

Legislative and Policy Agenda

AEA routinely surveys our 20,000+ members prior to the start of each legislative session to determine the priority issues impacting public education. Throughout the year, AEA uses a variety of methods to gather member feedback regarding specific legislation. Furthermore, AEA will additionally continue to advocate legislative and policy fixes as identified by our members that will strengthen our public schools.

2022 AEA Legislative and Policy Priorities

1. Repeal the Aggregate Expenditure Limit for K-12 schools, with a 2022 session focus to exempt Prop 301 and Prop 208 monies.
2. Engage in meaningful policy discussions to address the staff shortages impacting our schools and students.
3. Defend the commitment to ensure that trained professional educators work collectively to determine curriculum that ensures accurate and honest education.
4. Defend the expectation that no retaliatory action will be taken against educators advocating for their colleagues, students, and the profession.
5. Demand that all measures needed to ensure the safety of staff and students are available to local communities throughout the state.
6. Ensure that any newly created policies for any school funding is given equitably to serve those most in need.
7. Protect and sustain the ASRS defined benefit pension plan for public school employees.
8. Advocate for research-based class size limits to be used in every classroom throughout the state.

Ongoing AEA Legislative and Policy Priorities

Public Education Funding

AEA advocates for policies that:

Restore necessary funding for public education and fully invest in the future of Arizona's children.

- Attract and retain a workforce of certified employees with sufficient and immediate salary increases that will create competitive pay with neighboring states.
- Education Support Professionals (classified staff) must receive compensation and benefits that reflects a livable and thrive able wage/salary and must be competitive with similar jobs in the private sector.
- Establish permanent salary structures for all public-school employees which includes annual raises.
- Restore \$1 billion in revenue to provide immediate, sustainable, and significant public education funding (FY2022) focused on equity and closing the opportunity gap for all students to meet the needs of our public schools in Arizona as follows:
 - Provide critical resources for classrooms such as support services, supplies, updated textbooks, and technology.
 - Fund school building maintenance and repairs to give students safe, clean, and functional places to learn.
 - Provide adequate funding for smaller class sizes, lower caseloads and appropriate student to school counselor ratios based on current research recommendations.
 - Invest in school readiness via early childhood and Pre-Kindergarten through Third Grade educational programs, including state-funded full-day kindergarten.
 - Provide career and technical education funding to assist students in preparing to enter the workforce.
- Prevent the Arizona Legislature and Governor from diverting revenue away from public schools through tax cuts, tax credits and vouchers (i.e., empowerment scholarship accounts and student tuition organizations) until per-pupil funding reaches the national average.
- Secure affordable, quality healthcare coverage for all public-school employees.

The 2022 AEA Legislative and Policy Agenda is approved by the AEA Board of Directors. It is based on the public policy statements in the AEA Legislative Platform adopted by the 2020 AEA Delegate Assembly.

Ongoing AEA Legislative and Policy Priorities

Quality Teaching and Learning

AEA advocates for policies that:

Advance sound education policy supporting high standards for teaching and learning and ensuring access to a high-quality education for all Arizona students.

- Promote a statewide systemic approach to quality teaching and learning including highly effective educator preparation programs and certification; professional development; mentoring and induction; career development pathways; and compensation structures.
- Promote equitable access to social-emotional learning for all students through curriculum and training for educators. Provide funding to meet the social and emotional needs of all students
- Support legislation declaring instruction as the primary duty of teachers.
- Recognize educators as professionals and ensure them the autonomy to deliver a flexible curriculum and make instruction-based decisions to meet the needs of their students.
- Commit to the recruitment and retention of professionally trained and certified educators for all public schools.
- Ensure that all mandated trainings, professional development or change in professional expectations are publicly funded and not passed onto the educator.

Fair Employment Rights

AEA advocates for policies that:

Advocate for fairness and respect of the education profession and all public education employees.

- Strengthen educator employment rights relating to fair contract practices and dates, Reduction In Force (RIF) process, salaries, nonrenewal notices and association work.
- Establish due process rights for all Education Support Professionals (classified employees).
- Remove high-stakes consequences tied to mandated assessment data, including Local Education Agency (LEA), school, and individual ratings of effectiveness (i.e., A-F accountability system and results-based funding); evaluations; compensation structures; and personnel decisions.
- Provide for fair and relevant evaluation systems that:
 - a. include educator input and a clear appeal process.
 - b. support professional development and growth.
 - c. promote quality teaching and learning; and
 - d. use various data points that reflect the course of instruction.

Retirement System

AEA advocates for policies that:

Protect and strengthen a secure retirement system for current, retired, and future school employees.

- Sustain and protect a Defined Benefit plan for public employees.