



ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2019-2020

{Ratified by the ACSA Leadership Assembly, February 21, 2019 and Adopted by the Board, February 22, 2019}

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Association of California School Administrators calls on the organization to be a driving force for an equitable, world-class education system, and work towards the development and support of inspired educational leaders who meet the diverse needs of all California pre-kindergarten to adult students. The latest three-year strategic plan, adopted by the Board of Directors, directs ACSA to shape policy by aligning the collective influence at the local, state, and federal levels and also calls on the organization to be a recognized expert, authoritative voice, and a partner in addressing the diverse need of students and the issues that impact learning. The organization's Legislative Platform plays a significant role in guiding the ACSA Governmental Relations staff in steering the course for improvements and progress in public education and school administration.

ACSA's Legislative Platform, adopted every two years, establishes the advocacy priorities for the organization with the underlying premise of supporting what is best for students. The Platform, developed by the Legislative Policy Committee, is ratified by the Leadership Assembly and adopted by the ACSA Board of Directors. By establishing advocacy priorities, the Platform guides the advocacy work of the association and is used to inform lawmakers of the organization's highest education priorities. While the ACSA Legislative Platform is intended to identify major advocacy priorities, the absence of any particular policy issue does not preclude the Governmental Relations staff from representing the membership in policy areas that may arise over the course of the legislative session.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ACCESS: ACSA supports policies that ensure every student has access to a physically and emotionally safe school, and to high quality educational programs designed to prepare each student for success in college and/or the 21st century workforce.

EQUITY: ACSA will take action to confront barriers that limit the success of historically underserved students and will advocate for policies and practices that result in equitable educational outcomes.

LOCAL CONTROL: ACSA supports policies that empower school leaders to make local decisions that best serve students and their communities. ACSA discourages the inclusion of new state-mandated activities without the proper funding reimbursement unless there is a prevailing statewide interest or the simplification of existing programmatic requirements.

PRIORITY AREAS

Accountability and Continuous Improvement System

ACSA supports the successful implementation of a single, coherent accountability and continuous improvement system grounded on the inclusion of multiple measures that determine student progress and considers conditions of learning. ACSA supports the design and implementation of meaningful professional development opportunities and locally-tailored resources to build the capacity of educators supporting student academic growth and a positive school environment.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Pursue continued improvement of the state accountability system, including the development and refinement of the state and local performance indicators on the California School Dashboard.
- b) Consider modified methods for the accountability system for alternative education that recognizes all growth.
- c) Strengthen the English Learner reclassification processes.
- d) Seek consolidation and alignment between state and federal reporting requirements to the extent possible.

Charter Schools

ACSA supports a comprehensive and coherent public education system that includes quality options for all students. ACSA's Board of Directors established a Charter School Task Force that developed a set of principles which the Board adopted in October 2017. These guiding principles are prefaced with the belief that state, county, district and charter leaders need to work together to improve student learning through public accountability and transparency, equity and diversity, and innovation.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Work to ensure that charter schools implement nondiscriminatory enrollment practices and reflect the demographics of the general population of the school district, including but not limited to: foster youth, students with moderate to severe disabilities, English learners and economically disadvantaged students.
- b) Support charter governance structures that are free from conflicts of interest and promote oversight for fiscal operations and educational accountability that is equal to that of district schools, including compliance with the Brown Act.
- c) Limit a district's ability to approve charter schools outside of the district's jurisdiction.

Early Childhood Education

ACSA recognizes the important benefits of Early Childhood Education in helping with a child's brain development and opportunity to increase student's readiness by the time they enter Transitional Kindergarten or kindergarten. ACSA will evaluate early childhood education funding priorities against all other TK-adult priorities funded by Proposition 98 and the state's general fund.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Pursue policy changes to improve the existing State Preschool program eligibility and program requirements.
- b) Consider the prioritization of existing funds to expand access, improve quality or increase the reimbursement rates.
- c) Respond to the recommendations issued by the Assembly Speaker's Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education.

Educator Effectiveness & Pipeline

Students deserve the highest quality educators in every classroom. The teacher and administrator shortage, along with policy changes to restore bilingual education and increased leave benefits, will challenge districts to find and retain qualified employees in order to provide a quality education for all students. Investing in professional learning for teachers and administrators further aids in their preparation and retention.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Strive to secure 3% of Title II funds that are allocated to administrator professional learning for school and district leaders.
- b) Advocate for changing the membership of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to include at least one human resource administrator.
- c) Embed mental health and trauma-informed training into teacher and administrator credentialing programs.
- d) Support programs that help recruit and retain teachers, especially in critical shortage areas.

Mental Health

Student mental health needs are a prevalent state-wide issue that requires legislative awareness and attention. ACSA members report that rates of anxiety, depression, trauma, and suicide are at all-time high, including amongst alternative and adult education students. Addressing student mental health needs requires broad, coordinated efforts of which schools play one part.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Increase coordination amongst schools and community providers.
- b) Direct non-Prop. 98 funding to school districts to support local needs, including expanding student access to mental health services. Funding sources may include federal Medicaid/Medi-Cal, as well as revenues from both the Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63) and marijuana taxes (Prop. 64).

Retirement

All public educators deserve retirement security. To this end, ACSA is committed to preserving the defined benefit structure, particularly given that most educators do not receive federal social security benefits and that the current benefit model is a primary recruitment and retention tool for school districts.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Oppose any effort to eliminate defined benefit retirement plans.
- b) Repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision.
- c) Maintain the integrity of the California Rule, which guarantees public employee retirees the pension benefit they were promised at time of hire.

Safe & Healthy Schools

ACSA is committed to ensuring the physical and emotional health of all students, recognizing that children can only reach their full potential when healthy and safe. Every student, staff, teacher, and administrator must be prepared to respond to any school crisis that threatens the health and safety of school community members. ACSA supports the comprehensive approaches to providing a healthy and safe educational environment that is conducive to student learning.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Update school safety plan requirements to meet current needs.
- b) Protect the legal rights of all students to attend schools free of discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence, and intimidation.
- c) Work with relevant state agencies to develop air quality guidance for purposes of school closure.

School Facilities

Students and employees deserve quality and equitable school facilities. The bulk of Proposition 51 bond funds for new construction and modernization have been committed to school districts yet remain unsold, leaving more than \$5 billion in available funding from the state. Our school facility needs continue to grow while waiting for bond funds to be sold.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Support efforts to release remaining Proposition 51 bond funds.
- b) Support a school facilities bond for the March 2020 ballot that includes changes to the state and school building program to ease timelines and bureaucracy.
- c) Support funding outside of Proposition 98 to pay for emergency repairs due to natural disasters and to provide clean, lead-free water to our schools.

School Finance

ACSA calls on the state and federal governments to provide the resources necessary to offer innovative and excellent public education opportunities, support quality teaching and leadership, and foster parent, business and community involvement on behalf of California students. ACSA urges the state Legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom to identify and work towards achieving a long-term funding solution to bring California into the top ten rankings in per-pupil funding, as called for in the State Constitution.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Support allocation of Proposition 98 funds to fully fund existing programs, including adjustments for inflation and enrollment growth, as well as the full reimbursement of mandated activities and the equitable distribution for allocating one-time funds.
- b) Support increased education funding, including the development of a long-term investment strategy for public education.
- c) Mitigate the impact of increased employer retirement contributions while preserving the solvency of the public retirement systems.
- d) Establish new funding targets for the Local Control Funding Formula and pursue improvements as needed.

Special Education

Special education targets the needs of students with disabilities to help them achieve their educational goals and succeed in school. While special education services are state and federally mandated, state and federal funding has simply not kept pace with skyrocketing special education costs. ACSA supports special education reform that recognizes the growing number and increased severity of students identified with special needs, provides appropriate funding for special education services and increased support for districts identified for targeted assistance under the state accountability system. ACSA believes it is time for the state to address the glaring inequities in the current special education funding.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Supporting increased resources for special education including the equalization of SELPA base rates and increased state support for infant and preschool Special Education programs.
- b) Supporting the establishment of a funding allowance within the AB 602 formula for preschoolers and students with severe disabilities.
- c) Engaging in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).