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2014 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

As a State Board, we commend Governor Branstad and the Iowa General Assembly for major progress in educational policy in 2013. Their passage of education reform was historic and is appreciated. Building off of these good bipartisan efforts, we believe in these goals:

Improving Teacher and Leader Preparation
- Highlight exceptional methods for using technology in the classroom.
- Improve accountability with a reliance on student achievement data to demonstrate results.
- Continue to push for innovation and high quality in all programs in our state.
- Analyze the new 2014-15 yearlong student teaching experience pilot project that we believe will yield positive results in helping prepare our teachers.

Competency-based Education
- Continue to establish Iowa as a national leader in providing this learning option.
- Utilize the report from the multi-year task force that extensively studied competency-based education.
- Establish a permanent state funding stream to support competency-based measures in Iowa schools.
- Support the innovative efforts of ten Iowa schools who were awarded grants to develop a framework to support statewide implementation of competency-based education.

Online Learning and Other Technological Advances
- Be bold in embracing online learning in this state in preparing our learners for the future.
- Require all Iowa students to take at least one class online before graduation.
- Collect data to measure best practice in using technology, properly funding the necessary broadband capacity and hardware to allow such learning to take place.
- Work to promote the usage of the expanded Iowa Learning Online system by Iowa schools to provide expanded student learning opportunities.

Reducing Achievement Gaps
- Learn from Iowa schools that have effectively closed the gap.
- Establish intensive efforts for students based on ever improving data in this policy area.
- Continue to study root causes of and current efforts to address disparities.
- Implement pilot extended learning projects researched and prepared for the Iowa General Assembly as well as monitor the distribution of $10 million in high need school grants.

Assessment
- All student assessments must align with the Iowa Core to accurately study what students know.
- Assessments should provide usable results that help educators provide instruction that best meet the needs of their students.
- All assessment choices should be available for potential use in this state, with testing choices being selected based on professional research and review, not legislative prohibitions.
- We commend the legislative action that established an assessment task force and encourage this group to support reliable testing systems that use the latest technology.