



July 2015 Newsletter



A Summary of This Year's Legislative Session

What Happened This Year?

The Iowa legislative session was a long one this year. Starting in January, it didn't end until June 5, long after the May 1 deadline to adjourn.

One of the primary reasons for the longer session was a debate on public school funding. After an agreement was passed, Governor Branstad vetoed \$56 million in one-time spending for public schools. Democrats are calling for a special session to address the issue but it is unlikely they'll have the two-thirds majority needed in both chambers to make it happen.

Although the State spends more than \$3 billion on K-12 education (in addition to local and federal spending), the legislature struggled to find consensus on public school funding and was also unable to find funding to restore under-funded textbook and transportation line-items for nonpublic schools. Adding to the overall tension this session were pessimistic revenue forecasts and a controversial gas tax increase passed earlier in the session.

We saw Education Savings Account (ESA) legislation introduced in a couple forms in both chambers. The House passed a version out of subcommittee but failed to take it up in the full education committee. We are disappointed to see some special interest groups making equality of opportunity for students a political point in what we see as a separate public school funding debate but we will continue to work with our supporters in both parties and Iowa ACE on the issue. We want to see ALL schools succeed for the sake of all Iowa children!

Iowa ACE School Choice Summit!

The Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education (Iowa ACE) invites you to attend the **Iowa School Choice Summit** on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 from 9:00 AM to 1:00PM at the State Historical Building in Des Moines.

Virginia Walden Ford, a parent and school choice warrior who successfully led efforts to bring school choice to Washington D.C. will be the keynote speaker.

Continental breakfast will begin at 8:30am with a group session beginning at 9:00am. We'll discuss progress in Iowa on school choice this year, discuss legislations, ESAs, and STOs.

There will also be three breakout sessions including sessions for STOs, parents, and administrators/school personnel.

If you are an Iowan interested in school choice, we encourage you to attend! Please [click here](#) to download and distribute a PDF with all the details.

RSVP to Iowa ACE Executive Director Trish Wilger by [emailing her here](#).

We hope to see you there!

July 16, 2015

Independent Accreditation Update

IACS was extremely close to getting language passed this year making Independent Accreditation permanent in Iowa. The language was removed during the last few days of the session.

With the sunset provision taking effect in the year 2020, it will remain our top legislative priority to get that sunset removed as soon as possible. Please engage your Representative and Senator and let them know you need their help to get this passed.

ESEA Debate Goes On In D.C.

We posted [an article on our website](#) about the latest round of debate in D.C. on the “Elementary and Secondary Education Act” (ESEA). This replacement of the expired No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act is needed.

Although there are many differences of opinion on whether the federal government should be involved in education and to what extent, we would encourage you to engage your U.S. Representative and Senator and encourage them to put parents and children first.

NCLB failed to protect parents and children from inequities in title funding for those attending private schools. The House version of the new ESEA worked to address this inequity and [passed by a narrow margin](#) but must be reconciled with the Senate version, [passed today](#), before something is ultimately sent to the President. We'll keep you informed as we learn more.

Education Issues In The News

There are a number of other issues we are working on or watching. Here are just a couple:

Supreme Court Ruling -

Some have asked how recent developments at the Supreme Court are going to affect religious liberty and private school practices. The short answer is that nothing should change for us but there are some developments and best practices all religious schools should be reviewing. There are [letters to Congress from 15 state Attorney Generals](#) on the subject and [substantial questions](#) about policy. IACS will be working on draft policies and practices to best serve our mission and our students moving forward.

Body Cameras on School Employees? -

Some schools in Iowa are [moving toward body cameras](#) for administrators. What do you think? Necessary?

Top Five Things Every School Can Do To Advance The Cause of Christian Education

Most private schools across Iowa are in the same boat. Too few employees, one or two administrators, and few resources left for dedicated marketing, community outreach, and advertising. In general, our ability to deliver an amazing education on a fraction of the budget our public school counterparts work with is one of our selling points. The flip side of that coin is that doing more with less is difficult and requires a level of creativity that can be exhausting.

IACS schools are the best in Iowa. We outperform our public school counterparts despite similar levels of diversity and far fewer resources. We have the ability to address the physical, spiritual, and academic potential of each child that walks through our doors. Our parents have extremely high satisfaction rates and our results are second-to-none. Let's focus on empowering our faculty and staff to understand our distinctives and get the word out in the community in the most effective ways possible. There are lots of kids out there that deserve the education we can provide. Let's not fail them by not effectively putting ourselves in front of them and their parents early on.

There are some simple things that can be done to improve your school's footprint in the community. By simple, we don't necessarily mean easy. Even some of the simplest things are often hard to execute with consistency and quality. However, if we want to advance the cause of Christian education, reach as many children as possible, and market our schools effectively; [visit our post on the website](#) to see five things we believe all of our schools should be doing.

Full article:

[SIMPLE THINGS TO IMPROVE YOUR SCHOOLS FOOTPRINT](#)

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We have a new address!

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IOWA ASSOCIATION OF
**CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS**

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