



2010-2012 Legislative Platform

Mission Statement

The mission of ACSA is to:

- Support California's educational leaders.
- Ensure all students have the essential skills and knowledge needed to excel.
- Champion public education.

Platform

Introduction

The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) is the professional organization of educational leaders at all levels of school management in the state's over 1,000 school districts and 58 county offices of education. With a membership of more than 15,000, ACSA is a major stakeholder and key player in shaping educational policy and finance at the state and federal level.

Growth and Change

ACSA has a responsibility to meet the ever-changing needs of California's growing and diversifying population of 37 million citizens, over 6 million of whom are enrolled in public schools. California school enrollments have become a majority of minorities. Immigration is bringing an increasingly diverse population to the state's classrooms. Demographic changes challenge school leaders in all areas of their professional work and open the way to further educational reform, growth and achievement for a new generation of life-long learners. Responding to the diversity of needs of our students and providing adequate funding to address these needs continues to be a challenge.

Local Control

ACSA holds steadfast to the principle that local control is fundamental to establishing and operating sound programs for students. Locally elected governing boards know their communities well, and are empowered to set educational standards and priorities for schools. Because local boards and their management staff are accountable to their communities, they must be free from unwarranted intrusion by state and federal authorities.

Resources

Recognizing that in the California of today, approximately 54 percent of all public school money comes from the state, with approximately 10 percent from the federal government, ACSA calls on state and federal governments to provide funds in an equitable manner that builds excellence in public education, supports quality teaching and leadership, and to foster parent, business and community involvement on behalf of California students.

Master Plan

A California Master Plan for Education should map out the policy, fiscal, and governance needs of the state's public schools, using our standards-based system as a foundation. A Master Plan should emphasize how California's academic and content standards will be used to improve student learning, how decision-making at the local level will accompany local accountability, how a Master Plan will guide the implementation of education policy as opposed to a piecemeal approach to change, and how it prioritizes its recommendations.

Leadership

The future of California's public education system depends upon the quality of its leadership. School administrators serve in various leadership capacities and have different responsibilities, but their core values are the same. School administration is a public service that provides quality support to ensure student success. School administrators are leaders, managers and facilitators. They are responsible for identifying student needs, improving student achievement, closing the achievement gap and developing leadership in others. Recruitment, retention and professional learning opportunities require long-term commitments from the state Legislature, higher education institutions, school districts and the private sector to develop and support strategic initiatives to address the changing nature of school leadership.

Priorities

State – We must address the fact that the state has allowed its per-student funding level to fall far below that of other states while the relative wealth of California has increased. The association believes that the Legislature must exercise responsibility by providing an on-time and realistic budget and making its top priority the funding of public education, preschool through adult.

Federal – The federal government is a partner with the state in providing certain educational services and programs to districts and students. Among federal responsibilities is special education, migrant, immigrant and language education; federal impact aid; and now systemic reform. ACSA calls on each representative and each of the state's two senators to coalesce around ways that the Congress, the administration, and the federal agencies can help serve California students.

The following state and federal educational priorities detail ACSA's commitment to educational excellence for California's public school students.

Curriculum/Instruction

ACSA firmly believes that every student can succeed in school. School districts need sufficient resources and local discretion to provide a balanced program of education that enables every student in California to reach his/her full potential.

Additionally, ACSA seeks and/or supports legislation to accomplish the following:

- 1) Support local control to strengthen curriculum and instructional practices, including the use of technology, emphasizing practices that are researched based and that have demonstrated improved student achievement and resulted in closing the achievement gap.
- 2) Integrate statewide academic standards with a system of assessment and accountability which is aligned with the standards, which contain multiple valid and reliable measures in order to actively promote student progress and which maximize instructional time.
- 3) Support alternative education settings, as well as programs for students with special needs to ensure that all students succeed.

- 4) Support expansion of state programs and funding for early childhood education to ensure that young children are prepared for learning.
- 5) Support career technical education programs as part of the overall educational experience.
- 6) Support adult education programs as necessary and effective in helping parents and guardians ensure achievement of school-aged children and actively address lifelong learning needs of individual students.
- 7) Support and enhance language-appropriate instructional practices which ensure educational achievement for all English language learners.
- 8) Support cooperation between Pre-K-adult education and higher education to align college admission and placement assessments to Pre-K-adult education standards.
- 9) Support efforts that give students the physical, social, emotional, intellectual and health support needed to learn.
- 10) Support a moratorium on all punitive aspects of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) until Congress and the President can reach consensus on changes to Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
- 11) Support a reauthorization of ESEA that includes federal accountability based on individual student, school, district and state progress in increasing academic achievement; supports the work of local school districts but does not dictate interventions or methodologies; and funding must be targeted and delivered primarily through pupil weighted formulas based on percentage of poverty.
- 12) Support early warning systems for all grade levels to address the needs of at-risk students to stem the student drop-out challenge in our schools.

Finance

While Proposition 98 placed in the state Constitution responsible provisions for adequate, stable, long-range funding for operation of the public schools, it must be recognized that the measure provides a floor beneath which funding must not fall and should not be used as a ceiling for education expenditures. ACSA's highest priority for allocation of Proposition 98 funds is full funding of existing programs, including adjustments for inflation and enrollment growth, mandated programs, and deficits.

ACSA seeks and/or supports legislation to accomplish the following:

- 13) Provide adequate and stable funding for all preschool through adult education at the level necessary to support a quality education for every public school student.
- 14) Redesign California's public school funding system to address issues of complexity, equity, need, and increased local discretion.
- 15) Equalize funding among similar types of school districts and similar types of county offices of education while addressing geographic cost differences.
- 16) Allow for increased local funding options, both for programmatic support and for school construction and modernization.
- 17) Support continuance of the state's participation in school construction, modernization, and maintenance through revamped programs that provide a high degree of local flexibility, similar application processes and minimal state oversight.
- 18) Protect against public money being used in support of vouchers or for providing education in non-public schools for general education purposes.
- 19) Fund instructional materials, including library materials, at appropriate levels and allow more flexibility in use of funds.
- 20) Provide full funding and local control in decisions to allow districts to adopt programs that reduce the pupil/teacher ratio
- 21) Support investment in, and maintenance of, technology in public education to enhance California's economic competitiveness and to ensure that information can be accessed and shared in each classroom, including school libraries.

- 22) Provide full funding for mandated programs, both state and federal, annually.
- 23) Support block granting certain categorical areas to achieve consolidation, but protect program integrity, and guaranteeing COLA and growth funding.
- 24) Fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at the authorized federal level of 40% for pass through to local education agencies.

Governance

The role of the local school district and county offices in governance must be maximized while the role of the state should be to set clear expectations for the performance of the public schools, but not to prescribe how the expectations should be met. These roles should serve as the foundation of a statewide master plan for preschool through adult education.

Additionally, ACSA seeks and/or supports legislation to accomplish the following:

- 25) Reduce state mandates and simplify reporting procedures for all state-required reports.
- 26) Charter schools and districts are provided greater local control that allows for innovation and flexibility. This concept should be supported for all public schools and districts. Base any expansion of the public charter school program on measureable data regarding student progress in order to validate the effectiveness of charter schools. Require rigorous academic accountability to maximize student learning. Require adequate fiscal accountability by requiring charter schools and districts to comply with the Brown Act and Education and Government Code conflict of interest laws in place for all publicly funded entities. Facilities for charter schools should be provided by the charter granter.
- 27) Evolve the state accountability system so that all targets are based on the growth of individual students.
- 28) Create a statewide data system that allows access and use of individual student information wherever that child may be enrolled.

Human Resources

The recruitment, training and retention processes for school personnel have a fundamental impact on all aspects of education in California. The professional learning of school leaders directly through ACSA, our relationship with county offices of education, institutes of higher education, school districts and others is important for the recruitment of future school leaders.

ACSA seeks and/or supports legislation to accomplish the following:

- 29) Increase the pool of qualified, competent, and diverse personnel.
- 30) Provide funding to increase professional learning opportunities for school leaders – confidential, classified and certificated – and all other school employees, especially outside of the student instructional year to support our educational leaders and the important work they do. This should include support for beginning administrators.
- 31) Provide all ACSA members with sufficient protections against arbitrary and capricious decisions affecting their employment.
- 32) Improve management’s ability to evaluate, assign, assist and hold employees accountable.
- 33) Limit the scope of representation (collective bargaining) for school employees, except where local control would facilitate effective management, support local efforts to reduce the adversarial nature of school employee relations, and promote collegiality and partnerships between management and other school employees.

Educational Environment

ACSA believes that students and employees should have the opportunity to work and learn in an educational environment that is conducive to human growth and development.

ACSA seeks and/or supports legislation to accomplish the following:

- 34) Provide schools with adequate resources and effective program options to assure a safe environment for all students and staff.
- 35) Modernize and rehabilitate buildings and equipment to assure a safe physical environment and to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

Retirement

Retirement issues are of fundamental importance to both active and retired ACSA members. Using the association's Retirement Committee as a natural advisory resource, ACSA seeks and/or supports legislation to accomplish the following:

- 36) Improve and preserve employee retirement system's benefits, including health benefits, to make them comparable to the best systems available to other public employees in order to retain and attract the best qualified people.
- 37) Ensure adequate funding of STRS and PERS, and protect retirement funds from being diverted by the state to non-retirement purposes.
- 38) Protect and enhance retiree's purchasing power as measured against original retirement allowances.
- 39) Eliminate the government pension offset and windfall elimination provision as penalties on social security earnings for school leaders.