



2018-19 PASA Resolutions

As adopted by the membership on October 18, 2018 in Hershey

INTRODUCTION

This document reflects PASA's aspirations for public education. The ten priorities 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 them. These resolutions, in conjunction with the PASA Strategic Plan, serve to guide the Board of Governors, Committees and PASA staff 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.

GENERAL PRIORITIES

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators has as its ongoing priorities:

1. Advocating for the funding necessary to support high quality public education, which remains the foundation of our democracy and the American dream.
2. Promoting the safety and general welfare of students, including their mental, social, emotional, physical and character development.
3. Promoting and advocating for high-quality preparation and professional development programs that will ensure school system leaders are well prepared to serve as instructional leaders in Pennsylvania's public schools and providing ongoing opportunities for them to further develop their leadership skills.
4. Working with the Executive Branch and the General Assembly to secure desirable legislation and regulations affecting education.
5. Maintaining effective relationships with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and other education-oriented organizations for the purpose of improving education policy at the local, state and national levels.
6. Emphasizing the need for effective local control of education.
7. Providing resources to support the work of school administrators.
8. Supporting the maintenance of high standards of ethical performance.
9. Recruiting administrators and supporting strong professional preparation and self-development programs for school administrators.
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.

Outline of PASA Resolutions

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EMPHASIZED PRIORITIES IN 2018-19

School Safety

Responding to the call for action to further increase school security, school administrators, locally elected school boards, local officials and state policymakers have made security a priority issue in an ongoing effort to ensure that the education, health and safety of students and staff is and remains a focus issue. Toward that end, PASA calls for state and federal officials to ensure that local officials have access to adequate funding to ensure safe schools and that the focus of that support is on new and sustained funding, not on reallocation of existing funding. PASA also believes that local officials must have decision-making authority and flexibility in the use of those funds 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 schools is as safe as possible.

State Funding Priorities

Priorities in the development of a state budget for education must include a focus on maintaining and refining a predictable system for reimbursement of school construction projects (PlanCON), the five principles of basic education funding (equity, adequacy, predictability, accountability and efficiency), and reforms in both funding for and accountability of all charter schools.

Advocacy

PASA will work both as an association on behalf of its members and with its members to increase public awareness of the focus issues in public education, the successes of public schools, and the need for ongoing and increased public support for public education as a constitutional principle.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

- The success of public schools is the keystone to ensuring an educated public and a strong Commonwealth. For that reason, the Pennsylvania Constitution provides that “The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth.”
- To ensure that success and therefore success for all students, providing for a system of funding that provides adequate equitable and predictable resources to public schools must be the Commonwealth’s number one priority.
- 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 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
- School reform efforts must be evidence-based and adequately funded to ensure that accountability in management and educational progress is both measurable and achievable.

SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

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 continue to reflect the full program school districts offer rather than focusing on isolated information within the school district.
- 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 ensure 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.
- Collaborative initiatives between education and business and industry will help to direct and support education for all students.

Student Assessment

General Principles:

- Local partners (local control) are still our best resources for school improvement. Superintendents, school board members, educators, school communities and business leaders have the most accurate data and insights to improve teaching and learning.
- State and federal policy on standards and assessment, particularly with the successful implementation of ESSA, must be evidence-based, reflect the reality that students have individual needs, and recognize that evaluation of student achievement should be based on the individual student's progress in mastering those standards, and not measured by success on a single test.
- School leaders must partner with state policymakers to promote the successful implementation of the ESSA so that it does not impose undue burdens or stress on either children or staff, but rather promotes a positive classroom testing environment that provides students with the best opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of curriculum content. Any revisions made to current regulations regarding standards and assessment must address the unintended consequences that negatively impact student learning associated with implementation of federal accountability mandates.
- State assessments must be meaningful, data-driven and intended to further each child's educational achievement.
- Public schools must strive to meet the academic needs of all students as part of a "whole child" approach to education.
- 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. ESSA implementation should reflect the need for local decision-making as a guiding principle.

- State assessments must be aligned with rigorous core standards with a commitment to consistency throughout the student's educational career.

PASA:

- Supports a study to review the impact of parental decisions to opt-out their children from standardized testing, including a look at the impact on teacher evaluation, Future Ready Index comparison/use of school district data, and student demographics.
- Supports clear and rigorous academic standards.
- Supports consistency in academic standards throughout the student's educational career.
- Supports continued streamlining of high-stakes state assessments to minimize testing anxiety among students and staff and to maximize student instructional time.
- Supports an assessment system whose primary goal is to measure each student's yearly growth and inform efforts to improve teaching and learning.
- Supports local control and decision-making on the use of any test as a graduation requirement. To that end, PASA supports legislation that eliminates graduation requirements tied to Keystone Exams, allowing children to graduate with a local diploma.
- Supports a continued in the amount of time students are engaged in standardized testing without sacrificing test integrity, quality and higher-order thinking requirements.
- Supports changes to the assessment system that focus on preservation of instructional time, including time for remediation.
- Supports the use of alternative assessments for students with special needs appropriate to their disabilities, for ELL students and for those with severe medical conditions.
- Supports an accountability system based on state academic standards and state education policy and systems, and reflecting the relative fiscal contribution of the federal government to education in Pennsylvania.
- Supports successful implementation of the Future Ready Index to ensure that the accountability reporting tool is fair and equitable for all schools within the Commonwealth.

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 such as standards and assessments, accountability and school improvement, and educator evaluation can be assessed and discussed.
- Urges the General Assembly to work with local public school officials and other relevant community agencies to ensure adequate opportunities for public participation in the development of education policy by using the standing committees to review, hold

hearings and deliberate upon education legislation before it takes final action.

- Encourages active 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.

Management and Leadership for Effective Schools

PASA:

- Supports the development of initiatives and support systems that will encourage professional educators to consider and assume the role of administrator.
- Supports ensuring that those appointed to the superintendency, whether through a traditional or nontraditional track, demonstrate a clear understanding of and experience in school building and/or school system leadership and participate in ongoing professional development strongly grounded in the principles of instructional leadership, child development and school system management as outlined in the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership standards and leadership principles outlined by AASA.
- Supports the development of contracts for commissioned officers in collaboration with local school boards.
- Supports legislation that would ensure that individuals seeking the superintendency obtain in an educational setting the experience and training that a superintendent needs to be an effective educational leader.
- Supports utilizing Objective Performance Standards and multiple measures of performance in evaluating the performance of the superintendent and assistant superintendent.
- Supports developing compensation plans that treat management personnel adequately and fairly in accordance with established duties and responsibilities.
- Encourages the development of emergency supports to assist local public school officials with managing and operating
- Supports school board member participation in relevant, formal, state-supported pre-service and continuous in-service training programs as required for board service.
- Promotes local school board professional development as led by the superintendent and administrative team.
- Encourages school districts to support the continuous involvement of all members of the community.

RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE STUDENT SUCCESS

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.

- 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: equity, adequacy, predictability, accountability and efficiency.
- 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.
- 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, services and facilities that support the educational needs of 21st century learners.
- State support of basic education focused on the principles of equity, adequacy, predictability, accountability and efficiency reduces the pressure on districts to raise property tax rates to cover mandated school district costs.
- Federal funding for education should be adequate to fund federal requirements and mandates.
- All school entities receiving public funds, whether from the federal, state or local level, should be equally compliant with and accountable for meeting statutory and regulatory requirements for public education in Pennsylvania in order to ensure equal and equitable access and opportunity for all Pennsylvania students and accountability to Pennsylvania taxpayers.

PASA:

- Supports property tax restructuring that preserves the property tax reform that restricts the authority of locally elected school officials to raise local revenues needed to adequately fund public schools.
- Supports providing sufficient funds through the funding formula based on the needs of individual districts and local communities to meet the adequacy target. A true funding formula allows for local control and flexibility in the use of funds while eliminating grants and special funding initiatives that are inconsistent and unreliable.
- Supports a sustainable state funding system that is focused on equity, adequacy, predictability, accountability and efficiency in support of Pennsylvania's public schools.
- Supports implementation of adequate federal funding through revisions to the state funding formula for special education programs and services. 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 increases in funding for both the special education formula and contingency fund.
- Supports changes to the system for supporting the medical needs of children through ACCESS and Medical Assistance to ensure that adequate funding from those systems is available and dispersed in a timely manner to meet the actual medical needs of those children in schools, and that procedures for school districts to draw-down and utilize those funds are simplified.

- Concerning Act 1:
 - Support revising the timeline for passing school district budgets to allow districts to have relevant and accurate data on which to base funding/budget decisions.
 - Supports restoring 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.
 - Support recalculations under Act 1 that fully meet a school district's ability to ensure that school programs and services are adequately supported with local revenues.
- Supports regular, statewide and uniform property assessment.
- Supports tax restructuring that ensures that districts have guaranteed revenues and should not restrict school districts from raising local revenue to support locally determined educational needs of the district and meet the adequacy targets.
- Supports an equitable federal funding formula targeted to low-income and minority children.
- Supports state investment in early childhood and preschool education opportunities as part of the education continuum to help prepare students to be ready for school. This investment should be in addition to the investment supporting K-12 education.

Cost-Savings and Mandates

General Principles:

- Unfunded mandates do not work. Rather, they impose both an increasing administrative and financial burden on public schools that distracts from the primary mission of providing core educational services and programs to students.
- State policymakers must follow a consistent and rational approach to decision-making on new or expanded education mandates before new requirements on school districts are enacted. This must include careful and thorough research and consideration of 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. In addition, state policymakers should establish a consistent process to solicit feedback from local school officials on the impact of proposed mandates before they are enacted into law.

PASA:

- Supports funded policy changes that benefit students and do not include unrealistic expectations or pull resources from the core business of the school district.
- Supports appropriate transparency and essential data reporting requirements to inform state policymakers and taxpayers as to the effectiveness of public schools. However, state policymakers need to consider the need for and cost and burdens of additional reporting requirements that redirects the focus away from delivering educational services to students.

- Supports a streamlined and more efficient system (one-stop shop) of implementing employee verification checks and reporting.
- Supports continuing of state obligations under PlanCon, 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 changes in the PSERS system to provide both short- and long-term relief to school districts while maintaining the system adequately and basing decisions concerning the future of the system and system benefits on real data.
- Supports limiting the requirement for transporting nonpublic and private schools students to that provided within the district's boundaries.
- Supports increasing transportation reimbursement to reflect increased costs.
- Supports development of regulatory guidance to assist school districts with cutting programs and furloughing staff for economic reasons. Supports re-establishing and expanding the Mandate Waiver program, to include prevailing wage, furloughs of staff for economic reasons, graduation requirements, certification requirements, school construction contracting requirements and non-public and charter school student transportation.
- Supports revisions to current requirements that require "host" school districts to shoulder the full responsibility for billing and educating all students placed in public or private juvenile corrections programs and residential treatment facilities within their jurisdiction and instead place that responsibility either with the state, through the Department of Education, or with the local intermediate unit.
- Supports review and efforts to provide healthcare relief and keep costs under control.

Support for Safe Schools Initiatives

General Principles:

- A safe and secure learning environment is critical to the overall mission of public schools.
- School safety is a public responsibility and requires the commitment and positive actions of all stakeholders.
- Safe school initiatives must include the physical, emotional and social well-being of all students.
- The Commonwealth must be committed to ensuring sufficient resources for student education, safety and mental health without imposing costly laws and regulations concerning school safety issues.

PASA:

- Supports new, sustainable and flexible funding for safe schools initiatives, including equipment, personnel, curriculum, training and infrastructure.
- Opposes any legislation that reduces local control for security measures without comparable and ongoing state funding.
- Promotes legislation that allows public schools to declare safe schools initiatives as an

exemption under Act 1.

- Supports better coordination among state and county agencies resulting in comprehensive mental health services within the public school setting.
- Promotes the development of comprehensive programs that target drug and alcohol issues with an emphasis on prevention and rehabilitative services.
- Supports a review of recently-enacted truancy requirements

Professional Staff and Supports

General Principles:

- Hiring, developing, supporting and retaining new professional educators are 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.
- 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 raising student achievement. Those who serve in central administration, led by 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 or obtain a broad base of experience and training in education leadership principles.
- 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.
- 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 a reduction in state mandates for staff training in favor of increased flexibility at the local level for targeted staff development.
- Supports a reduction in mandates under PIL/Act 48 (Act 45) requirements in favor of increased flexibility in providing meaningful professional development options for administrators.
- 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 creation of incentives for the recruitment, development and retention of all district employees, as well as substitute teachers.
- Supports alternative entry qualifications for paraprofessionals.
- Supports the authority of a locally elected school board to make decisions on salary and benefits for school administrators 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, rather than on any state-imposed arbitrary salary caps.
- 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 collaboratively in establishing systems and policies that both increase incentives to attract qualified administrators, including competitive benefits, adjusted compensation plans, and revised retirement policies, and decrease barriers to attract those candidates, such as restrictions on pension benefits.
- Supports continued tenure for principals and other professional administrators as a tool for attracting and retaining qualified education leaders.
- Supports local school district control by opposing proposals to restrict school board authority to contract with commissioned officers and the right to renew a commissioned officer.
- 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.
- Promotes increased flexibility within the specificity of STEAM-related certificates.

Educator Effectiveness

General Principles:

- Professional staff evaluation systems must include multiple measures, support a differentiated approach for evaluation that focuses on meeting the professional needs of teachers and principals, and must not place an excessive burden on administrative staff time.

PASA:

- Supports revision of the teacher evaluation system to allow for authentic teacher accountability and to restore the ability to remove poor performing teachers utilizing multiple measures.
- Supports modification of current calculations and domains within the Educator

Effectiveness Model to streamline the process and improve the reliability and accuracy of the evaluation. The current implementation has been disjointed, and the requirements on building administrators and instructional staff are overwhelmingly time-intensive, specifically concerns with teacher-specific data and the elective data (SLO).

- Supports the overall goal of providing appropriately increased accountability and improving professional performance and acknowledges that the new model of professional evaluation has brought about significant improvement in the conversations around instruction and educational improvement at the building level.

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.
- Supports professional development for negotiations.

ASSURING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITABLE PUBLIC EDUCATION

Charter Schools and Cyber Charter Schools

General Principles

- All charter schools are public schools. Therefore, governance/responsibilities must be equitable, and the funding formula must be revised to reflect the true cost of providing education.
- Laws and regulations governing operations and funding of nontraditional public schools must ensure a balanced system of public education in Pennsylvania that does not create separate and unequal schools or school systems for our students.
- Pennsylvania law concerning charter school accountability and funding is inadequate. Although a small percentage of charter schools and online programs provide evidence of academic success, most do not. 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, 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 a revision of Pennsylvania's charter school law and funding system that:
 - provides adequate resources to those schools for actual, audited costs of instruction and services.
 - changes charter school funding calculations that do not take into account differing programs and services offered by traditional public schools and charter/cyber charter schools.
 - strengthens accountability for student achievement and use of taxpayer funds
 - requires full compliance with state requirements, including state ethics, transparency, conflict of interest and audit requirements.
 - revises the current process for tuition payments and student accounting practices, to include utilization of PDE Form 363, including appropriate deductions.
 - addresses over-identification of special needs upon entrance to a charter or cyber charter school.
 - ensures that students who choose to attend a charter school are not denied enrollment due to student level of need.
- Opposes transferring local tax dollars raised for public education to for-profit management companies and organizations.
- Supports legislation that would require equitable per-student tuition for charter schools based on how districts are funded, a statewide flat fee for cyber charter schools, and an

exemption for 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.

Nonpublic Schools, Tuition Vouchers and Opportunity Scholarships

General Principle

- Research and data indicate that the vast majority of public schools consistently provide a fair and appropriate education to the Commonwealth's children.

PASA:

- Calls for removing from public schools the responsibility and accountability for monitoring student attendance and enforcing existing student truancy requirements in nonpublic, private and parochial schools.
- Strongly opposes the use of public funding to provide tuition vouchers or opportunity scholarships.
- Strongly opposes state and federal legislation which would allow for or expand voucher or tuition tax credit plans.
- Strongly supports adoption of accountability measures to determine the effectiveness of the investment of state tax credits (EITC) to support enrollment of students in private schools.
- Strongly opposes federal or state legislation and regulations which would expand school districts' financial obligation in support of programs for nonpublic school students.
- Strongly urges that policies, in the form of laws, regulations and standards that apply to public schools, should apply also to nonpublic schools whose students accept public funds.