



Legislative Policy Committee Legislation Sponsorship Proposals 2011

Each year the members of ACSA's Delegate Assembly are asked to participate in a survey to prioritize ideas for possible legislative proposals. The Legislative Policy Committee is then asked to review the survey results, determine which issues should be a priority for governmental relations staff, and review other issues that staff will be involved in throughout the year. Below are areas and issues that ACSA will sponsor, co-sponsor, or focus attention on this legislative session.

Continuing efforts from 2010:

School Funding: Work towards a longer term solution to funding K – adult education in order to provide adequate funding. Continue our active engagement in communicating our message of narrowing the achievement gap, building capacity among teachers and school leaders, measuring results through reliable data on student achievement, and providing adequate, stable and ongoing funding. Continue our collaborative work with the education coalition on this issue.

Issue: The state continues to cut school funding to solve its budget problems.

Proposal: Allow programmatic and fiscal flexibility during difficult fiscal times.

ACSA's board of directors is forming a Task Force around the issue of flexibility. With our continuing budget pressures, many programs have been adversely affected. The Task Force will be asked to develop a position paper around flexibility of school funding.

(#21, 90%)

Issue: The current method of funding schools through revenue limits is archaic, impossible to understand, and inadequate. Proposal: Change the archaic formulas for funding schools and begin anew by looking at more equitable formulas to fund schools and work towards a longer term solution to provide adequate funding. (#5, 83%)

Issue: School districts and count offices are in need of additional funding beyond the levels provided by the state. But, with the exception of the 55 percent vote requirement for local school bonds, there remain significant barriers for approving local taxes and the only real local source of general fund revenue is limited to parcel taxes. Proposal: Lower the vote requirement for parcel taxes to 55 percent and/or create other local

sources of revenue to be used by school districts and county offices of education with similar vote requirements. (#4, 75%)

ESEA Reauthorization/Accountability/Assessment/Common Core: Continue the work of our ESEA Task Force in developing issue papers around important topics within the reauthorization conversation. Continue our advocacy work at the federal level on this issue.

Issue: With the sunset of the Public School Accountability Act and STAR assessment system in 2013, reauthorization is necessary. Proposal: Reauthorize PSAA, STAR and the textbook adoption process based, in part, on changes proposed by ACSA's ESEA Task Force and adopted by the ACSA board of directors including streamlining and recalibrating the state and federal accountability systems. (#2, 85%)

Issue: California's adoption of national Common Core Standards coupled with some additional California standards will require a complete alignment of curriculum, instructional materials and assessments. Proposal: Co-sponsor legislation to align California's system and ensure sufficient funding is provided. (#13, 84%)

Issue: Tools are lacking to support students with disabilities and English learners to assist educators to close the achievement gap.
Proposal: Pursue legislation that requires instructional strategies are imbedded in the curriculum and textbooks for all core subjects to assist English learners and students with disabilities. Also provide a training option for teachers to learn RTI strategies. (#9, 81%)

Issue: The new California Common Core is not aligned to California's ELD standards.
Proposal: Sponsor legislation to align the ELD standards to the new California Common Core standards. (#14, 75%)

Issue: The new Open Enrollment law adopted during the Race to the Top discussions is fatally flawed and presents many implementation problems for school districts. Proposal: Sponsor legislation to make significant changes to the law including removal of the 10% cap, a focus on the lowest decile, included charters and provide for a waiver process. Consider language to require the development of a single formula for all state and federal programs for purposes of accountability. (#8, 71%)

Issue: Continuing concern about the amount of testing at the high school level.
Proposal: Propose that the California Standards Tests are equated to the CAHSEE to allow some students to meet the graduation requirement through the CST's rather than CAHSEE and link the CST's to a student's GPA. (#11, 68%)

Issue: Reauthorization of ESEA will be forthcoming in 2011 or 2012.
Proposal: Continue our work through ACSA's ESEA Task Force on identifying changes to the federal ESEA law during reauthorization discussions including direct advocacy with legislators at the federal level. (#7, 63%)

Pension Reform: This issue was discussed by both gubernatorial candidates this past fall and has been mentioned by Governor Brown in speeches and interviews since the election. The discussion continues around abuses in the public sector. Senator Simitian has been a leader on this topic in the Legislature. In addition, ACSA continues our active engagement in resolving the inequities around the issue of social security at the federal level.

Issue: Public pension benefits and excessive pension allowances or abusive practices have lead to a public push for reform. Proposal: Continue working to protect public pension benefits as well as identifying problems and working to correct any egregious practices. (#22, 79%)

Below is a list of the highest priority issues selected by the Delegate Assembly from the emailed survey. These issues received a response ratio of 70% or higher from the respondents. This means they were rated either “high priority or highest priority” by most of the respondents. In addition, we have included issues that we know will be high priorities for the governor or Legislature during the 2011 session.

Survey Issues:

Teacher/Principal Evaluation:

Issue: Improving the teacher and principal evaluation process to provide more comprehensive evaluation criteria that ensures the needs of students are met. Proposal: Continuing our work through ACSA’s ESEA Task Force by developing evaluation templates that ensure the use of multiple measures consistent with both the CSTPs and CPSELs professional standards and ensure that academic student achievement is a significant factor in evaluations. (#12, 75%)

Special Education:

Issue: Special education costs continue to outpace funding received from local, state and federal sources. The cost increases in services around autism as well as the veto of mental health funding – AB 3632 – have increased these pressures. Proposal: Pursue funding for AB 3632 services as well as protecting special education funding from ever being used for other purposes by the state. Pursue full pass through of special education funding from the state to local districts. (#23, 73%)

Career Tech/Adult Education/ROCP: ACSA’s board is forming a Task Force around the issue of flexibility. With our continuing budget pressures, many programs have been adversely affected. The Task Force will be asked to develop a position paper around flexibility of school funding.

Issue: With the continuing state budget cuts to schools, adult education, career technical education and ROCP programs have been eliminated in many districts.

Proposal: Continuing discussions and work with ACSA's adult education council and CTE council around services that can be provided through adult education and ROCP that supports the school districts, students and community. (#16, 70%)

Preschool/Kindergarten:

Issue: Widely accepted research indicates a strong correlation between preschool and kindergarten attendance and student success in later years.

Proposal: Continue work on SB 1381 (Simitian) which changed the date for Kindergarten enrollment beginning in 2012 and established a transitional kindergarten program. There may be need for additional legislation to clarify sections of this new law. (#3, 70%)

Health Care: ACSA participates in the Education Coalition for Healthcare Reform working group exploring the rising costs of healthcare for our school employees. The goal is to see what options might be available and to work with management and labor on this issue.

Issue: The cost of health care for school employees continues to escalate.

Proposal: The creation of a mandatory statewide education health care pool for K-12 employees to realize cost reductions and provide quality health care deliveries. (#6, 70%)

Other Issues: (Listed in priority order)

Red Tape: In the extensive membership survey done of ACSA members in 2006, eliminating or reducing red tape in their jobs was one of the highest priority items.

Issue: The amount of reporting requirements both at the state and federal levels has increased. Proposal: Examine the reporting requirements demanded by the state and determine if some of the red tape can be eliminated or reduced. (#19, 65%)

Issue: Discussion around eliminating some mandates and reforming the mandate reimbursement process as the state's support for schools continues to diminish.

Proposal: Reducing the number of mandates required by the state and easing the reimbursement process around mandates given the continuing budget shortfalls experienced by school districts. (#18, 64%)

Administrator Credentialing:

Issue: The Commission on Teacher Credentialing is undertaking a year long review of the administrative credential. Proposal: Continue ACSA's active engagement in these discussions to ensure balance and a product that allows for flexibility in obtaining an administrative credential. (#15, 57%)

Charter Schools: ACSA continues to seek legislative remedies for the impact charter schools have on traditional school districts.

Issue: The number of charter schools continues to grow.

Proposal: Continue working on improving oversight, improving accountability and training school leaders on providing for conversion charters. (#10, 54%)

Suspension/Expulsion:

Issue: State code around suspension and expulsion of students found abusing drugs needs to be updated to include prescription drugs.

Proposal: Revise and update state codes to reflect the inclusion of prescription drugs so school leaders have authority to suspend or expel students found abusing these drugs or take appropriate action against any crimes associated with these drugs. (#17, 46%)

Green Technology/Energy Conservation:

Issue: Green technology provides a potential cost savings for school districts. Proposal: Continue our work around promoting cost effective green and solar technology for school districts as a means of saving resources. (#20, 46%)