CASBO

2027



POLICY PLATFORM

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2027 Policy Platform

The principles contained in the policy platform for the California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) provide basic parameters to guide positions adopted by CASBO's Legislative Committee and the Board of Directors on matters that are pending before the Federal Administration, Congress, the Governor, and State Legislature. The platform and principles are consistent with CASBO's mission, strategic planning process, and initiatives.

Fundamental Principles

CASBO advocates for sound policy in the areas of school business and finance based on our expertise and leadership as school business officials. Through political advocacy and action, CASBO seeks to influence state and federal policymakers on business and finance issues for the benefit of public education. Our advocacy is based on three core principles.

1. Public education is the foundation of a healthy democracy and thriving economy. California students are the basis of the association's priorities, and bill positions are adopted with the goal of ensuring that all students have an opportunity to be educated in safe and healthy environments with appropriate educational resources and support, so that they may become productive members of society.
2. California public schools must be funded at a level that provides sufficient resources for students to achieve proficiency on California academic standards and allows schools to prepare California's youth for higher education, the workforce, and responsible citizenship. As of February 2025, the Education Data Initiative currently ranks California 21st in the nation in per-pupil spending.[1]
3. Local control is fundamental to the success of California public schools.

[1] Hanson, Melanie. "U.S. Public Education Spending Statistics" EducationData.org, February 8, 2025, https://educationdata.org/public-education-spending-statistics

Essential Priorities

The following essential priorities shall guide CASBO's Legislative Committee and Board of Directors in determining positions on fiscal and policy matters:

School Finance Adequacy

California must have a school finance system that fully funds the costs of the state's high academic standards and needs of our students.

To achieve this goal, CASBO believes:

- California should provide base per pupil funding to be at or above the average of the top 10 states in the nation.
- Proposition 98 should be viewed as a minimum level of funding, must be protected against reductions, manipulations and suspensions, and it is not adequate for meeting the needs of our students.
- Predictability and consistency are essential for an adequately funded education system.
- Consideration should be given to the growing cost pressures on local educational agencies that minimize the dollars that reach the classroom, including energy costs, insurance premiums, health care costs, and increases in contribution rates to the State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) and the Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS). CalSTRS and CalPERS retirement systems must be adequately funded, appropriately invested, and protected from being diverted by the state for nonretirement purposes.
- The current reserve threshold, defined as the combined assigned or unassigned ending general fund balance[2], should be increased to allow for fiscally prudent levels of reserves in line with the best practice of at least 17 percent outlined by the Government Finance Officers Association that provide protection from the volatility of state revenues. As a best practice, this minimum should be maintained through the final year of the multi-year projection.
- All approved local educational agency mandated costs should be fully and quickly reimbursed, and limits should be placed on the imposition of new state mandates. Further, funding for outstanding mandate reimbursements should not be combined with other expenditure purposes.

[2] Per Education Code § 42127.01, "Combined assigned or unassigned ending general fund balance" refers to assigned and unassigned moneys in the general fund accounts of school districts, including assigned and unassigned moneys in the Special Fund for Other Than Capital Outlay.

Local Control

CASBO believes that those at the local educational agency level are best equipped to make decisions that implement needs-driven, innovative, and efficient programs to improve student achievement that are consistent with the statutory goals and requirements of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and done in partnership with local educational partners. LCFF envisioned a decentralized finance system that eliminated costly bureaucracy and ensured that a maximum number of dollars reached classrooms.

CASBO believes the state must re-commit to the principles of local control by:

- Prioritizing the Local Control Funding Formula as the primary way to deliver dollars to local educational agencies.
- Ensuring core programs, such as the LCFF base and special education are fully funded before creating new and expanded programs.
- Evaluating burdensome planning and reporting requirements to ensure they balance the need for transparency and accountability with the goal of maximizing funding for students and classrooms and allowing administrators to stay focused on key educational responsibilities.
- Preserve the ability of local educational agencies and their local community to determine the best approach to improving student outcomes.

Special Education

CASBO supports adequate state funding for special education to recognize the increasing identification rates and keep pace with growth in costs. In addition, we will work at the federal level to ensure the federal government honors its commitment to fund 40 percent of special education costs through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Facilities

CASBO supports an adequately funded school facilities program that prioritizes student safety and covers the cost of maintenance and operations of those facilities. We oppose using Proposition 98 funds as a source for the statewide school facilities program and believe any new statewide school facilities program must think beyond bond funding as the only source of dollars while maintaining the historic partnership between the state and local school districts for financing school facilities.

Transportation

CASBO urges the Legislature to increase the reimbursement rate for Home-to-School Transportation to bring state support in line with current costs and adopt an equitable allocation formula that more accurately reflects geographic and demographic cost differences among local education agencies. In addition, transportation policy should acknowledge the unique geographical circumstances of local educational agencies and avoid one-size-fits-all approaches.

Collective Bargaining

CASBO supports strong labor-management partnerships that prioritize local decision-making based on the unique needs of each district. We oppose one-size-fits-all policy mandates that undermine the integrity of collective bargaining or increase costs in ways that divert resources from students. Policy decisions should instead increase local flexibility to best serve students and communities.

Charter Schools

CASBO supports proposals to ensure authorizers are well equipped to carry out their oversight responsibilities and that charter schools are educationally and fiscally viable and provide added value to the community. CASBO supports policy that allows fiscal hardship to be considered when evaluating charter petitions, as outlined by AB 1505 (Chapter 486, Statutes of 2019).

Child Nutrition

CASBO supports fully funded, high quality nutrition programs for children.



On matters of state and federal policy that are not addressed in these essential priorities, CASBO shall work with members of the Education Coalition, education management and stakeholder organizations, and local education agencies to support proposals that improve the quality of education in California, and to oppose proposals that increase the fiscal burden on local education agencies or are detrimental to the future of public education and school children in California.