

2019 Legislative Agenda

The challenges facing the Nebraska Legislature in 2019 include:

- A projected 2019-20 budget year revenue shortfall of \$95.1 million;
- Taxpayer advocacy groups have targeted Nebraska for reductions in both property tax and income tax rates that will affect the ability of Nebraska public schools to provide quality education;
- A decades-old, near-last-ranking in state aid to K-12 education. Nebraska ranks 48th in state aid to education, a perennial status of inadequate state support that forces Nebraska public schools to an overreliance on local property taxes for funding; and,
- A governor who publicly advocates for policy changes supporting private education at the (revenue) expense of public education.

In response to these challenges, NSEA's 2019 Legislative goals will focus on:

- Legislation expanding both the quality and quantity of learning in our public schools, because learning is how we prepare future generations to succeed;
- Legislation adding to the tools and resources available to educators, because well-trained and well-equipped educators provide professional excellence in our classrooms;
- Legislation favoring opportunities that will meet the needs of *each and every* child, rather than a select few; and,
- Legislation increasing state aid for public education, because state revenue shortfalls should not be balanced by reducing an already substandard level of state financial support for education.

During the 2019 Legislative Session, NSEA will work with legislators to:

- Provide state and local funding that supports quality public education for every student;
- Ensure public school students and staff have respectful, safe and secure learning and working environments;
- Provide additional funding for behavioral health services and resources, and provide all school staff with behavioral health training and tools commensurate with their school responsibilities;
- Promote and protect public education programs that benefit Nebraska students, teachers, higher education faculty and education support professionals;
- Ensure that any changes to the state's tax system are either revenue neutral or provide additional funding for PK-16 public education;
- Encourage state programs giving educators more time to teach and students more time to learn;
- Support efforts to maintain effective student/teacher ratios for optimum classroom learning;
- Ensure the protection of collective bargaining rights;
- Encourage the collection of sales tax on internet-related purchases to help fund public education; and,
- Maintain prudent management and funding of the school employee retirement plans.

