



Kids First Advocacy Conference Top Five Talking Points

1. Maintain education funding increase in budget:
 - Keep SEEK increase in the budget of \$71 million and \$118 million
 - Keep increases for Flexible Focus Programs
 - Keep Increases in technology funding, but also increase funding for bandwidth
 - Evaluate the mandated staff salary increase to make sure it is fully funded.
2. STOP all unfunded mandates
 - Every year school districts are asked to do more, but the funding is not included. Local school districts will no longer be able to sustain educational gains without relief from unfunded mandates.
 - Unfunded mandates force districts to fund programs that may not fit the needs and wants of the students and staff in their local school district.
3. Protect local control
 - Keep school decisions local so that board members can appropriately address issues that come up in their schools
 - Increase local school district flexibility by removing unfunded mandates and allow districts to develop policy solutions to fit their community needs.
4. Improve due process for teachers
 - Currently, certified employees go through a process that is unpredictable, illogical, and inconsistent.
 - By reforming the tribunal process, local school districts will receive a more fair and balanced response to teacher termination appeals.
 - The most important, critical element in education is an effective teacher.
 - According to research on teacher effectiveness (Jordan, Mendro and Weerasinghe), above-average students being taught by a highly effective teacher for three years in a row scored **49 percentage points higher** in math assessments when compared with their peers who started at the same achievement level, but had ineffective teachers for three years in a row.
5. Support calendar legislation
 - Rep. Addia Wuchner (R-Florence) filed, HB 383, which creates more flexibility for local school boards in developing the school calendar.
 - This bill will provide relief for school districts this year that have missed several days as a result of the bad weather.