

Talking Points



Professional Respect

The right to be acknowledged, respected, and valued for expertise, training, and dedication, to great public schools and their communities.

- Staff are professionals and experts in their fields. They are essential to student success, and their voices and work should be heard and respected in local, district, and state decisions. Respect for the profession has a direct impact on student outcomes.
- Staff teach and assist, foster critical thinking, build positive relationships, perform physical and medical support, implement behavior management plans, and provide students with consistent social and emotional support to thrive. They shape future generations and are vital partners in a thriving community.
- Educators often go above and beyond their job descriptions, giving personal time and money to support students. They coach teams, advise clubs, supervise and attend after-school events, tutor beyond the school day, collaborate with colleagues, and communicate with families. This level of commitment deserves to be recognized and appreciated.



Manageable Workload

The right to do their jobs within the workday, including regularly scheduled time to manage workload, preparation, collaboration, break time, duty-free lunch, and other essential and professional tasks. This also includes limiting class size or total student load to ensure staff can plan, assess student learning, and build strong relationships with their students and families.

- Freeing more time in the day for staff to focus on student learning and assistance allows for more individualized student support, deeper engagement, and improves student outcomes.
- Having more time to prepare high-quality lessons, gather and monitor student data, implement student behavior plans, and collaborate improves instruction and assistance and enhances productivity, creativity, and innovation, leading to better student outcomes.
- Regularly scheduled time for professional tasks, including break time and a duty-free lunch, is a matter of professional respect. It acknowledges that school staff are professionals who need time to take meal and bathroom breaks, plan, and perform their duties effectively, just like employees in any other field.



Fair Compensation.

The right to bargain for a competitive, comprehensive agreement encompassing many issues, including competitive and living wages, paid leave, affordable health insurance, benefits, working conditions, and limiting class size. One job should be enough.

- Fair compensation, including a competitive salary and benefits package, is crucial for attracting and retaining quality staff. When compensation fails to keep pace with inflation or is not competitive with other professions, it becomes challenging to attract and retain talented individuals as education professionals.
- Fair compensation includes affordable health insurance. The cost of health insurance for public school employees has increased faster than their salaries, making coverage more challenging to afford. School staff should be able to live and support their families without having to take on an additional job.
- Merit pay is not fair compensation. Students come to school with factors beyond their control, including hunger and housing issues. Tying one test score to student success and extra professional pay is inequitable and has a history of failure.



Safe and Healthy Work Environment.

The right to a safe, healthy, and secure working and learning environment with administrative support for clear, consistent, and up-to-date processes for addressing disruptive behavior and intentionally violent acts.

- Administrative support is essential for protecting staff and students. This includes a formal process for reporting workplace accidents and violence, supportive behavioral programs, effective communication systems, and ongoing staff training, as well as clear procedures.
- Students and staff deserve a healthy and safe learning and working environment, including more qualified building personnel, such as school counselors, nurses, behavior specialists, social workers, and mental health specialists.
- Strong administrative support and open and consistent system-wide communication, plans, and protocols for addressing harassment and assault against students and staff in every school district.



Secure Retirement.

The right to a secure retirement with IPERS, a well-managed, gold-standard defined-benefit retirement system.

- Weakening through offering less optimal options or removing IPERS would shift retirement risk to workers, make public service less attractive, and hinder efforts to fill vital public roles. This would ultimately harm the state's ability to attract and retain essential workers, negatively impacting the state's economy.
- In FY2024, IPERS' income included \$1.5 billion in contributions from members and employers, and \$2.9 billion from investment earnings. IPERS' investment program generates most of the revenue needed to pay member benefits, allowing IPERS to maintain stable contribution rates. No state general fund money is used to subsidize IPERS.
- Most IPERS benefit recipients live in Iowa and spend their retirement income locally on groceries, entertainment, healthcare, and more. In FY2024, IPERS paid \$2.4 billion in benefits to members who live in Iowa. That's 89% of IPERS' total benefit payments.



Quality Resources.

The right to select and use high-quality resources, supplies, tools, and equipment needed to effectively and productively execute jobs and duties. This includes ensuring that all curriculum is credible, research-based, and developmentally appropriate.

- Outdated textbooks, broken equipment, or lacking basic supplies hinder students' engagement and learning.
- When staff have the necessary supplies and tools, they are not just better equipped to do their jobs effectively, but they can also do so more efficiently. Appropriate resources directly impact student success and can help save time during the workday, allowing staff to focus more on their core responsibilities.
- Ensuring all schools have access to the same high-quality resources helps address inequities. When some schools are well-funded and others are not, students receive a disparate quality of education. Iowa's new private school voucher program diverts public funds that could be spent in public schools, which educate more than 95% of Iowa's students.



Community Support.

The right to a school environment that reinforces student learning and school goals, with support from administrators, board members, parents, and the community.

- Education is a community-wide effort, not just the responsibility of school staff. When staff, administrators, board members, and parents collaborate, they establish a robust and consistent support system that enables students to succeed. This community support is crucial in reinforcing student learning and school goals.
- Providing a consistent message to students about the importance of their education and the value of their school requires community reinforcement for success. It requires positive action from administrators, school board members, and the community.
- Strong community support fosters a positive and healthy school environment. It helps build trust and communication between families and staff, which is essential for addressing challenges and celebrating successes. Support is a two-way street that requires all parties to be engaged and active in student success



Collaborative Leadership.

The right to a Labor Management Committee (LMC) in every workplace, utilizing local association members to foster collaborative problem solving, improve working conditions, and enhance student learning.

- LMCs build trust by creating a structured space for open dialogue between staff and administration. This direct communication channel helps resolve issues before they escalate, demonstrating that leadership values staff input.
- LMCs are potent tools for solving problems related to working conditions. Staff and management can work together to find proactive solutions that benefit everyone, from workload management to school safety and climate.
- LMCs contribute to a better and more productive school environment. The staff working environment is the student's learning environment.



Professional Growth.

The right to shape and access job-related growth opportunities. This includes professional development tailored to specific needs, interests, and experiences, as well as quality onboarding, training, and mentoring for new employees.

- Providing quality professional development, training, and mentoring demonstrates the school district's investment in its staff. It helps to retain experienced educators and creates a positive, growth-oriented culture. Professional development should be appropriate, timely, and efficient.
- Staff have the right to shape their career paths through professional development that aligns with their needs and interests. This autonomy empowers them to improve their jobs and stay engaged in their careers.
- Career growth is not just about training; it's also about having clear opportunities for advancement. Employees who see a pathway for growth are more likely to commit to a long-term career.



Professional Collaboration.

The right to collaboration and input, which recognizes staff as experts in their field, and the value in exchanging and sharing practices, lessons learned, methods used, and general experiences with each other.

- Professional collaboration allows staff to share knowledge, methods, and expertise to create strategies and solutions for student success. Sharing resources can save valuable time and reduce workloads.
- Policies are more practical and effective when staff are included in decision-making at the building, district, and state levels. Their firsthand experiences are invaluable and can lead to better outcomes for students and the educational system.
- A collaborative environment builds a stronger, more cohesive team. Shared responsibility boosts morale and demonstrates that everyone's voice, autonomy, and expertise are valued.