



# Legislative Beliefs Statement of ASBO International

As approved by the ASBO International Board of Directors

June 15, 2017

## ASBO International

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) has access to approximately 30,000 school business professionals through its members and affiliates, who are all dedicated stewards of taxpayers' investment in education. These trustworthy K-12 district leaders are tasked with managing educational resources effectively and efficiently to support student success. School business officials work tirelessly to ensure that the myriad financial and administrative operations necessary to keep schools running and provide safe learning environments do not negatively impact student learning. As school business officials strive to ensure that taxpayer resources are utilized wisely in their districts, ASBO International is here to support them.

ASBO members represent every aspect of school support services, including school finance and operations, facilities and risk management, human resources, procurement, nutrition services, technology, and more. They ensure that every day, students have clean facilities, safe transportation, nutritious meals, current technology, and adequate supplies to support their education. Our members are committed to enhancing student achievement by efficiently managing educational resources, creating innovative school business management practices, and leading the profession by promoting the cost-effective use of taxpayer resources.

## School Funding Has Yet to Recover from the Great Recession

With a wide and deep knowledge of school finance and operations, ASBO International is uniquely qualified and well positioned to help federal policymakers understand the enormous challenge of ensuring student success in a rapidly changing educational landscape where dwindling resources—federal, state, and local—are a continuous reality.

ASBO International is concerned about the lack of stability in school finance today. In the past, our members have relied on and sustained student learning with a necessary, welcomed infusion of federal resources. However, this has helped fill only part of the void created by the loss of state and local education funding. State school funding levels are still recovering from the Great Recession. The 2008 financial crisis and federal fiscal austerity measures imposed by the 2011 Budget Control Act, the 2013 sequester, and other budgetary caps have had detrimental effects on federal education funding, and thus adversely influence state and local funding. We believe that K-12 schools will continue to face a bleak financial future and will require additional federal assistance. This assistance may take the form of additional funding, but other forms of aid for schools are vital, too.

## ASBO International Legislative Beliefs

### I. **We believe targeted, robust funding with minimal administrative burden is an important part of a school system's revenue.**

**We support** a bipartisan, fiscally responsible solution for the federal government to resolve sequestration and remove harmful budget caps that limit federal investment in education.

**We support** that Congress play a primary role in ensuring that students have an equal opportunity to receive a quality education. Furthermore, we support an increase in federal funding for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We believe Congress should fully fund formula grants that reflect its commitment to historically disadvantaged students, including low-income students and those with disabilities.

- We believe Congress should prioritize funding for formula grants over competitive grants as a part of its broader education agenda. Formula grants represent a more reliable funding stream for school districts, which require a certain level of financial stability to undertake the ambitious reforms proposed by competitive grant programs.
- We believe Congress should fully fund IDEA at 40% of the national average per-pupil expenditure to address extra costs involved with educating special-needs students and fulfill its original promise to support students with disabilities. We support relaxing IDEA, Part B maintenance of effort requirements so that local districts have more flexibility in addressing this underfunded mandate by reducing investment in special education on the condition that more efficient ways of serving students with disabilities can be achieved.
- We believe Congress should increase funding for ESSA Titles I, II, and Title IV formula grants. ESSA provides state and local leaders flexibility and autonomy over their classrooms, but their success will ultimately rely on how well ESSA is funded. In addition, while formula grants should be prioritized, we also support sufficient funding for Titles II and IV competitive grants that support quality professional development and 21st Century Community Learning Center after-school and other vital programs.

**We support** a reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Act that reinforces the importance of quality school career and technical education (CTE) programs aligned with college- and career-ready standards. While there are provisions in the law worthy of sustaining, we believe several changes should be made to modernize the law to ensure our nation has a highly qualified, prepared workforce.

- We believe the next Perkins bill should: 1) increase CTE funding and reduce administrative burdens to receive funding; 2) require separate funding streams for secondary/post-secondary programs; 3) encourage businesses to get involved in CTE programs; 4) increase funding for student career counseling; and 5) limit the federal government's authority to prescribe CTE mandates (as done with ESSA).

## **II. We believe that schools need adequate federal support, flexibility, and funding to implement federal healthcare regulations.**

**We support** federal efforts to increase the amount of funding and quality of training, technical support, and other guidance/resources to assist school systems with implementing healthcare regulations. We support the outreach efforts of the Internal Revenue Service to ASBO International and other K–12 stakeholders on improving the regulatory environment for school systems.

**We support** the reduction, simplification, and streamlining of current Affordable Care Act (ACA) regulations to reduce the administrative burden and costs for school systems to comply with the healthcare law.

- We believe the definition for a full-time employee (FTE) who qualifies for health insurance should be changed from an individual who works an average of 30 hours/week to 35 hours/week. We also support adding new language to the ACA that allows currently “grandfathered” self-insured plans to permanently retain that status.

**We oppose** healthcare reforms that would adversely affect the financial structure or funding streams of the federal-state Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Programs (CHIP). This includes limiting federal payments to states via per-capita caps based on enrollment or block grants, both of which do not provide states relief in the event of a recession, public health crisis, or other emergency.

- We believe that capping or reducing Medicaid/CHIP funding to states hinders their ability to reimburse Medicaid-eligible service providers, including hospitals, clinics, and schools. Schools rely on \$4 billion annually in Medicaid dollars to provide vital student health services to children, especially those with disabilities and from low-income families that cannot afford access to these services elsewhere.

## **III. We believe that K–12 infrastructure is in dire need of federal investment and schools require adequate funding to construct, renovate, upgrade, and maintain facilities.**

**We support** a fiscally responsible federal infrastructure plan that incorporates K–12 schools into its broader policy agenda. Federal investment in K–12 infrastructure should include, but not be limited to, direct state funding; voluntary grants; public-private partnerships; tax-credit bonds such as qualified zone academy bonds and qualified school construction bonds (QZABs/QSCBs); and other financial options to help schools construct, renovate, upgrade, and maintain their facilities.

**We support** the reduction, simplification, and streamlining of grant application and reporting requirements for schools and districts to receive federal funding for K–12 infrastructure projects. Excessive administrative, paperwork, and compliance burdens relative to voluntary grant applications often deter school districts from applying for financial assistance. We believe the federal government should work with ASBO International and other K–12 stakeholders to ensure infrastructure grants and related requirements are easy to access and navigate for districts with limited staff and resources.

#### **IV. We believe that schools require a sustainable nutrition program business model with minimal administrative burden that provides affordable, nutritious meals that students will want to eat.**

**We support** an increase in federal government reimbursements to schools for free and reduced-price meals and for lost revenues when implementing new nutrition regulations.

**We support** the reduction, simplification, and streamlining of regulations for federal child nutrition programs to reduce the administrative burden and costs for managing school meal programs. The federal government should continue to play a supportive, flexible role in helping states and school districts comply with nutrition standards and offer quality guidance, technical support, and professional development for administering meal programs.

**We oppose** nutrition reforms that would adversely affect the financial structure of, federal funding streams for, or student access to, child nutrition and school meal programs. This includes capping federal payments to states for school meal programs via block grants and increasing the eligibility threshold for schools and districts to enroll in the 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program.

- We believe that capping funding streams via state block grants will reduce funding for schools to administer meal programs (block grants would provide states fixed funding in lieu of federal reimbursements per each eligible meal served). Block grants do not provide states relief in the event of a recession, rising child poverty, increases in enrollment/participation in meal programs, and rising food prices and school meal costs.
- We believe that the CEP is an effective federal program that enables high-poverty schools and districts to provide meals to all students at no charge; improves meal program participation and efficiency; and reduces paperwork burdens for K-12 districts. CEP has been adopted in approximately 18,000 high-poverty schools and 3,000 districts, feeding more than 8.5 million students. Currently, a school or district is CEP-eligible to serve all students school meals at no charge if 40% or more of its students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. We oppose any increase to the 40% threshold, which would make it harder for schools/districts to qualify for CEP eligibility and provide low-income students access to affordable, nutritious meals.

#### **ASBO International and Its Members Are Willing Partners**

ASBO International and its members want to offer our experience, expertise, and interest in creating a world-class education system for all students. We welcome the opportunity to work with federal policymakers in meeting the significant financial and operational challenges that schools face. Please feel free to contact Elleka Yost, ASBO International Government Affairs & Communications Manager, at 866.682.2729 x7065, or email [eyost@asbointl.org](mailto:eyost@asbointl.org).

## ASBO International Legislative Advisory Committee

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