Principal for a Day – Talking Points

Student Discipline

In light of several pieces of legislation aimed at addressing bullying and reducing the use of exclusionary discipline, we believe that school administrators and boards need the flexibility and discretion to address discipline according to the needs and values of their community.

- We encourage school districts to utilize positive behavior interventions, restorative justice measures, social emotional learning concepts, and constructive discipline within available resources and in appropriate situations;

- We support the elimination of zero tolerance disciplinary practices;

- We support efforts to keep students on track for graduation and providing opportunities for suspended or expelled students to make-up their work at the discretion of the local school district given the particular circumstances;

- However, school officials and law enforcement must have discretion and the ability to remove students from the learning environment as needed to maintain a safe school environment for students, staff, volunteers and visitors. **We remain concerned that many of the provisions in Senate Bill 3004 would remove or significantly reduce this authority, therefore threatening the safety of students and staff in Illinois schools.**

Education Reform

Over the last three years, the State has enacted the Performance Evaluation Reform Act, Senate Bill 7, Common Core standards, begun work on new assessments, a Longitudinal Data System and the Illinois 5Essentials Survey. We support continued innovation in education, but **caution the enactment of further reforms until the above items are fully implemented.** We encourage working with the Illinois State Board of Education to determine effective implementation with thoughtful and appropriate timelines and resources.

- Reforms should be implemented with caution against an over-reliance on assessment of children.

- PARCC assessments, aligned to Common Core State Standards, should also be implemented in a thoughtful manner with appropriate resources. Most districts in Illinois lack the devices and technology infrastructure to begin utilizing online assessments by the intended implementation dates of 2014-2015.

- We value high-quality administrators and teachers and promote effective educational leadership. It is our belief as an association that better principals foster better schools and learning environments for students. We support having well-trained evaluators and administration of quality staff evaluations, with reasonable training expectations.

- We support the restoration of New Teacher and Principal Mentoring funding to provide additional support to new educators and administrators.
State Funding

We appreciate the fiscal crisis in Illinois, but support the continued investment in public education. IPA supports funding the General State Aid formula at a level that reflects the cost of providing quality education for all Illinois students.

- We also support the general concept that school funding reform is necessary to assure a fair and appropriate education for all students. Equity must be matched with adequate resources to accomplish the goals policymakers and constituents have for our schools and our students.

- We support stable transportation funding in the state budget. Especially for downstate and rural districts, transportation support is essential to ensuring students get to school, ready to learn. Even in suburban districts, transportation is needed for families that are challenged to transport their students on their own due to work commitments or other conflicting schedules.

Mandates

- IPA supports local control of public schools and believes that any programs or services mandated by the Illinois General Assembly and the Governor or the Illinois State Board of Education should provide sufficient new revenues to fully reimburse the additional costs by those programs. Statutory enactment of new mandated programs must be in compliance with, and not exempted from, the State Mandates Act.

- We encourage the General Assembly to support the work of the P-20 Council and ISBE to eliminate mandates that are determined inefficient, do not accomplish intended goals, or do not appropriately support student achievement.