

## **AASA Mission Statement**

AASA, the School Superintendents Association, advocates for the highest quality public education for all students, and develops and supports school system leaders.

## **AASA Belief and Position Statements**

### **100 Public Education**

*Public education is the foundation of American democracy and is the primary vehicle for preparing each generation of adult citizens to become contributing members of a democratic society.*

- 100.1 Public Education is the Cornerstone of our Democracy and a Civil Right
- 100.2 Getting Children Ready for Success in School
- 100.3 Vouchers and Tuition Tax Credits
- 100.4 Public School Choice and Charter Schools
- 100.5 School Finance Systems Focused on Proficiency for all Students
- 100.6 Local Funding
- 100.7 Unfunded Mandates

### **200 Equity and Diversity**

*School leaders have a responsibility to create school cultures that recognize and value diversity.*

- 200.1 Equity for All Children
- 200.2 Overcoming Racial and Economic Isolation in Schools
- 200.3 Diversity
- 200.4 Bullying
- 200.5 Verification of Citizenship and Legal Status of School Age Children

### **300 Learning Environments**

*Environments conducive to learning require that all variables that influence a student's ability to succeed should be addressed.*

- 300.1 Advocates for Children
- 300.2 Appropriate Early Education Programs for All Children
- 300.3 Getting Schools Ready for Children
- 300.4 Facilities
- 300.5 Technology
- 300.6 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- 300.7 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- 300.8 Criminal Background Checks

## **400 Leadership**

*Stable and consistent leadership by the superintendent is vital to the success of the public school system.*

- 400.1 Licensure for Administrators
- 400.2 Portability of Professional Credentials and Pensions
- 400.3 Professional Compensation
- 400.4 Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders
- 400.5 Health & Wellness
- 400.6 Leadership/Professional Development

## **500 Student Learning and Accountability**

*All public schools must provide a quality educational experience for each student, which necessitates a framework of rigorous academic standards infused with life and career skills including critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication, innovation and self-direction. A system of accountability, which clearly demonstrates, through multiple measures, the level of progress attained by students is essential to fulfilling the mission of schools to increase student achievement and equip graduates with the skills required to be college and workforce ready.*

- 500.1 Preparation for Living in an Interdependent Global Society
- 500.2 High School Completion
- 500.3 School and District Accountability and Assessment of Student Performance
- 500.4 Equity in Accountability

## **600 Community Collaborative and Partnerships for Education**

*Building partnerships and supporting the education of all students is the responsibility of the entire community. Those partnerships and the contributions made by all stakeholder groups in the community contribute to the educational success and well-being of our children. Communities are responsible for the health, safety, welfare and education of each child. Schools are but one partner in the community which includes many domains of public and private agencies. AASA urges and supports collaborative, community-wide programs and partnerships to deliver full services and programs to address the needs of the whole child. AASA supports quality community-wide programs and services designed to break the cycle of poverty and address the readiness and wellness needs of all children.*

- 600.1 Communicating Effectively with the Public
- 600.2 Leaving Decisions Regarding Commercial Affiliations with Local School Districts

## **100 PUBLIC EDUCATION**

*(Scheduled Review: 2015)  
(Updated: February, 2012)*

*Public education is the foundation of American democracy and is the primary vehicle for preparing each generation of adult citizens to become contributing members of a democratic society.*

### **100.1 PUBLIC EDUCATION IS THE CORNERSTONE OF DEMOCRACY AND A CIVIL RIGHT**

Public education is the cornerstone of democracy and a civil right. AASA will aggressively defend against all actions that undermine public education such as vouchers, tax credits and charters that are not publicly accountable.

An effective public education system enables citizens of the United States to exercise the rights granted to them by the Constitution of the United States. Every student has a right to be educated and that right cannot be infringed by race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, economic status or any other factor as granted to them by the Constitution of the United States.

*First Adopted: 2008*

### **100.2 GETTING CHILDREN READY FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL**

For children to be ready to attend school, steps must be taken to account for non-school factors that affect student achievement.

Therefore, AASA strongly supports the enactment and funding of universal healthcare for all children as well as comprehensive services and programs that encourage children to be healthy. Areas of focus should include but not be limited to: parenting skills, healthy home environment, personal wellness, obesity, access to social services and universal immunization.

Recognizing the critical role that families and early education plays in getting students ready for school, AASA resolves that every child must be provided with quality, comprehensive early childhood programming so that he/she can enter kindergarten ready to learn with the skills necessary to ensure success in school.

*First Adopted: 2005*

### **100.3 VOUCHERS AND TUITION TAX CREDITS**

AASA absolutely opposes undermining universal equal educational opportunity for all, supports the separation of church and state in public school funding, and opposes increasing the segregation of America's children by diverting public funds in support of vouchers and related initiatives.

AASA supports the application of public school academic accountability standards and regulatory requirements to all non-public schools receiving public funds.

AASA opposes local, state, and federal financial incentives that reward private corporations for supporting non-public school entities.

AASA opposes vouchers and all forms of tuition tax credits for private or sectarian schools.

*First Adopted: 2004*

#### **100.4 PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE AND CHARTER SCHOOLS**

AASA supports public school choice and charter schools that operate under the governance of local public school boards. There should be a level playing field, including non-discriminatory and unconditional enrollment for all children. Therefore, common regulations and accountability should apply to all schools receiving public funding. The manner in which charter schools are financed must be standardized and aligned so that their creation does not have an adverse effect on the quality of existing public schools.

*First Adopted: 1999*

#### **100.5 SCHOOL FINANCE SYSTEMS FOCUSED ON PROFICIENCY FOR ALL STUDENTS**

AASA supports creating stable, equitable, predictable and adequate funding for schools based on local, state and federal revenues that will meet the challenges of universal proficiency and provide the funding base needed to support-a system which leads to success for all students.

AASA supports legislation and litigation in states that will result in schools increasing high levels of student achievement.

*First Adopted: 2004*

#### **100.6 LOCAL FUNDING**

AASA encourages and endorses the efforts of local administrators and boards of education to challenge funding systems that result in inequitable and inadequate funding.

*First Adopted: 1998*

#### **100.7 UNFUNDED MANDATES**

Federal and state mandates must be fully funded.

*First Adopted: 2004*

## **200 EQUITY AND DIVERSITY**

*(Scheduled Review: 2015)  
(Updated: February, 2012)*

*School leaders have a responsibility to create school cultures that recognize and value diversity.*

### **200.1 EQUITY FOR ALL CHILDREN**

AASA promotes equity and excellence for students, educators and administrators by implementing continuous improvement and research-supported best practices. AASA advocates for policies that address the unique needs of persistently underserved children.

AASA supports educational experiences that foster a respect for diversity and an understanding of individual differences and cultures in a safe and orderly environment. AASA supports engaging families and community members to promote student success with programs that sustain effective collaboration.

*First Adopted: 1996*

### **200.2 OVERCOMING RACIAL AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION IN SCHOOLS**

AASA believes school leaders and school districts that overcome racial and economic isolation provide the best preparation for participation in America's multi-ethnic society and the global society for which we are educating children. School leaders have a moral and ethical responsibility to provide affirmative leadership and to advocate for integrated, high-quality schools. School leaders must work with other organizations and agencies to promote economic security and full social participation.

*First Adopted: 2008*

### **200.3 DIVERSITY**

AASA is committed to being a diverse organization and our actions and publications will both reflect and promote leadership diversity in this organization and our profession.

*First Adopted: 2009*

### **200.4 BULLYING**

AASA strongly encourages communities, leaders and school districts to work collaboratively to prevent acts of bullying.

*First Adopted: 2012*

### **200.5 VERIFICATION OF CITIZENSHIP AND LEGAL STATUS OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN**

All children are entitled to a free and appropriate public education. Therefore, schools should not be responsible for the verification of citizenship or legal status of school age children.

*First Adopted: 2012*

## **300 LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

*(Scheduled Review: 2016)  
(Updated: February, 2013)*

*Environments conducive to learning require that all variables that influence a student's ability to succeed should be addressed.*

### **300.1 ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN**

AASA is an advocate for the health and well-being of our nation's children. Children have a right to live and learn in a safe and nurturing environment. Research demonstrates that learning is enhanced when children feel safe and have their physical and emotional needs met in a healthy school environment. This includes access to healthy foods, opportunities for physical activity, clean air to breathe, access to preventive care and health services, including mental health. AASA believes this is a fundamental right of every child in America.

*First adopted: 2006*

### **300.2 APPROPRIATE EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR ALL CHILDREN**

A high percentage of a child's development and learning occurs by age 5. All children should enter school ready to learn, and every adult in the community must assume a measure of responsibility for the education, welfare and safety of each child. Therefore, AASA believes that communities should offer developmentally appropriate early educational programs for all children beginning no later than age 3. The future success of all children requires such an investment.

*First Adopted: 1995*

### **300.3 GETTING SCHOOLS READY FOR CHILDREN**

Schools that are aligned around systems leadership will accelerate movement toward universal proficiency. Therefore, AASA resolves that school administrators should place a greater emphasis on systems leadership to meet the challenges of a global society.

AASA resolves that decisions should be made by educators at the local level who best understand the needs of their students and who can design educational programs to meet their needs.

AASA resolves that all students and families must have access to the latest technology and be provided opportunities to learn and develop the intellectual skills necessary for success in our global society.

AASA resolves that all students and families be provided a strong support system to include advocacy and advisement.

*First Adopted: 2005*

### **300.4 FACILITIES**

AASA recognizes the important role of school facilities in creating an appropriate learning and working environment. AASA believes that facilities must not only be conducive to learn and to work, but must also provide a safe place to learn.

Meeting the goal of successful learning by all children requires a multifaceted set of strategies. One of those strategies should include the provision for eco-friendly schools and educational facilities that are environmentally supportive of the health of the children and the adults who work in them.

*First Adopted: 1998*

### **300.5 TECHNOLOGY**

AASA recognizes the importance technology must play in the education of our nation's youth. We strongly endorse federal, state and local efforts to guarantee funding for the support, maintenance and upgrading of technology to which will provide all students universal access to the technological tools which will ensure state-of-the-art global connectivity and fully integrate technology into the instructional program. One part of this effort should include the expansion of E-rate to support increased connectivity.

AASA believes that its commitment to equity must include access to a variety of technological hardware for all students regardless of socio-economic status, gender and/or race.

AASA recognizes the importance of the use of multiple technologies to enhance learning environments and to create new learning opportunities for students and educators. Multiple technologies need to be used by schools to break down barriers among classrooms, schools, states and countries.

AASA recognizes the value of full state of the art, anywhere, anytime connectivity for all students, staff and educators to create a continuous learning environment. AASA acknowledges that learning happens outside the traditional classroom setting and the technology must support this.

AASA believes that all teachers and administrators must be prepared to use technology as a tool to enhance learning and model the understanding of and use of technology. AASA supports increased research for educational technology and ensuring that the latest developments in technology are used effectively within schools.

AASA, as an organization, must be recognized as a leader in the productive use of technology.

*First Adopted: 1996*

### **300.6 INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)**

The education of children with disabilities demonstrates a national commitment to equal educational opportunity for every child. IDEA should be fully funded at the 40% level of the national average per pupil expenditures (as promised in the 1997 and 2004 reauthorizations of IDEA). Congress must fulfill its obligation to fully fund IDEA to the promised 40 percent level through mandatory funding and allowing for maximum local flexibility.

AASA urges the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMMS) to reimburse districts for medical services to Medicaid eligible students.

*First Adopted: 2003*

### **300.7 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT (ESEA)**

AASA believes that a high-quality public education is a basic civil right for all children. Equal access to educational opportunity is a cornerstone of American democracy. State and local school system leaders are dedicated to helping students reach high levels of learning and to preparing students to be active participants in a global society.

AASA recommends that ESEA be reauthorized to return to the original position of meeting the needs of children of poverty, therefore eliminating the conceptual problems of No Child Left Behind, including: a challenge to federalism, a flawed organizational change strategy, a flawed educational change strategy, and a failure to account for the impact of non-school factors on student achievement.

AASA recommends that ESEA move from the 93 disconnected and disjointed programs added between the original passage of the law in 1965 and the most recent reauthorization in 2001, toward a more systemic continuum of services and supports based on poverty, special student populations and special conditions. We need to return to the original goal of ESEA, which was to promote equal educational opportunity. ESEA should be revised to provide a continuum of services and support based on a continuum of need. Need should be primarily defined by eligibility for free and reduced cost meals under the federal nutrition program, but should also consider special groups of students and special circumstances for school districts.

AASA believes the primary responsibility for determining educational methods and strategies resides at the state and local level, consistent with the 1979 U.S. Department of Education Organization Act. States have a constitutional responsibility to establish, fund and support public education. Local school districts have a responsibility to ensure student learning in the context of their state's constitutional requirements for education.

AASA believes the role of the federal government in education is to help ensure equal opportunities to learn for each child by assisting states and school districts in their efforts to develop capacity, by providing leadership and by providing resources. The federal government should supplement and support rather than dictate state efforts in education.

AASA members know that the devastating effects of poverty have a significant impact on student achievement. While school systems do address the effects of poverty, they cannot eliminate the causes of poverty. Federal efforts to improve student achievement should coordinate with other relevant systems, such as health care, housing and judicial systems, to alleviate the fundamental inequities that perpetuate poverty.

AASA believes that states and school systems should not be required to spend state and local funds to implement federal program mandates.

AASA believes ESEA should provide coherent goals, assumptions and methods to improve learning for all students, especially for low-income and minority students. These goals, assumptions and methods should be based on evidence gained from research and practice.

*First Adopted: 2008*

### **300.8 CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS**

School environments must be safe and secure for all students. To this end we support the coordination of, and communication between existing federal and state criminal background databases. Furthermore, a national database of criminal offenses, which includes sexual offenders and child predators, should be developed so that school districts can access for criminal background checks.

*First Adopted: 2011*



## **400 Leadership**

*(Scheduled Review: 2016)  
(Updated: February, 2013)*

*Stable and consistent leadership in the superintendency is vital to the success of the public school system.*

### **400.1 LICENSURE FOR ADMINISTRATORS**

Only graduate degrees and licensures or endorsements in educational administration, supervision and leadership issued by state licensing agencies through accredited colleges and universities should be recognized for the preparation, appointment and promotion of school leaders.

*First Adopted: 2006*

### **400.2 PORTABILITY OF PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS AND PENSIONS**

AASA supports pension portability and licensure reciprocity to encourage the free flow of professional leadership.

Every state should provide educators with a means to transfer from state to state with experience, licensure and pension plan(s) intact. AASA supports complete mobility within public education for educators.

*First Adopted: 2004*

### **400.3 PROFESSIONAL COMPENSATION**

Professional compensation for superintendents and middle management members should be a local decision that is consistent with educational preparation, performance, position, and responsibility.

Educational leaders' effectiveness is enhanced by multi-year employment contracts which attract and retain high quality leadership for the public schools.

*First Adopted: 1994*

### **400.4 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND LEADERS**

Attracting and retaining highly effective teachers, principals, district administrators and superintendents from all backgrounds, should become a primary goal for all stakeholders including our professional organizations, our state legislators, the federal government and the business community.

AASA supports efforts to provide incentives designed to encourage highly effective teachers and administrators to enter rural, high-poverty or low-performing schools and school districts.

*First Adopted: 2000*

### **400.5 HEALTH & WELLNESS**

The members of AASA are the leaders of the nation's schools and should model behaviors that are important to the health and wellness of their students, staff, and communities.

*First Adopted: 1996*

#### **400.6 LEADERSHIP/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Effective professional development programs for school administrators lead to educational improvement at all levels. AASA encourages a systemic and coordinated effort among state education agencies and other professional organizations to support professional development programs designed to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers, administrators, and others.

AASA supports ongoing professional development for administrators and boards of education. Furthermore, AASA supports efforts to attract promising educational leaders to enter administration.

*First Adopted: 2006*

## **500 STUDENT LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

*(Scheduled Review: 2017)  
(Updated: February, 2014)*

All public schools must provide a quality educational experience for each student, which necessitates a framework of rigorous academic standards infused with life and career skills including critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication, innovation and self-direction. A system of accountability, which clearly demonstrates, through multiple measures, the level of progress attained by students is essential to fulfilling the mission of schools to increase student achievement and equip graduates with the skills required to be college and workforce ready.

### **500.1 Preparation for Living in an Interdependent Global Society**

All students must be prepared to live and work in an ever changing interdependent global environment. To be fully equipped for worldwide challenges and opportunities, all students should have broad based educational opportunities to include: learning multiple languages; having exposure to the history, culture, and context of all regions of the world; learning how to collaboratively solve problems and interact with peoples of different cultures and different lands; and developing empathy for human differences, commonalities, backgrounds and cultures. It is critical that teacher and administrative/leadership programs include international cultural skills and knowledge that will allow educators to be prepared to teach and lead students to be successful in a global society.

*First Adopted: 2011*

### **500.2 High School Completion**

Our nation's secondary schools must prepare students for a highly technical, global economy in which they are engaged and productive as citizens and as members of the workforce. Without a high school diploma, post high school choices for students are limited. Earning a high school diploma enables students to select from optional pathways including post-secondary technical training, college/university entrance and/or entry into the world of work.

Educational advancements and improvements are rooted in the larger context of community support and pre -K - 16 programming. Transformations must include (1) a high set of expectations and standards with a rigorous core curriculum, (2) a repertoire of differentiated instructional strategies that engage students in real life applications, (3) an environment that fosters positive relationships between all members of the school community, and (4) a collaborative professional learning community that focuses on improving teaching and learning for every child.

A high school's graduation rate must be calculated with flexibility to allow the time each student needs to complete high school; that graduation rate must be calculated in a manner consistent with the provisions of IDEA. An accurate data system must be implemented that provides a common definition of dropout rate and the flexibility to compute graduation rates in three, four, five, or six years, and to include high school equivalency exam or other alternative performance pathways. This approach is similar to data collected for college graduation rates and should be required in order to calculate state and national graduation rates.

*First adopted: 2011*

### **500.3 School and District Accountability and Assessment of Student Performance**

Children live in a highly mobile and globally oriented world; therefore, AASA supports the establishment of a set of quality learning standards and outcomes matched to high standards for student performance. The accountability and assessment standards should require students to demonstrate mastery of core academic skills and life and career skills. AASA supports accountability for student learning using assessments based upon multiple measures that are reliable and valid. The use of valid, reliable assessments, whether developed locally, nationally or

internationally, must be utilized for reporting progress to students, to parents/guardians, in order to measure performance of schools and districts, and to report results to the general public. These assessments should promote student performance and monitor growth, promote learning and drive improvement in schools.

AASA supports staff accountability for curriculum content, certification, professional training and student achievement.

*First Adopted: 1997*

#### **500.4 EQUITY IN ACCOUNTABILITY**

AASA supports the application of any public school accountability systems for all educational institutions receiving state or federal funding including, but not limited to: virtual schools, charter schools, independent schools and home school placements.

*First Adopted: 2004*

## **600 Community Collaborative and Partnerships for Education**

*(Scheduled Review: 2017)  
(Updated: February, 2014)*

Building partnerships and supporting the education of all students is the responsibility of the entire community. Those partnerships and the contributions made by all stakeholder groups in the community contribute to the educational success and well-being of our children. Communities are responsible for the health, safety, welfare and education of each child. Schools are but one partner in the community which includes many domains of public and private agencies. AASA urges and supports collaborative, community-wide programs and partnerships to deliver full services and programs to address the needs of the whole child. AASA supports quality community-wide programs and services designed to break the cycle of poverty and address the readiness and wellness needs of all children.

### **600.1 COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE PUBLIC**

The future of public education depends on effective communication and relationship building. Developing long-term relationships with faculty, staff, parents/guardians and the community requires regular, honest and open communication to help build understanding of, advocacy for, and commitment to the mission of the school district.

*First Adopted: 2006*

### **600.2 LEAVING DECISIONS REGARDING COMMERCIAL AFFILIATIONS WITH LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

AASA urges local school boards to protect student health and well-being when establishing commercial partnerships, including exclusive sales agreements. AASA supports leaving decisions regarding commercial affiliations with school districts to the local boards of education and opposes state and federal legislation that limit such arrangements.

*First Adopted: 2004*