation and assessment standards. Specifically, the reporting of student participation and completion rates in online programs should be comparable to traditional public schools for accountability purposes.

2.8 We support legislation that will assist local school districts in their efforts to raise the achievement of all students while closing the gap for underperforming groups of students.

2.9 We believe local school boards must retain sufficient flexibility to approve, continue or discontinue charter schools and all local public school choice options for the benefit of all students in the school district.

2.10 We strongly support legislation to provide in-state postsecondary tuition to all Colorado high school graduates in order to help decrease BVSD's achievement gap, increase our graduation rate and positively contribute to Colorado's economic development and growth.

2.11 We support the implementation of full day kindergarten and expanding early childhood programs that can give all students a pathway to success. It is BVSD's expectation that the General Assembly would eventually fund full day Kindergarten programs and quality early childhood programs throughout Colorado.

2.12 We support the creation and implementation, at the school district level, of academic development metrics from preschool through second grade for purposes of meeting student literacy benchmarks and district accountability for each student as may be required to maximize individual learning growth. We oppose any statewide legislative or regulatory directive at these and any other grade levels that would mandate student retention.

SCHOOL FINANCE

3.1 We strongly urge the legislature to continue efforts at a comprehensive reform of the Colorado School Finance Act and overall State tax structure.

3.2 We continue to support the current state calculation of "Total Program" funding for public education through the Colorado School Finance Act and will work to minimize and eventually eliminate the use of a negative factor to restore Colorado K-12 funding to its constitutionally required level.

3.3 We support legislation allowing school districts to trigger the enrollment averaging formula for funding purposes based on the percent of decline of its non-charter school population.

3.4 We support maintaining and, when possible, increasing reimbursement levels for the categorical programs of English Language Proficiency Education, Gifted and Talented Education, Special Education, Transportation and Vocational Education.

3.5 We support legislation that increases the pool of funds available for reimbursement to districts with students with severe special needs and associated high excess costs.

3.6 We support legislation providing additional funding and resources to promote school safety, truancy, anti-bullying and gang prevention/intervention programs and services.

3.7 We support funding for Colorado public schools to enhance environmental sustainability.

3.8 We support additional funding for transportation costs.

3.9 We support an increase in the state reimbursement rate for school nutrition programs that promote and support higher wellness standards and healthier school foods.

3.10 We support legislation that would refer comprehensive state tax and spending policy reforms to Colorado voters to unravel the current conflicting and confusing state constitutional provisions that inhibit or deny adequate funding of government services including K-12 public education.

3.11 We support legislation that would allow a local school board to refer to district voters a proposed dedicated property tax mill levy to provide increased funding of that district's capital improvement projects to address ongoing facilities maintenance needs.

EMPLOYMENT

4.1 We support legislation that will expand employment for areas where a school district has declared a critical shortage or inability to hire qualified staff.

4.2 We support legislation that provides necessary state funding to increase educator effectiveness.

4.3 We support legislation that ensures the long-term financial health of the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) fund for existing and future school district employees.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS:

5.1 We oppose legislation that makes it the responsibility of a school district to verify a contractor's prompt payment of its subcontractors.

5.2 We oppose any further statutory reduction in allowed retainage requirements in school district capital construction contracts.

5.3 We support legislation requiring the Colorado Department of Education to streamline data collection procedures required of school districts.