

# NASSP POLICY OBJECTIVES

for the 117th Congress and the Incoming Presidential Administration

## Key Priorities

1. Enact policies and provide additional funding to bolster public education and counter the funding losses exacerbated by past national disasters, specifically the COVID-19 pandemic and the Great Recession.
2. Apply an equity lens to policies that further the ability of each student to be college or career ready and promote educational equity.
3. Strengthen the principalship and educator workforce to ensure that all students receive an education that makes them college or career ready and prepares them to be effective members of society.
4. Support safe and healthy schools.

## ▶ POLICY OBJECTIVES

1. **Enact policies and provide additional funding to bolster public education and counter the funding losses exacerbated by past national disasters, specifically the COVID-19 pandemic and the Great Recession.**
  - Build on the momentum of the recently passed Coronavirus Response and Relief Act by passing additional legislation that provides at least \$125 billion more in dedicated funding for K-12 schools.
  - Oppose any and all proposals that seek to strip funds from public institutions for private school voucher or tax credit proposals.
  - Properly invest funds in the annual appropriations process so that all Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) programs meet at least their authorized levels of funding.
  - Invest additional funds or enact policies that aim to provide public education with their same pre-American Recovery and Reinvestment Act investment levels, while also adjusting for inflation.
  - Support a significant investment in rebuilding and modernizing crumbling public school infrastructure by reintroducing and passing the Rebuild America's Schools Act (H.R.865/S.266). This bill would invest \$70 billion in grants and \$30 billion in bonds to help address critical physical and digital infrastructure needs in schools across the country.
  - Provide additional funding to improve literacy instruction for students. Specifically, provide \$500 million for the Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation Act, which builds off the success of the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program. These grant programs allow states to support high-quality professional development for teachers, principals, and specialized instructional support personnel to improve birth through grade 12 literacy instruction for struggling readers and writers, including English-language learners and students with disabilities.

- Provide state and school districts with flexibility in federal accountability requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic, which could include annual assessments, school identification and interventions, and educator evaluations.
- Support policies and programs that increase parent and community engagement in children's education to bolster the overall effectiveness of efforts meant to address learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes providing increased funding for the Full-Service Community Schools program and Statewide Family Engagement Centers program.

## 2. Apply an equity lens to policies that further the ability of each student to be college or career ready and promote educational equity.

- Enact policies that promote racial diversity in the educator workforce and enact recommendations from NASSP's "**Educator Diversity**" position statement.
  - ◆ The Department of Education should regularly convene and create an ongoing consultation dialogue with school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, chief state school officers, minority-serving institution leaders, community leaders, and others to identify the challenges and opportunities in the effort to create a more racially diverse workforce that better reflects and serves all students.
  - ◆ Fund Title II, Part A of the Higher Education Act (HEA) to at least its authorized levels to help give more people of color the resources necessary to enter the educator workforce.
  - ◆ Through the Civil Rights Data Collection, collect and report annual data on the race, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, and sexual orientation of teachers and school leaders in all public schools and the enrollment and completion rates for candidates of underrepresented populations in teacher and leader preparation programs to identify gaps in retention strategies.
  - ◆ Prioritize funding under the HEA for partnership grants that prepare school leaders and teachers to create a culturally responsive climate for diverse populations, including children with disabilities, English-language learners, and children from low-income families.
- Promote policies that affirm and protect the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals and enact legislation that provides a comprehensive federal prohibition of discrimination in public schools based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.
  - ◆ The Equality Act (H.R.5/S.788), which prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in a wide variety of areas including public accommodations and facilities, education, federal funding, and employment, should be reintroduced and passed.
- Restore the Obama-era Title IX guidance on transgender students and school discipline. Also, enact policies in NASSP's "**Racial Justice and Educational Equity**" position statement.
- Enact policies that address the digital divide and homework gap.
  - ◆ Congress and the Federal Communications Commission should provide at least \$12 billion for the E-rate program and allow the program to be used to support home internet access for students and their families.



- Enact policies aimed at serving traditionally underserved populations and address factors that limit their success.
  - ◆ Fund federal programs aimed at serving underserved populations like Title I and IDEA to at least their federally promised levels.
  - ◆ Congress should reintroduce and pass the Strength in Diversity Act (H.R.2369/S.1418) to fund grants to districts to implement strategies to address the effects of racial isolation or concentrated poverty by increasing racial and socioeconomic diversity.
  - ◆ Reintroduce and pass the Advanced Coursework Equity Act (S.4480), which would establish a grant program for states and districts to address equity gaps through instituting equitable enrollment mechanisms, increasing enrollment in advanced courses, covering the costs of advanced coursework exams and materials for students from low-income backgrounds, and preparing and supporting educators to teach these courses, all while setting clear and measurable public goals to achieve.
  - ◆ Reintroduce and pass the Homeless and Children Youth Act (H.R.2001), which would increase access to federal homeless programs for homeless children, youth, and families.
- Pass the DREAM Act or similar legislation that ensures a permanent, legislative fix that provides Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program recipients and other undocumented individuals with a path to citizenship.

### **3. Strengthen the principalship and educator workforce to ensure that all students receive an education that makes them college or career ready and prepares them to be effective members of society.**

- Provide more funding for federal programs that provide educators with professional development opportunities, with a specific focus on school leaders.
  - ◆ Fund Title II, Part A of ESSA to at least \$2.6 billion annually, the previous amount passed in the House for FY 2020. Also, encourage states to take advantage of the 3 percent set aside for school leader professional development and continue the ongoing collection of Title II, Part A data to ensure that states and districts are implementing programs consistent with ESSA and to help stakeholders determine the effectiveness of these investments in improving school leadership.
  - ◆ Reintroduce and pass the Learning Opportunity and Achievement Act (S.4831), which combats instructional loss—particularly for at-risk and marginalized students—by providing support for professional development and training programs for educators, tutoring and academic services, research and best practices, and other initiatives to enhance equity and access for all students.
  - ◆ Reintroduce and pass the Preparing and Retaining Education Professionals Act (S.752). This bill combats teacher and principal shortages by making Teacher Quality Partnership grants permanent and opens these grants up for the professional development and training of school leaders.
- Provide additional funds to strengthen and grow principal and teacher pipelines.
  - ◆ Fund all programs in Title II, Part A of HEA to at least to their authorized levels. This includes the Teacher Residency Program, the Pre-Baccalaureate Preparation Program, and the Leadership Development Program.



- ◆ Provide a substantial investment in Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) grants to increase the number of educators in high-need subjects and high-poverty areas.
  - ◆ Guarantee proper implementation of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program to ensure enrollees are incentivized to work in high-need areas. Furthermore, provide additional loan forgiveness opportunities specifically directed at principals serving in low-income areas, as laid out in the Recruiting and Retaining Effective School Leaders Act (H.R.3925).
  - ◆ Reintroduce and pass the Classrooms Reflecting Communities Act (S.2887), which establishes a grant program allowing eligible partners to develop Grow Your Own programs that focus on recruiting diverse teacher candidates from the community and supporting them as they work to receive a teacher certification or licensure.
  - ◆ Reintroduce and pass the Educator Preparation Reform Act (H.R.7319/S.969), which would overhaul federal laws governing teacher preparation, including reporting requirements, accountability provisions, and the TEACH grant scholarship program. The bill places specific attention and emphasis on principals with the addition of a residency program for new principals.
- Provide additional funding to address educator losses that have been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and improve the imbalanced ratio of principals, assistant principals, teachers, and specialized instructional support personnel to students. Legislation that should be reintroduced to address these losses includes:
- ◆ The Save Education Jobs Act (H.R.8691)
  - ◆ The Educator Jobs Fund Act (S.4917)
- Enact programs and policies that bolster the educator workforce as a whole and aim to curb long-term teacher and principal shortages.
- ◆ Enact policies to address and support educators' mental health, including funding for counseling and stress management.
- Develop a federal campaign to promote and encourage individuals to enter education professions to aid in curbing principal and teacher shortages.

#### 4. Support safe and healthy schools.

- Pass legislation and provide at least \$5 billion in additional funding to increase the number of full-time specialized instructional support personnel in schools.
- ◆ Congress should reintroduce and pass the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Act (H.R.4381/S.2499), which directs the Department of Education to award grants to state educational agencies to support school-based, mental health service providers at public elementary and secondary schools.
- Promote policies that aid in supporting students' mental health, better enabling them to learn and succeed in the classroom.



- ◆ Reintroduce and pass the Mental Health Services for Students Act (H.R.1109/S.1122), which provides specific statutory authority for the Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) State Educational Agency Grant Program that is administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This program supports school-based mental health services, including screening, treatment, and outreach programs.
  - ◆ The federal government should give states and local communities the ability to combine federal and state funding from separate agencies to address mental health and school safety issues at the local level.
  - ◆ The federal government must provide financial support to enable local communities to implement a comprehensive culturally and linguistically appropriate school-based mental health program that supports and fosters the health and development of students.
- Pass policies and legislation that incentivize districts to eliminate the use of corporal punishment in schools.
- Support policies that adhere to the [Framework for Safe and Successful Schools](#).
- Support policies requiring all law enforcement officials who work in schools to undergo extensive training that adequately equips them to work in a school setting and specifically with children, adolescents, and those with special needs. Furthermore, do not enact policies that allow administrators, teachers, or anyone other than specially trained school resource officers to carry firearms in schools.
- Fully fund federal programs that support healthy schools and provide federal funds for school safety.
- ◆ Provide at least the authorized level of funding for Title IV of ESSA to provide students with increased access to mental health services, advanced courses, and college and career counseling.
  - ◆ Reintroduce and pass the Trauma-Informed Schools Act (H.R.4146) that will formally define “trauma-informed practices” in the federal education code and ensure that states and school districts can assist educators in accessing professional development opportunities to provide the necessary care and assistance for children suffering from adverse childhood experiences.
  - ◆ Pass legislation that provides resources to address bullying and curb youth suicide rates. Relevant legislations from the 116th Congress includes the Cady Housh and Gemesha Thomas Student Suicide Prevention Act (H.R.3778), Danny’s Law (H.R.3659), Effective Suicide Screening and Assessment in the Emergency Department Act (H.R.4861/S.3006), National Suicide Hotline Designation Act (H.R.4194/S.2661), Safe Schools Improvement Act (H.R.2563/S.2548), Suicide and Threat Assessment Nationally Dedicated to Universal Prevention Act (H.R.2599/S.2492), and the Suicide Prevention Act (H.R.5619/S.3198).
- Support policies that limit youth access to illegal drugs, tobacco, and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). Also, support policies that provide funds for the treatment and recovery of those addicted to these substances or items.
- ◆ Reintroduce and pass the Protecting American Lungs and Reversing Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act (H.R.2339/S.3174) which puts in place new requirements and policies to curb youth tobacco and ENDS use.