

Carmel Clay Schools 2018 Legislative Priorities

Aligned with the ISBA 2018 Legislative Priorities

Our Mission: Carmel Clay Schools will provide opportunities for all students to realize their potential in an ever-changing world.

Our Guiding Principles start with “Students are at the center of every decision.” and end with “Fiscal responsibility is fundamental to achieving our vision.”

Students and Teachers

1. **Student Testing and Teacher Evaluations** - There should be greater focus on benchmark testing during the school year (formative testing) compared to end-of-year testing (summative testing). A more formative testing process would more fully integrate with an effective teacher evaluation system that focuses on individual student growth. (IC 20-28-11.5-4(c)(2))

Discussion: Less time and money should be spent on high stakes end of year assessments, and more time on periodic formative classroom assessments. It is more important to give teachers tools so that they can adjust lessons in response to student growth and performance throughout the school year.

Teacher evaluations should substantially focus on student academic growth to inform teaching. Formative testing results, reviewed throughout the school year, can provide immediate feedback on student comprehension and academic progression. Mid-course corrections, based on student and class performance, will allow teachers to adjust their teaching style, emphasis, and pace. Teacher evaluations should focus on a teacher's ability and willingness to use this type of data to inform instruction, not on student standardized test scores.

2. **Professional Development** - The state should provide funding for up to five (5) days of professional development and in-service program days conducted beyond the 180-day school year.

Discussion: We recognize teachers as professionals and look to the state to recognize and fund professional development.

Funding

3. **Public School Tax credits** - Tax credits should be allowed for donations made to public schools and public school foundations.

Discussion: There currently exists a tax credit system for donations to Indiana colleges and universities and for donations to scholarship-granting organizations (private school vouchers). There is no tax credit for donations to public schools or public school foundations. Many public schools are beginning to experience financial distress and it would be prudent public policy to also encourage taxpayers to donate to their local public schools that represent over 1,000,000 Indiana students.

4. **Non-Public School Funding and Accountability** – Stop reducing public school funding by funding vouchers, education savings accounts, and other private school funding mechanisms. There should also be greater accountability and transparency required for private schools accepting state funding. An example is that student assessments should be equivalent to those in public schools.

Discussion: Currently there is only one fund from which public schools and non-public schools receive funding from the State. This means fewer dollars going to public schools if the State continues to distribute these funds to non-public schools. There should be auditing procedures established to ensure that state tax dollars are expended on approved educational costs.

5. **Tax Deduction for School Textbooks and Supplies** – Indiana is one of few states that requires public school students and parents to pay for their school textbooks and supplies.

Discussion: Public school parents pay a substantial amount for textbooks and other school supplies. These parents should also be entitled to claim up to \$1,000 income tax deduction per dependent. Parents of students enrolled in private schools or home schools are already entitled to claim that amount as an income tax deduction per dependent for costs related to tuition, textbooks, computer software, and other school supplies. There is no similar tax deduction available to parents of students who are enrolled in public schools.

6. **Assistance for Losses from Circuit Breaker** – The circuit breaker was designed to cap property taxes but an unintended consequence has been to reduce funding to public schools.

Discussion: More and more schools are feeling the effects of property tax caps.

Adopted: October 23, 2017