

2015 – 2017

Legislative Platform

Approved by ACSA's Legislative Policy Committee January 12, 2015

Adopted by ACSA's Delegate Assembly February 12, 2015

ACSA's Mission Statement

The mission of the Association of California School Administrators, the driving force of education in California and beyond, is to ensure the creation of communities of learning and teaching that serve both the aspirations of individual students and the greater good of society, through this unique and indispensable coalition distinguished by:

- bold and authoritative advocacy;
- dedication to the highest personal and professional ethics;
- inspirational networks of discovery and sharing of knowledge;
- mutual commitment to excellence; and
- universal accessibility to learning.

Legislative Platform

Introduction

ACSA continues to be in the forefront on public education policy issues at both the state and federal level. This is possible because of the guidance and expertise of our members. A key responsibility of ACSA's Delegate Assembly is to review and approve the ACSA Legislative Platform every two years. Prior to the Delegate Assembly's approval, the Legislative Policy Committee drafts the platform with the input of ACSA members who are surveyed statewide. The Legislative Platform as approved by the Delegate Assembly is then ratified by the ACSA Board of Directors. The Platform helps to inform policymakers of ACSA's highest priorities, guides the work of the ACSA staff and shapes the action steps to implement ACSA's Strategic Plan.

Growth and Change

ACSA has a responsibility to meet the ever-changing needs of California's growing and diversifying population of more than 38 million citizens, over 6 million of whom are enrolled in public schools. California schools mirror this vibrant, ethnically diverse population. 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. With the implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), we must prevent policymakers from adding further restrictions and mandates upon school districts and engender support for locally determined measurements of progress.

Adequacy

ACSA calls on the 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. California currently ranks 46th in per pupil spending across the nation. ACSA calls on our state and federal governments to bring California into the top 10 rankings for adequacy in funding as called for in California's state Constitution.

Twenty-first Century Schools

A 21st century plan for education should map out the policy, fiscal, technological and governance needs of the state's public schools, using our standards-based system as a foundation. A 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 plan will guide the implementation of education policy as opposed to a piecemeal approach to change, how technology will be implemented to advance these goals, and how the plan prioritizes recommendations including dedicated funding sources.

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, developing a simplified version of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) template, 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 to 46th of all 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 in order to bring California into the top tier in the nation for per pupil funding, preschool through adult.

Federal – The federal government is a partner with the state in providing certain educational services and programs to districts, schools and students. Among federal responsibilities are the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Carl Perkins, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II, special education, migrant, immigrant and language education; federal impact aid; and the civil rights of students. ACSA calls on each congressional representative and each of the state's two senators to coalesce around ways that Congress, the Administration and federal agencies, can help serve California students by increasing per pupil funding, increasing funding under E-Rate to support a high speed infrastructure and support for school modernization and maintenance.

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

Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment/Accountability

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.

ACSA will seek and/or support policy to accomplish the following:

- 1) Support efforts that give students the learning skills necessary for the 21st century as well as the physical, social, emotional, intellectual and health support needed to learn.
- 2) Support local control to strengthen curriculum and instructional practices, including the use of technology, emphasizing practices that are research based and demonstrate improved student achievement which will result in closing the achievement gap.
- 3) Integrate statewide academic, career technical, Next Generation Science standards and English Language Development standards, including Common Core State Standards, with a system of assessment and accountability that is aligned to standards and contains multiple valid and reliable measures in order to actively promote student progress and maximize instructional time. Evolve the state accountability system so that all targets are based on the growth of individual students and are aligned to the 8 State priorities under LCFF.
- 4) Support suspension of the use of Common Core aligned assessment results for accountability measurements until there has been sufficient time to align instructional practices, curriculum and materials are in place and the testing system has been fully implemented, is valid and reliable.

- 5) Support and assist in the development of an accountability system for alternative education that recognizes all growth using a “save-rate” metric that provides credit for short-term, accelerated growth as well as annual student achievement growth. Support alternative education settings, as well as programs for students with special needs with a dedicated funding stream to ensure that all students succeed.
- 6) Support career technical education programs with a dedicated funding stream as part of the overall educational experience.
- 7) Support adult education programs with a dedicated funding stream to help parents and guardians ensure achievement of school-aged children and actively address lifelong learning needs – including career and college ready skills - of individual students and that support self-sufficiency, adult literacy and the economic workforce.
- 8) Support and enhance English language learner reclassification processes and language-appropriate instructional practices which ensure educational achievement for all English language learners in becoming college and career ready.
- 9) Support cooperation between Pre-K-12-adult education and higher education to align college admission and placement assessments to Pre-K-12-adult education standards.
- 10) Advocate for alignment of Federal and State accountability systems to avoid disparate identification of low performing schools as with past program improvement requirements and support continuous improvement measures rather than punitive sanctions at the state and federal level.
- 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 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.
- 13) Advocate for the design of a quality evaluation rubric as part of LCFF accountability.
- 14) Advocate on the design and implementation of the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE).
- 15) Support expansion of state and federal programs and funding for early childhood education to ensure that young children are prepared for learning.

Finance

Proposition 98 placed in the state Constitution provisions for long-range funding for public schools but it must be recognized that Proposition 98 provides a floor beneath which funding must not fall and should not be used as a ceiling for education expenditures nor be considered adequate funding until California meets the goal under the Constitution to be within the top ten states in the nation in resources and services for students. 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, deficits and eliminating deferrals.

ACSA seeks and/or supports policy or budget proposals to accomplish the following:

- 16) Provide State funding that is in the top 10 of all States in the nation pursuant to California's Constitutional commitment and ensure stable per pupil funding for preschool through adult education at the level necessary to support a quality education for every public school student.
- 17) Provide full funding for mandated programs, both state and federal, annually.
- 18) Play a lead role in ensuring the mandate to draw down local reserves whenever the state sets aside Prop 98 funds in a state reserve is repealed.
- 19) Advocate increasing base funding and equalizing funding among similar types of school districts and similar types of county offices of education while addressing geographic cost differences.
- 20) Advocate for a Phase III of "dedicated" Common Core implementation and NGSS set-aside funding to be used at the discretion of LEAs for the purpose of transitioning to Common Core State Standards and NGSS. These funds will be considered part of a multi-year investment for the instructional support needs of students, teachers and other education leaders.
- 21) Fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at the authorized federal level of 40% for pass through to local education agencies.
- 22) Pursue funding for special education services as well as protecting special education funding from being used for other purposes by the state. Pursue full pass through of special education funding from the state to local districts.
- 23) Continue ACSA's active engagement in school facility issues. Allow for increased local funding options, both for programmatic support and for school construction, modernization and emergency repair.
- 24) 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.
- 25) Protect against public money being used in support of vouchers or for providing education in non-public schools for general education purposes.
- 26) Through LCFF and LCAP, fund instructional materials, including digital materials and library materials, at appropriate levels and allow more flexibility in use of funds.
- 27) Provide full funding and local control in decisions to allow districts to adopt programs that reduce the pupil/teacher ratio.
- 28) Support investment in, and maintenance of, technology and recognition of ongoing costs of keeping technology current 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.
- 29) Support expanding services to include preschool / TK – 4 year olds and the financial resources to staff and provide for facility needs to implement and maintain such programs.

Governance/Advocacy

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.

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

- 30) Reduce state mandates and simplify reporting procedures for all state-required reports.
- 31) Require governance transparency and adequate fiscal accountability along with rigorous academic accountability for all charter schools and districts. Any expansion should be based on measurable data regarding student progress and fiscal solvency. All state and federal laws should be followed and all state and federal services required of public schools should be provided by charter schools and districts.
- 32) Continue active engagement and leadership on legal cases having a statewide impact, through ACSA's Education Legal Support Fund.
- 33) ACSA should increase its federal presence and engage ACSA members in actively advocating for reforms to federal programs that improve California public schools.
- 34) Continue ACSA's active engagement in securing education administrators on state boards, commissions and advisory bodies.
- 35) Restrict providing public records requests to for-profit companies.

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 policy to accomplish the following:

- 36) Advocate for quality ongoing professional development support for all teachers and administrators to deliver instruction that aligns with the CCSS, the NGSS and the assessments that will require computer based applications and performance based assessments.
- 37) Define effective educators and creation of rubrics to measure effectiveness.
- 38) 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.
- 39) Provide all ACSA members with sufficient protections against arbitrary and capricious decisions affecting their employment.

- 40) Advocate for a streamlined certificated employee dismissal process. ACSA will also advocate for educator effectiveness and create a tool to measure it that focuses on the value to students and what they have learned. Improve education management's ability to effectively evaluate teachers by advocating for quality professional development and support for administrators statewide.
- 41) Support an increase in teacher probationary length of time from 2 years to 3+ years while ensuring no cause is required.
- 42) Improve administrative rights to transfer permanent teachers to alternate assignments such as subbing.
- 43) Limit the scope of representation (collective bargaining) for school employees, except where LCFF/LCAP 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.
- 44) Continue ACSA's active engagement in discussions to ensure balance that allows for flexibility in obtaining an administrative credential and advocate for funding support for induction costs.
- 45) Increase the pool of qualified, competent, and diverse personnel and improve the administrator to teacher ratio which is one of the highest in the nation.
- 46) Improve Special Education credentialing requirements to be less specific in order to increase the recruitment and retention of those coming into the field.

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 policy to accomplish the following:

- 47) Provide schools with adequate resources and effective program options to assure a safe environment for all students and staff.
- 48) Modernize and rehabilitate buildings and equipment to assure a safe physical environment and to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.
- 49) Support schools working with social service agencies to provide support for the social and emotional needs of students.
- 50) Support introduction and implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) programs in districts across the state.
- 51) Secure student privacy related to social media use and data mining. Support reforming FERPA to include technology, protection from data mining and other recent developments around student data.

Retirement

Retirement issues are of fundamental importance to both active and retired ACSA members.

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

- 52) Improve employee retirement 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. Preserve the pension benefits of employees with the CalSTRS and CalPERS systems.
- 53) Ensure adequate funding of STRS and PERS, and protect retirement funds from being diverted by the state to non-retirement purposes.
- 54) Protect the current defined benefit structure embodied in the CalSTRS and CalPERS systems by opposing any efforts to convert into a defined contribution structure.
- 55) Eliminate the government pension offset and windfall elimination provision as penalties on social security earnings for school leaders.

For questions concerning ACSA's 2015-2017 Legislative Platform please contact ACSA's Governmental Relations Department at (916) 444-3216.