

# Iowa Association of Christian Schools 2010 Legislative Session Summary



[www.iowachristianschools.org](http://www.iowachristianschools.org)

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## 2010 Legislative Session Is Over!

IACS had a busy session due to budget drama, the abbreviated schedule, and some controversial bills.

### 2010 Legislative Session Summary

The 2010 Legislative Session is over and the news for Iowa's Christ-centered schools is predominantly good. Here are just a few of the highlights from a very busy session:

[Senate File 2380](#) initially passed the Senate with a 10% cut to the EOA/STO tax credit. We were extremely pleased that a bipartisan amendment to remove the cut was adopted by the House and accepted by the Senate. As a result, the EOA/STO program was left untouched this year at the current \$7.5 million cap! **No one thought our coalition of organizations could protect the program this year! Your emails and phone calls made the difference! THANK YOU!**

[Senate File 2376](#) (The Education Appropriations Bill) included this year's **textbook appropriation** for nonpublic schools. It was reduced by about \$25,000 to \$600,000.

The annual Standings Appropriations Bill ([HF 2531](#)) contained the annual **nonpublic school transportation appropriation**. This year the amount was cut to around \$7 million. The amount was \$8.6 million two years ago. We will be working to restore these funds as they are grossly underfunded.

IACS worked very hard to resist a bill filed by the Iowa Department of Education that would have capped the "Specially Accredited" schools, or "College Prep. Accreditation" at the current nine schools. These Schools include Des Moines Christian School, Iowa Christian Academy, Ankeny Christian Academy, Grandview Park Baptist School, Waterloo Christian, Pella Christian High

School, The Maharishi School, Scattergood Quaker School, and Rivermont Collegiate.

These nine schools are all *very high achieving* schools who, because of this type of accreditation, are able to be more innovative and autonomous than they would be under the general accreditation option. The Specially Accredited Schools and IACS opposed this year's bill to cap the program at the current nine and were successful. IACS is looking to work with these schools, the Department, and legislators to protect this accreditation and increase options for Iowa's private schools. We'll have more details on our efforts soon! Thank you for your willingness to contact your legislators in opposition to this year's bill.

There were other bills IACS successfully opposed this year. We opposed a comprehensive sexuality education bill, an unfunded mandate that would have required vision screenings of students in school by specifically trained screeners, and a "dating violence" bill that public and private school advocates were uncomfortable with.

### Nonpublic Textbook/Tech Bill Passes!

Late in the session, Governor Culver signed [SF 2178](#) into law allowing state textbook funds to be used to buy laptop computers for use in accredited nonpublic schools.

A special thanks to [Senator Hancock](#), [Representative Ficken](#), and Tom Chapman at the Iowa Catholic Conference for making this bill happen. IACS lobbied in favor of this bill and we were proud to be represented at the bill signing by our lobbyist, Eric Goranson. We are hopeful that schools will use these funds to increase instructional technology use in classrooms.

## It's An Election Year!

Are you ready to make a difference this election year!?

Please make sure you engage your local, state, and federal candidates on parental rights, religious liberty, and school choice this year! Watch your media outlets for opportunities to meet candidates for various offices in your area. If you take the time it'll have a huge affect!

Be sure to ask your candidates if they support a parent's right to access the school that best meets the needs of their child(ren), whether public or private, regardless of their income or address. Will they not only support but champion tuition tax credits and/ or vouchers?

Ask them if they'd support a Religious Freedom Restoration Act to protect Christ-centered schools and other religious organizations from junk lawsuits and protect their right to function within their Biblical/religious worldview.

Ask candidates; should education policy should be decided in Washington D.C. or the National Governor's Association or should it be decided by Iowans at the state level?

Please feel free to let an IACS board member or our lobbyist know if you find school choice champions around the state. We will work with them!

## IACS On Tour

We are looking for opportunities to connect with school leaders, parent-groups & events! Please contact Eric Goranson if you are willing to let us speak to your group about IACS, School Choice, and/or to answer any specific questions you may have. We'll travel anywhere in the state to meet your administrators, teachers, families, and/or community leaders!

We also need help finding connections with accredited and non-accredited

Christian Schools that are not IACS members. We would love to speak to their administrators, boards, or parent groups about IACS and the work it does for their school.

## IACS WEBSITE!

IACS has a website! Find it at [www.iowachristianschools.org](http://www.iowachristianschools.org). Learn more about IACS, see the IACS calendar, and sign up to receive updates. A Legislative Alerts page is up so you can contact legislators on specific issues.

You can find IACS on **Twitter** at [www.twitter.com/IA\\_IACS](http://www.twitter.com/IA_IACS)

We're also on **Facebook!** Search for "Iowa Association of Christian Schools."

## Join The Team!

If your school has already sent in its dues for this school year, THANK YOU! If not, we can't effectively represent the interests of your school at the capitol without the participation of all our schools. **We need your help to protect the rights of Christian Schools in Iowa.** Contact any board member or IACS lobbyist Eric Goranson with questions.

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## IACS Lobbyist

**Eric Goranson**  
Goranson Consulting  
[eric@goranson-consulting.com](mailto:eric@goranson-consulting.com)

## Contact Us!

Iowa Association of Christian Schools  
PO Box 165, 630 First Avenue S.E.,  
Sioux Center, IA 51250  
Phone: (712) 722-0777  
[info@iowachristianschools.org](mailto:info@iowachristianschools.org)  
[www.iowachristianschools.org](http://www.iowachristianschools.org)

