



2011-12 PASA Resolutions

adopted 10/20/11

INTRODUCTION

The goals of PASA and its aspirations for public education are reflected in this document. The ten goals represent what PASA should work toward as an organization, while the resolutions are more specific actions that need to be taken in order to achieve the goals.

These resolutions serve to guide the Board of Governors, Executive Director, and Committees in carrying out the work of PASA. Since PASA is a direct affiliate of the American Association of School Administrators, PASA accepts the responsibility of supporting the resolutions of AASA.

GOALS

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators has as its goals:

1. Providing leadership in developing and offering quality programs, seeking expanded opportunities, and exploring new avenues for curriculum development, instructional improvement and effective assessment.
2. Working with the Executive Branch and the General Assembly to secure desirable legislation and regulations affecting education.
3. Maintaining effective relationships with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and other education-oriented organizations for the purpose of improving education at the local, state and national levels.
4. Advocating for the funding necessary to support high quality public education.
5. Emphasizing the need for effective local control of education.
6. Providing resources for managing problems in school administration.
7. Supporting the maintenance of high standards of ethical performance.
8. Recruiting administrators and supporting strong professional preparation and self-development programs for school administrators.
9. Promoting the safety and general welfare of students, including their mental, social, emotional, physical and character development.
10. Supporting the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education to ensure that all schools, whether public or nonpublic, meet legal, educational and health standards as prescribed by law for the Commonwealth.

PRIORITY RESOLUTIONS FOR 2011-12

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

- High quality schools don't just happen. They are the result of the commitment of teachers, administrators, support personnel, school board members, policy makers on both the state and federal level, taxpayers and parents to create supporting communities in which students can grow and learn.
- All partners in education must stand accountable for their contributions to public schools and the impact their role has on student learning. This includes:
 - the Commonwealth's commitment to public education and an obligation to provide access to adequate resources to support student learning in Pennsylvania's public schools
 - the teaching profession's obligation to utilize research-based instructional strategies
 - administrators' obligation to insure that high quality leadership is in place to lead efforts to improve student learning
 - student and family commitment to pursue, promote and support the value of education and life-long learning
- School reform efforts must be research-based and adequately funded to ensure that accountability in management and educational progress is both measurable and achievable.

Public Education Funding

General Principles

- PASA believes that the current system for funding public education is broken.
- PASA believes that current tax policies in the Commonwealth unfairly benefit some to the exclusion of others and, in general, reduce available revenue sources to address the essential costs of programs and services, including public education.
- PASA believes that five principles should guide state funding of public schools: equity, adequacy, predictability, accountability and efficiency. If these goals are met, then schools should be accountable for academic results.
 - **Equity:** While standards are the same for every school, resources are not. PASA believes that all communities and students should have equal access to the services and programs needed to meet academic goals.
 - **Adequacy:** The costing-out study was the basis of a funding formula aimed at ensuring that all schools and students were provided with adequate resources needed to meet state standards. Subsequent studies confirmed the results of the costing-out study. However, the six-year funding formula based on the costing-out study has been abandoned. PASA believes that the commitment to provide adequate educational resources to Pennsylvania's children should be maintained.
 - **Predictability:** Changes in administrations and changes in political philosophy

have rendered a consistent, predictable way for school districts to make long-term operational decisions nearly impossible. PASA believes that, in a time of increasing focus on student achievement and operational efficiencies, a predictable and stable school funding formula is essential to meet local, state and federal expectations.

- **Accountability:** Public schools should be held accountable for practices and operations. However, PASA believes that state and federal governments also must be held accountable for providing to schools the resources necessary to meet operational goals, particularly in student achievement.
- **Efficiency:** Public schools are among the most highly regulated entities in the nation. State and federal mandates, taken together, impose a tremendous time and cost burden on school operations. PASA believes that state and federal policymakers should examine all existing mandates imposed on public education to determine the actual cost/benefit for the school and for students. PASA further believes that no mandate should be imposed on school districts unless it is essential to school operations or student needs, is research-based and does not entail additional costs to implement in either time or resources.
- PASA believes that the Commonwealth's share of school funding should be made available to school districts in predictable, regularly scheduled payments and allocated based upon the 2008 Basic Education Funding formula enacted by the General Assembly.
- PASA believes that public schools should have the flexibility to utilize federal and state funds in the most cost-efficient and effective manner based on student needs within each school and school district.
- PASA believes that locally elected school officials are in the best position to make tax decisions based on the needs within their communities, particularly when state and federal governments do not meet the five goals of education funding.
- PASA believes that a well-funded state formula reduces the pressure on districts to raise property tax rates to cover mandated school district costs.

Cost-Savings

PASA:

- Supports updating the formula for funding school facilities and amending laws governing school construction to allow for cost-savings (i.e. prevailing wage, single contract rule, etc.).
- Supports updating transportation requirements for nonpublic and private school students to restrict distance to 10 miles from a student's home school, not the district's borders.
- Supports legislation to give school districts authority to cut programs and furlough staff for economic reasons, and granting to school districts the authority to make furlough decisions utilizing both seniority and performance measures.
- Supports changes to federal and state health care requirements to ease school district costs.
- Supports changes in PSERS funding to "smooth-out" the contribution rate over time, while maintaining the system adequately and basing decisions concerning the system and system benefits on real data.
- Supports shared costs for providing health care benefits.

State and Federal Funding

PASA:

- Supports continuation of formula-driven funding targeted at research-based programs and services such as childhood education and full-day kindergarten, while maintaining flexibility in the use of funding for K-4 programs based on the needs of individual districts and local communities.
- Urges appropriate and adequate state and federal funding for special education programs and services mandated by law, based on real costs and student needs. This includes full funding of state and federal mandates, eliminating state requirements that go beyond federal requirements, and establishing reasonable limits on available programs.
- Supports funding for enhancing technology and networking capability, particularly in underserved areas.
- Supports adequate funding for vocational schools and CTCs.
- Supports continued school district access to Medicaid funding for health services to students with disabilities.
- Supports adequate funding for intermediate units, early intervention and alternative education.
- Supports financial support for upgrading equipment and facilities in CTCs.

Local Funding

PASA:

- Opposes restrictions on the authority of local school officials to raise local revenues needed to adequately fund public schools.
- Supports changes to Act 1 that would restore previous exceptions to referendum requirements that account for the actual costs incurred by the school district to provide mandatory programs and services for students with special needs and the school district's share of mandated employee pension costs.
- Supports regular, statewide and uniform property assessment.
- Supports authority to collect impact fees on new residential and commercial construction.

Charter Schools and Cyber Charter Schools

General Principles

- PASA believes that charter schools are an integral component of Pennsylvania's public education system.
- PASA believes that lawmakers and state policymakers should work collectively with public schools to establish fair and coherent state charter school policies that are based on available data concerning performance and cost.
- PASA believes that Pennsylvania law concerning charter school accountability and funding is inadequate. Although many charter schools and online programs provide evidence of innovative and academic success, others do not. Mixed results in student achievement, numerous cases of questionable, if not criminal, business and personnel practices, a lack of transparency and an inequitable funding mechanism that does not

fairly reflect actual costs of instruction continue to be a great concern. For that reason, PASA believes that state policymakers must make changes in the state's charter school law and policies to provide assurance to taxpayers that limited public resources are being utilized in a transparent and cost effective manner and to ensure that the primary beneficiaries of charter schools are the students they are intended to serve.

PASA:

- Supports retaining a school district's exclusive authority for approval of charter schools.
- Supports basing general and special education funding of charter and cyber charter schools on the cost of actual instruction and related supports provided to students.
- Supports strengthening accountability and requiring full compliance with state requirements, including state ethics, conflict of interest and audit requirements.
- Supports legislation that would exempt districts from paying tuition for cyber schools when a school district offers a comprehensive cyber education to its students.
- Supports a review of student achievement at all levels to gauge appropriateness of cyber instruction.

Student Assessment

General Principles:

- PASA believes that public schools must strive to meet the academic needs of all students as part of a "whole child" approach to education.
- PASA believes that state and federal policy on standards and assessment must be research-based, reflect the reality that students have individual needs and recognize that proficiency on assessments is just one of many indicators of student or school success.
- PASA believes that state assessments must be aligned with rigorous state-adopted standards and consistent over time in order to be useful in measuring student achievement.
- PASA believes that school entities should have the authority to develop rigorous local assessment systems aligned with state academic standards to determine the proficiency and readiness of students to graduate from high school.

PASA:

- Supports clear and rigorous academic standards.
- Opposes implementation of a state assessment system that adversely impacts student learning time.
- Opposes the use of any standardized test as the sole criteria for school district, school or staff evaluation, or as a standard for student graduation.
- Supports evaluation of the number of required student tests and assessments tied directly to the standards.
- Supports the use of alternative assessments for student with special needs appropriate to their disabilities and for ELL students.

Tuition Vouchers/Opportunity Grants

General Principles

- Research and data indicate that the vast majority of public schools consistently provide a fair and appropriate education to the Commonwealth's children.
- PASA recognizes the right of parents to decline the opportunity to enroll their children in the Commonwealth's public schools and choose instead to either homeschool their children or enroll them in the private school of their choice.
- Public funds for education must be directed to the community's public schools and constitutionally are not for private use.
- In those schools and school districts where students are not meeting academic expectations, communities, parents, school officials, the Department of Education and state policymakers must work together to provide that supports and resources are directed appropriately and effectively to ensure a safe, student-focused learning environment that will lead to gains in student achievement.

PASA:

- Opposes the use of public taxpayer dollars to fund tuition vouchers or opportunity grants.
- Opposes state and federal legislation which would allow for voucher or tuition tax credit plans.

ESEA Reauthorization

General Principles:

- Both state government and federal government play an important role in directing and supporting public schools.
- Federal rules governing each state's public schools must include sufficient flexibility for states and school districts to provide the most effective education within their respective communities.

PASA:

- Supports equitable federal funding formula targeted to low-income and minority children.
- Supports a more easily understood accountability system balanced by the relative contribution of the federal government to the school district.
- Supports regulatory relief from 2014 ESEA requirements until the act is reauthorized.

Mandate Waivers

General Principles:

- Before new requirements on school districts are enacted, state policymakers must carefully research and consider the financial, staffing, educational and operational impact of the proposal within the broader view of existing requirements and the overall educational mission of public education.

- Mandated education requirements established by state officials must be adequately funded at the state level to avoid placing an undo financial burden on local communities and must include sufficient flexibility to ensure that local school officials are able to comply with new requirements without placing undo stress on the educational program or effective school district management.

PASA:

- Supports re-establishing and expanding the Mandate Waiver program, to include prevailing wage, furloughs of staff for economic reasons, school construction contracting requirements and non-public and charter school student transportation.

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Quality Education

General Principles:

- All partners in education must stand accountable for their contributions to schools and the impact their role has on student learning.
- Accountability should reflect the full program school districts offer rather than focusing on isolated information within the school district.

PASA:

- Supports collaborative initiatives between education and business and industry.
- Supports the increased use of and funding for technology.
- Supports professional development focused on effective practices and enhanced knowledge in specific or additional areas of certification.
- Supports better integration of academics and technical training.
- Supports continuing support for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that provide a realistic approach to scheduling student time and allow for continued emphasis on academics.
- Supports reasonable accommodations to provide least restrictive environment.
- Supports the use of a graduation rate calculation that accurately reflects individual student needs, placement and enrollment history within the school district.
- Supports the development of state policies to fund the most appropriate delivery system to meet the educational needs of institutionalized students.

School Safety and Security

PASA:

- Supports cooperation between school districts and local community organizations, parents and law enforcement to protect student well-being.
- Opposes intrusive school safety audit practices that go beyond benchmarks in state statutory and regulatory requirements.

Management-Leadership Team

PASA:

- Supports the development of initiatives and support systems that will encourage professional educators to consider and assume the role of administrator.
- Supports establishing, as board policy, charts and line-staff relationships and position descriptions.
- Opposes legislation that would remove any administrators from the management team.
- Supports developing compensation plans that treat management personnel adequately and fairly in accordance with established duties and responsibilities.
- Supports providing the rationale for compensation ranges and fringe benefits.
- Supports ensuring access to management training programs.
- Supports maintaining a policy for the evaluation of management personnel, using multiple measures of performance.
- Supports assessing annually the performance of the superintendent, using multiple measures of performance.
- Supports adopting methods for self-evaluation.
- Supports establishing goals and objectives for the district.
- Supports using assessment data as an element of evaluation.
- Encourages school board member participation in pre-service and continuous in-service training programs.

Personnel and Professional Development

General Principles:

- PASA believes that hiring, developing, supporting and retaining new professional educators is essential not only to the future of the profession but to the future of public education and the workforce as well. Toward that end, PASA believes that policymakers must not establish or retain statutory or regulatory roadblocks that would keep the “best and the brightest” from either considering education as a profession or leaving the profession early in their careers.
- PASA believes that high quality professional development of professional staff and leaders, provided annually, is essential to raising student achievement aligned with the standards targets.
- Research shows that strong education leadership both at the district and school building levels is essential to building curricular frameworks that raise student achievement. Those who serve in central administration, including the superintendent, are key to providing the leadership and support necessary to ensure the seamless integration of effective and efficient district management, communications, curriculum development and policy implementation. For that reason, it is imperative that school district leaders be fully certificated as educators.
- Educational training and skills in both management and educational leadership are essential for a superintendent’s success as a school system leader who is both an effective manager and a professional leader focused on raising student achievement.

- PASA believes that a cooperative effort among local school districts, institutions of higher education and the Pennsylvania Department of Education is essential to assure the preparation of high quality management and other personnel to meet present and future educational needs.

PASA:

- Supports the Pennsylvania Department of Education to continue to permit districts and intermediate units to train noncertificated college graduates to provide a broader pool of substitutes and allow the limited use of students currently enrolled in certification programs to serve as substitutes for professional employees.
- Supports the right of school districts to hire and retain the best-qualified and certified candidates for every position.
- Supports alternative entry qualifications for paraprofessionals.
- Opposes efforts to impose arbitrary salary caps on school administrators, but rather supports the authority of a locally elected school board to make those decisions based on the characteristics and needs within the community, the level and scope of responsibility in the school district and the experience and expertise of the school district leader.
- Opposes legislation that would diminish the experience and training a superintendent needs to be an effective educational leader.
- Urges superintendents and school boards to develop systems to identify educators in their systems who have the potential to be outstanding school leaders and to provide them with mentoring and support so that they can grow into positions of increasing responsibility.
- Urges state policymakers, local school officials and local school boards to work together to establish systems and policies that increase incentives to attract qualified administrators, including enhanced benefits, adjusted compensation plans, and revised retirement policies.
- Supports continued tenure for principals and other professional administrators as a tool for attracting and retaining qualified education leaders and opposes proposals to restrict school board authority to contract with commissioned officers.
- Strongly opposes any restrictions on the local school board's right to renew a commissioned officer.
- Supports careful development of certification standards that do not exacerbate existing teacher shortages.
- Supports allowing school districts to hire professionals licensed by other agencies when shortages exist in the availability of dental hygienists, school nurses, speech/language therapists/specialists, etc.
- Encourages state officials to broaden the range of professional development opportunities for administrators under Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) requirements that are appropriate to the responsibilities of the job.

Development of Education Policy

PASA:

- Encourages the State Board of Education to continue using public hearing forums as a viable vehicle through which educational concerns can be assessed and discussed.
- Urges the General Assembly to ensure opportunities for public participation in the

development of education policy by using the standing committees to review, hold hearings and pass upon education legislation before it takes final action.

- Supports adequate staff and sufficient resources for the Department of Education to fulfill its mission of improving and supporting education at the local, state and national levels.
- Urges involvement of superintendents actively in the development of guidelines, models, standards, practices and policies.
- Recommends that the Secretary of Education have experience as a school administrator and as a commissioned officer in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Collective Bargaining

PASA:

- Strongly urges the legislature to consider a method whereby neither teachers nor school districts have a financial advantage during a work stoppage.
- Supports efforts to explore ways to reduce disruptions due to labor-management impasses.
- Supports the requirement for a secret ballot vote for strike action.
- Strongly opposes agency shop.

Nonpublic Schools

PASA:

- Opposes federal or state legislation and regulations which would expand school districts' financial obligation in support of programs for nonpublic school students.
- Urges full funding for transportation of students to nonpublic schools located outside the boundaries of the district of residence, in accordance with Act 372.
- Urges that policies, in the form of laws, regulations and standards that apply to public schools, should apply also to nonpublic schools and students that accept public funds.

Other Issues

- **Community Involvement:** PASA encourages school districts to support the continuous involvement of all members of the community.
- **Intermediate Units:** PASA encourages and supports the intermediate units in their provision of services to school districts and students.
- **Education Associations:** PASA encourages collegial commitment to strengthen effective educational team relationships between PASA and other educational associations, including PSBA, PAIU, PTA, PAESSP, PASCD, PASBO, PASPA, PSEA, AFT-PA, PASR, PenSPRA, PACTA, PARSS and PIAA and their national affiliates.