

Association of California School Administrators Legislative Platform 2023-24

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) is to advocate in the best interest of students and to develop, empower and inspire equity-minded educational leaders. ACSA strives to be the driving force for an equitable, world-class education system that meets the diverse needs of all California children and adult education students.

ACSA's Legislative Platform plays a pivotal role in prioritizing the work of the Governmental Relations' team and members' local advocacy efforts. The Legislative Platform is developed by the Legislative Policy Committee, ratified by the Leadership Assembly and adopted by the Board of Directors every two-year legislative session, with a mid-session update. While the Legislative Platform identifies key advocacy priorities, the Governmental Relations staff will advocate on additional policy areas that arise over the course of the legislative session that promote the organization's mission and vision.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

STUDENT SUCCESS: Advocating for the resources needed to ensure students have equitable educational access and opportunities — from early childhood to college and into the workforce.

EQUITY: Advocating to dismantle systemic barriers that limit the success of historically underserved students and for policies and practices that result in equitable educational outcomes.

EDUCATOR SUCCESS AND WELL-BEING: Elevating the voices of educational leaders in the policymaking process and advancing policies that support professional growth and success, as well as policies that protect the social, emotional and physical well-being of school leaders.

LOCAL CONTROL: Empowering and entrusting local educational leaders and partners to best serve their local school communities. Supporting policies and robust funding mechanisms that enable local educational leaders to make decisions that achieve exceptional outcomes.

HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION: Renewing trust in public education as the institution essential for individual advancement, our state's prosperity and the cornerstone of democracy.

PRIORITY POLICY AREAS

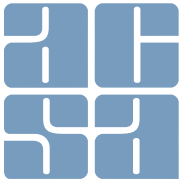
EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY-BASED EQUITY

ACSA is unwavering in its commitment to supporting policies that advance equity, diversity, belonging and inclusion. This commitment extends beyond the school setting as societal factors, including economic standing and health outcomes, are determinants of student success. ACSA will continue advocating for equity-centered policies that empower underserved and underrepresented groups with additional resources as well as policies that support all student groups in realizing their highest potential.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Dismantling systemic barriers that impact student learning and success;
- b) Advocating for policies that enhance educational opportunities for all students, especially those historically underserved and under-resourced;





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- c) Prioritizing legislation that promotes diversity in the educator workforce;
- d) Advancing policies that support the protection of LGBTQIA+ individuals and prohibits discrimination.

ROBUST AND STABLE SCHOOL FUNDING

As California and the nation see an economic slowing, the need for education funding remains, especially as new programs continue to be implemented. ACSA calls on the state and federal governments to provide robust and stable funding in order for schools to provide innovative and high-quality education to all students.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Fully funding the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) statutory cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), funding COLA to all programs outside the LCFF, and full allocation of Arts, Music, and Instructional Materials Block Grant;
- b) Mitigating the fiscal impact of declining enrollment;
- c) Fully funding required programs, including the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program, Transitional Kindergarten and Universal Meals;
- d) Mitigating the impact of increased employer retirement contributions while preserving the solvency of the public retirement systems;
- e) Increasing resources for special education and supporting efforts to expand inclusive practices, including the reauthorization of and increased funding for the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- f) Securing school facility funding through a statewide bond or other dedicated revenue streams to meet current and future construction and modernization needs.

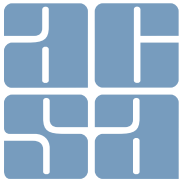
STAFF SHORTAGE: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Statewide, schools continue to face severe shortages in both classified and certificated positions, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. ACSA supports multiple pathways to the education profession and ensuring that students see diverse representation from caring, high-quality educators at all levels of the school system. ACSA urges the state to support innovative, research-proven methods that recruit and retain education professionals.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Enhancing financial incentives to enter the field, seeking multiple methods to demonstrate professional competency and reducing barriers for recruitment and retention;
- b) Supporting affordable and expedited credentialing programs, including credentialing that is embedded within existing degree programs;
- c) Removing eligibility obstacles that hinder out-of-state reciprocity;
- d) Protecting public employee pension and health benefits and repealing the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision;
- e) Providing greater opportunities for retirees to return to schools without jeopardizing their earned retirement benefits.





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STREAMLINED ACCOUNTABILITY

Educators are grappling with extensive and ever-increasing plan development and reporting requirements. Accountability efforts should be streamlined to allow educators to focus on directly serving students. ACSA supports the successful implementation of a single, integrated accountability system that determines student progress with consideration of local learning conditions.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Pursuing continued improvement of the state accountability system, including the refinement of the state and local performance indicators on the California School Dashboard;
- b) Developing of an accountability process for alternative education that recognizes student growth and alternative education's unique context;
- c) Consolidating and aligning state and federal reporting requirements.

STUDENT AND EDUCATOR WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Schools are grappling with intensified mental health needs for both students and staff. ACSA members report that rates of student anxiety, depression, trauma and suicide are at all-time highs. Furthermore, educators are experiencing burnout and need additional mental health supports. Responding to these needs requires broad, coordinated efforts of which schools only play one part. ACSA will continue to promote policies and cross-sector solutions that ensure all students and educators have access to social and emotional support and care.

Policy recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Increasing coordination among schools, state agencies and community providers, with a focus on providing school-based services;
- b) Seeking innovative ways to increase the amount of trained mental health and behavioral professionals in schools;
- c) Providing schools access to non-Prop. 98 funding, including Medicaid/Medi-Cal and Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) funds, to expand access to mental health services.