

Iowa Association of Christian Schools

2014 Winter Edition



www.iowachristianschools.org

New Year, New Website, New Legislative Session

Happy New Year!

Although a little over halfway through this school year, we wish you a happy 2014! IACS has been working to represent the issues facing Iowa's Christian schools since 1976. Each New Year brings with it the start of a new legislative session just a couple of short weeks later.

This year, IACS is as focused as ever on educating Iowans about the benefits of school choice and protecting the interests of our schools during the legislative session. That's why we have invested in a new website and new services to help you interact easily with us and with your elected officials.

It is crucial that we are engaged in the process as there is much work to do on various issues and appropriations. We also need to support the efforts of Iowa ACE to champion school choice legislation like our tax credits and the new Education Savings Accounts (ESAs).

This year is an election year. IACS does not endorse political candidates and we do not have a political action committee. We are, however, proud to be a part of the Iowa Advocates for Choice in Education coalition and encourage you to visit their website, check out their political action committee, and get involved. Your support of IACS as dues-paying schools as well as our individual contributions to Iowa Advocates makes a huge difference as we each fulfill our unique roles in Iowa's school choice movement.

Our New Website Has Launched!

After a number of years with our last website, we needed to make some changes to improve the look and the functionality of our website.

What's New:

1. **Design** - A completely fresh look and feel with easy navigation. We wanted to make sure that the latest news was always easy to find and that our email sign-up form and our action alerts were easy to use.
2. **Communication** - We have subscribed to the VoterVoice service and we are extremely excited about what this means for our outreach and advocacy efforts! This service will be integrated into our website and Facebook page. Now, when you sign up for our email newsletter, you are also signing up to be able to participate in our calls-to-action in only a few clicks. When IACS sends out a request to contact your legislators, all you have to do is click, update any pertinent information if needed, customize the email that's already drafted for you if you'd like, and hit send. It's as easy as it gets and will make our efforts to contact legislators even more effective!
3. **News/Blog** - Our website now has a more attractive and categorized "news" section so you can find what you are looking for much easier.
4. **Other Changes** - Starting soon, every school we have information for will be listed with dues-paying members getting links! If your school's link needs updating, please let us know!

January 7, 2014

2014 Legislative Session Preview

IACS has been in contact with legislators throughout the interim and we are prepared to advocate for your schools again this year.

The leadership in both chambers are telling us that they plan on taking up fewer controversial items, working together to pass a budget, and adjourn early this year.

Last year was a huge year with many large issues seeing progress but we know that it never is as quiet as leadership hopes it will be. We are hopeful that this session will see both chambers agree to work together. We will be looking for opportunities to remove the sunset from last year's independent accreditation legislation, we will be working with public and private school partners on mostly technical corrections and adjustments to last year's ed reform legislation, and we will work with [Iowa Advocates for Choice in Education](#) and the [Iowa Catholic Conference](#) in advancing school choice legislation.

We are also very aware of the slow pace at which transportation and textbook funding has caught up after the back-to-back 10% across-the-board cuts from a number of years ago and will be working to correct the underfunding of these commitments by the State for our kids.

School Choice/ESA Iowa Public Opinion Survey

[Iowa ACE](#) co-hosted a press conference with [The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice](#) at the State Capitol a few months ago announcing the results of a survey conducted Statewide. [This survey](#) of a broad cross-section of Iowans showed that Iowans generally like their local public schools *and* want to see school choice expanded in Iowa. This was very good news! Iowans support the

concept of school choice, they support the STO tax credit program, and with Iowa ACE just starting the grassroots campaign on ESAs, Iowans are already largely supportive.

You can [click here](#) to see some of the news coverage that resulted from the press conference.

IACS Annual Meeting A Success!

We want to thank everyone who came out to our annual meeting at [Des Moines Christian School](#) this year!

We had a great time networking, hearing from Governor Branstad, and answering your questions.

A special thanks to the Governor for his willingness to visit with us!

Iowa ACE Needs Your Help

[Iowa ACE](#)/Advocates is gearing up for next session and this next election cycle. They are looking for opportunities to get in front of community groups, business leaders, parent groups, and anyone else that may be a school choice supporter to tell our story, educate Iowans about the ESA proposal, and ask for support.

Some of our IACS schools and STO leaders have been asked to help in very specific ways and we are grateful many are doing so. Would you be willing to host IACS lobbyist and [Iowa Advocates for Choice in Education](#) President Eric Goranson for an informational meeting and invite community leaders, school families, board members, or others? No group is too small or too large. Also available to speak at events or with groups is [Iowa ACE](#) Executive Director Trish Wilger.

They will be asking those interested to sign up for email alerts, to volunteer, and to financially support Iowa ACE

and its political action committee. Please contact us if you are interested in helping.

Education Savings Accounts

IACS is proud to be a part of [Iowa Alliance](#) and [Iowa Advocates for Choice in Education](#) (Iowa ACE) Iowa ACE is the overarching school choice organization in Iowa that brings together the [Iowa Catholic schools](#), [IACS](#), independent schools, and other like-minded stakeholders to the table to advocate for school choice.

Iowa ACE recently released [a video](#) describing Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) and why we are moving to pass this program in Iowa. **Please take a few minutes to [watch the YouTube video!](#)** Let us know if you have any questions!

An "Education Savings Account" bill was introduced and voted on more than once but was not passed last session. We are, however, very pleased with how the bill is developing. This legislation is an innovative and exciting approach to school choice. We will continue to work with [Iowa Advocates for Choice in Education](#) (the lead organization on this bill) and the Iowa Catholic Conference to advance this bill next session. This session will see bills in the House and Senate with some adjusted language we believe makes the legislation even stronger than before. We'll send out links and details about the new bills when they are introduced later this month.

IACS Online

Check out our **NEW** website! You can keep track of IACS' efforts at www.iowachristianschools.org. Learn more about IACS and sign up to receive email updates. If your school is not listed or needs updating, please let us know.

“Follow” IACS on [Twitter](#).

“Like” us on [Facebook](#).

IACS Membership

Your school should have received this year's request for dues. If you have already responded, THANK YOU! We can't effectively represent the interests of your school at the capitol without its participation! **We need your help to protect the rights of Christian schools in Iowa.**

As an example of the value of IACS membership: every year IACS defeats numerous unfunded mandates at the Iowa Capitol. Just ONE of these mandates would cost you significantly more than your IACS dues for the year! Add to this significant victories on accreditation and school choice issues and you'll see what a value we are. Join us as we work for you. Contact Brad Vis at (712) 476-2615 for information.



IACS Board Of Directors

Brian L'Heureux — President
Valley Lutheran School

Randy Ten Pas — Vice President
Hull Christian School

Janna Voss — Secretary
Timothy Christian School

Brad Vis — Treasurer
Rock Valley Christian School

Ryan Anderson
Parent, Iowa Christian Academy

Carmine Boal
Ankeny Christian Academy Foundation

David De Jong
Pella Christian Grade School

Pete Van Velzen
Sheldon Christian School

IACS Consultant/Lobbyist

Eric Goranson
Goranson Consulting, Inc.

Contact Us

Iowa Association of Christian Schools
c/o Rock Valley Christian School
1405 17th Street, Rock Valley, Iowa 51247
Phone: (712) 476-2615 (ask for Brad Vis)

info@iowachristianschools.org

www.iowachristianschools.org

[@IA_IACS](#)

[Facebook.com/IowaChristianSchools](https://www.facebook.com/IowaChristianSchools)