

**Sondra Wilson**  
**for Iowa Governor**

## **PILLAR II — EDUCATION**

# **Upskilling Iowa**



*Conceptual Seal —  
Open for Collaboration*

**Statewide education upgrades tied to real-world skills and careers:**

- ✦ Food and herbal medicine gardening
- ✦ Skill-building extracurricular activities
- ✦ Criminal and civil law classes in high schools
- ✦ Holistic support for students with disabilities

# **New Statewide Vegetable Gardening Class**

## **School Gardens That Lower Lunch Costs for Iowa Families**



- 1.) Civilian Restoration Corps (CRC) teams install **5-zone, self-watering gardens** on school properties (see "*Gardens Across Iowa!*"™ on WildWillpower.org).
- 2.) Colleges (e.g., ISU, Kirkwood, DMACC, Hawkeye) partner with school districts—**horticulture students help teach and maintain school garden programs.**
- 3.) A **simple-to-use app** and **automated watering** makes the classes manageable for teachers and school districts.
- 4.) Students build **valuable, lifelong skills**—learning to sprout, transplant, prepare soil, maintain gardens, harvest, and process food throughout spring, summer, and fall classes.
- 5.) Families join students and teachers for an **annual fall harvest banquet** and community celebration—honoring students' hard work.

**We don't need higher taxes or fewer meals.**  
**We need smarter systems that lower costs.**

# After School Skill Building Programs

## Adult-Led Nonathletic Extracurricular Activities

In Iowa, we celebrate our student athletes—and we should! Now, imagine that same level of pride and recognition for students building skills, creating projects, and preparing for real life.

As an alternative to student-led clubs, these programs will bring artisan and trades specialists together with staff to help students *tap into their entrepreneurial spirit*—designing and building real-world projects that spark excitement about learning. The Young Inventors program will work directly with the CRC's *Inventor's Guild*.



### HANDS-ON SKILLS & TRADES

Shop, welding, metalworking, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, automotive, robotics, and more.



### DESIGN & DIGITAL ARTS

Graphic design, 3D printing, animation, video production, coding, and web design.



### LAW & CIVICS EDUCATION

Criminal law, civil law, constitutional rights, mock trials, and civics in action.



### ENTREPRENEURSHIP & BUSINESS

Start a business, manage money, marketing, pitch your ideas, and build your future.



### AGRICULTURE & SUSTAINABILITY

Urban gardening, animal care, soil health, renewable energy, and sustainable living.



### LIFE SKILLS & LEADERSHIP

Public speaking, financial literacy, first aid, mentorship, and community service.



Students choose projects. They follow their passions.  
They build portfolios, confidence, and a future.

*We're expanding the honors experience to every student.*

Iowa became a national leader in education  
by pioneering new ideas—not by copying others.

*And we're not finished!*

# Conscious Classrooms

## Holistic Support for Students with Disabilities



### 1.) American Sign Language (ASL) Classes in Every School District

Recent funding cuts have created a crisis for Iowa's deaf community, worsening an already critical shortage. Deaf Iowans should not have to live in isolation. Iowa schools will ensure students can earn world language credit in ASL, while a new college incentive program will help train and recruit teachers to address the interpreter shortage. Phased rollout starting with online classes.

### 2.) Statewide Disability Awareness & Guest Speaker Program

Students will learn how to recognize and respond to the needs of people with disabilities—so individuals no longer have to repeatedly explain their needs. Training includes communicating with autistic individuals, when and how to assist wheelchair users (and when not to), supporting elderly Iowans, and more. The program will be co-designed with Iowans with disabilities to ensure it is practical and meaningful.

### 3.) Reduce Administrative Workload for Special Education

A new statewide system with a user-friendly interface will replace excessive paperwork so that information is entered once and shared with relevant staff and families.

# New "G.I. Joe" Gun Safety Program

## Officer and Veteran Guest Speakers to Instill Values in Young People



Part of Sondra's 'Rights-Intact Gun Legislation'—reducing violence while protecting the rights of Iowans:

- ✳ Introduced around 5th grade, at a critical age when students are forming their understanding of responsibility and real-world safety.
- ✳ Provides veterans with a meaningful way to reintegrate into their communities while being honored for their service.
- ✳ Teaches responsibility, honor, and respect—emphasizing that firearms are tools meant for protection, not harm.
- ✳ Focuses on real-world safety and decision-making, not media-driven misconceptions.

**Students should first learn about guns from *real* heroes—*not* from movies or video games.**

# Healthy Communication & Relationship Skills

## The “Safe Sex, Safe Hearts” Campaign



- ★ Teaches respectful communication, consent, and clear boundary-setting in real-world situations.
- ★ Equips students with the skills to navigate relationships with clarity, confidence, and respect.
- ★ Helps students recognize unhealthy dynamics early—and respond before situations escalate.
- ★ Builds bystander awareness and de-escalation skills to prevent harm and support others.
- ★ Strengthens traditional sex education by adding real-world communication and decision-making skills that students actually use.

**Sex education focuses on biology— not on communication.**

**Equipping students with healthy communication skills helps prevent unwanted pregnancies, sexual violence, and domestic violence later in life.**

# Criminal & Civil Law Classes

## Teaching Students How to Navigate Our Justice System



- ✦ Prepares seniors to **recognize and respond** to fraud and rights violations—including those involving abuse of authority.
- ✦ Teaches practical **conflict resolution** skills—and how to take action when necessary.
- ✦ Shows students how to document incidents, file complaints, and **navigate basic legal processes** with confidence.
- ✦ **Strengthens communication** and mutual understanding between citizens and public officials.

**Every graduate should leave school knowing how to protect themselves and others—without fear or confusion.**