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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.

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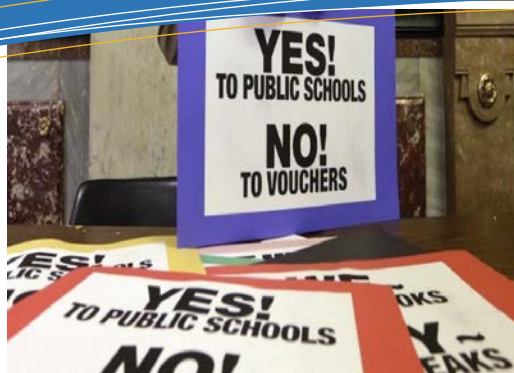
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**PASA opposes school voucher programs.**

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## PASA Opposes Vouchers and HB 1800

PASA joins the majority of the American public in opposing voucher schemes that funnel public dollars to private and parochial schools. Most American taxpayers do not like the concept of taking tax dollars specifically collected for the purpose of educating all children in public schools and giving it to private and parochial schools that provide no accountability on how that money is spent on children.

Therefore, PASA opposes House Bill 1800. The bill would give vouchers to all currently enrolled private and sectarian school students. What impact would that have? In 2017-18, the Harrisburg School District transported 612 resident students to private schools. This voucher plan would result in \$2.5 million going to private and religious schools without one student currently enrolled in the Harrisburg School District accepting a voucher!

That is above the cost of vouchers for current students, which could cost Harrisburg another \$3 to \$6 million according to the formula described in the bill depending on how many families accept a voucher. As a result, the full range of costs to the Harrisburg School District could be an astounding \$5.5 to \$8.5 million. This would be a severe economic blow to a district that is already in financial distress but is working hard with state officials to reorganize and get on its feet financially and academically.

In addition, as is true of the EITC program, there is no corresponding academic or fiscal accountability for these public voucher dollars once they are sent to private or sectarian schools. In fact, the bill expressly prohibits the commonwealth, the district, and the receiver from imposing additional accountability requirements on non-public schools not already authorized by law. And the bill specifically states that private schools do not have "to accept or retain a student if the nonpublic school does not offer programs or is not structured or equipped with the necessary facilities to meet the special needs of the student or does not offer a particular program requested."

It is unwise to spend state tax dollars on private schools when the state should focus on ensuring that every student in every community has equal access to an excellent system of public education. As established in the PA Constitution, public funds are for public schools that are open to ALL students, not for the support of private education and private or sectarian schools which have no accountability and transparency and are not required to accept every child who applies.

*"The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails." John Maxwell*



**Pennsylvania Association  
of School Administrators**

*Proud Leadership for Pennsylvania's Schools*

## PASA Principles

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 recognition of shared responsibility with local communities for providing resources adequate to comply with laws and regulations regarding public education and essential to support student learning in Pennsylvania's public schools

The teaching profession's obligation to utilize evidence-based and research-based instructional strategies

Administrators' obligation to ensure 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

Higher education's commitment to preparing future teachers, offering dual-enrollment courses for students and partnering with school districts to ensure student readiness

Commitment from the profession, the public, the media and the wider community in acknowledging the high importance of public education and the teaching profession to ensure a strong democracy

The greater business community's commitment to workforce development and career and college readiness

## PASA's Funding for Public Education General Principles

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:** Funding resources must be adequate to support real and actual costs of educating ALL students to meet the state and local standards, be based on local costs, individual student needs, district size, geographic size, and district wealth, and reflect the shared responsibility of adequately funding schools by the state and local community. In particular, the rising costs of providing services and programs for children with special needs, as well as the rising costs of litigation, necessitates an increased level of financial support from both the state and federal level. PASA believes that the commitment to provide adequate educational resources to Pennsylvania's children is necessary for the success of all students.

**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 evidence-based and does not entail additional costs to implement in either time or resources.

The Commonwealth's share of school funding should be made available to school districts in predictable, regularly scheduled payments and allocated based on a fair, equitable and adequate funding formula.