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PASA POINTS

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators

About PASA

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) is an organization that is instrumental in developing successful school leadership through advocacy, support, sustainment of high-quality school administrators and a statewide collegial network.

Contact us at:
2608 Market Place
Harrisburg, PA 17110
www.pasa-net.org
717-540-4448
Email: pasa@pasa-net.org

Dr. John Bell
PASA President

Dr. Jay Burkhart
PASA President Elect

Dr. Jeffrey Fuller
PASA Past President

Dr. Thomas Lesniewski
PASA Treasurer

Dr. Shane Hotchkiss
Legislative Chair

Dr. Mark DiRocco
Executive Director



Schooling is much different for everyone during the current pandemic. We need to keep our students and staff safe.

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Ensuring Safe and Healthy Schools

PASA remains very concerned about the health and safety of children and staff members in our schools. School districts have made decisions on how to deliver instruction to students ranging from full in-person settings for all students to full remote learning. These have been difficult decisions for school officials as there are varying opinions on how to best educate students during a pandemic.

Many districts have processed active COVID-19 cases that have resulted in quarantines of individual and temporary closure of buildings. This has caused tremendous disruptions to the continuity of education and family routines. With the virus spiking over the past few weeks, we anticipate that more disruptions will take place during the coming winter months unless a vaccine or effective therapeutic arrives to quell the virus.

PASA appreciates our partnership with lawmakers and asks for state and federal officials to continue working in partnership with public school officials to identify critical needs in schools and ensure that public schools have access to adequate and equitable funding that will effectively address the safety needs, educational needs, and physical, mental and social/emotional health of all students and maximize their learning in a secure and positive school environment, whether in the traditional classroom or in virtual environments.

PASA also respectfully requests that state policymakers to continue seeking input from local public school officials when developing educational policy to meet that goal and coordinate policies and guidance to clearly support public schools in providing a healthy and safe learning environment for students. PASA further believes that local officials must have decision-making authority and flexibility in the use of resources to best meet the unique needs of their respective districts rather than having specified state mandates and requirements imposed on all schools. Finally, PASA believes that school communities and the larger public community must work together to ensure that each public school is equitably and adequately supported to meet the unique educational, health and safety needs and challenges of students in all communities throughout Pennsylvania.

PASA Principles of Support to Ensuring Safe and Healthy Schools

General Principles:

- A healthy, safe, secure, and positive learning environment is critical to the overall mission of public schools.
- School and student health and safety is a public responsibility and requires the commitment and positive actions of all stakeholders.
- Safe and healthy school initiatives must address the physical, social/emotional and mental health of all students, whether in traditional classrooms or in virtual environments.
- The Commonwealth must be committed to ensuring sufficient resources for all aspects of student education, safety, and health without imposing costly laws and regulations concerning school health and safety issues.

PASA:

- Supports new, sustainable, and flexible funding for safe and healthy school initiatives, including equipment and supplies, personnel, curriculum, training, and infrastructure.
- Supports providing adequate and equitable funding to school districts for health and safety initiatives based on need and not distributed through competitive grants.
- Supports a review of requirements in Safe2Say and Act 44 to better meet the efforts of school districts to keep students, staff, and schools secure and provide sufficient flexibility on the local level in making decisions on safety issues.
- Supports utilizing the Department of Education as a major partner in current and future legislative and regulatory initiatives promoting school health and safety.
- Expresses a willingness to assist in the development and evaluation of legislation and policy regarding school health and safety.
- Opposes any legislation that reduces local control for decisions concerning security measures without comparable and ongoing state funding.
- Promotes legislation that allows public schools to declare expenditures for school and student health, safety, and security as an exemption under Act 1.
- Urges better coordination among state and county agencies focused on comprehensive mental health services within the public school setting to more adequately and effectively meet the needs of the growing number of students facing mental health challenges.
- Promotes the development of comprehensive programs that target drug and alcohol issues with an emphasis on prevention and rehabilitative services.
- Supports a review of truancy requirements

PASA is committed to assisting the Governor, General Assembly, and school leaders across the Commonwealth to ensure that our school students and staff are safe as possible during the current pandemic and beyond. We look forward to working with policy makers to ensure that adequate funding and resources are provided to our schools to address the many challenges for school health and safety.