

# **CASE Legislative Platform 2018**

The purpose of Colorado's public education system is to educate all students to high standards and to ensure an enlightened citizenry capable of governing a democratic society. Excellence in education requires strong, accountable leadership and governance; adequate financing; coherent, long-range planning; standards-based curriculum; highly qualified, effective teachers; programs that address diverse student learning needs; quality facilities; and community and parent engagement. The CASE Platform provides direction for achieving the purpose of Colorado's public education system.

## **Leadership and Governance**

A coherent and aligned comprehensive plan for public PreK-20 education for Colorado should be developed in collaboration with interested parties.

Implementation of a comprehensive learner-centered educational system requires skilled leadership at the classroom, school and district levels.

## **Student Achievement and Accountability**

Educators are accountable for ensuring that all students are included in a quality learning experience and are post-secondary/workforce ready.

We believe in engaging and rigorous standards to help lead the way for student interest. Standards need to help make real world connections, spur deep thinking and build connections across content areas.

A balanced assessment system plays a vital role in both an accountability system and the teaching/learning cycle. Multiple assessment types should exist to provide valuable and timely information at varying times within a student's learning progression.

## **School Finance**

Educators, who are charged with providing a quality public education, must have adequate resources to produce desired expectations that come from the local, state and Federal levels.

The public has a vested interest in the success of their school system. Public schools belong to the community. Schools are funded by the public and controlled by the public through elections of local, state and national officials. The investment in children is an investment in local communities, the state and the world. School/district leaders have an obligation to educate the public and elected leaders about school operations using full financial transparency so that decisions made are in the best interests of students.

The state government should fully fund all mandated programs. The state should restore per pupil funding rather than targeting funds for specific mandates, to allow local districts to fund and/or restore programs consistent with their local community values and unique district needs. The state must provide school districts and BOCES with an adequate and equitable amount of stable source of funding based on a balance of state and local resources.

## **School Choice**

Public school choice can provide increasing opportunities for all children to learn in ways that best meet their abilities and needs. Public school choice must not come at the expense

of existing local public schools and all public schools should be held to the same rigorous standards and expectations.

### **School Culture, Climate and Safety**

A learner-centered school requires an environment that is safe, respectful, and personalized. A safe environment ensures physical, social and emotional well-being. A respectful environment creates a culture of collaboration, acceptance, risk-taking, inquiry and the freedom to make mistakes. A personalized environment is one where every individual feels valued, respected, and supported. A strong school culture and climate ensure safety, engagement and a positive environment as the foundation in which to teach and learn.

### **Personnel**

The most important factors in a quality education are strong leaders and effective educators.

Implementation of a learner-centered educational system requires skilled leadership at the classroom, school and district levels. At the classroom level, teachers need the ability to build relationships with all students and the ability to design individualized instruction based on their deep knowledge of content and pedagogy. At the building level, school leaders need to build collaborative relationships with educators, students and families to design structures that meet the unique needs of the students. District leaders need to ensure that learning is the focus of the school system and that all necessary supports are in place to ensure the schools' educators and students have what they need to achieve these outcomes.

Implementation of a learner-centered educational system requires professionals who are dedicated, reflective, and have both a growth mindset and passion for the whole student.

### **Education Data Privacy and Security**

Education data plays a vital role in empowering educators, students, families and policymakers. At the same time, safeguarding the privacy of education data is critical. Families, students and educators want and deserve assurances that personal information and data are secure and protected.

### **Family and Community Partnerships and Support**

The engagement and support of family and community are critical elements to student success. Schools need to partner with families to understand how they can work together to support their children. Community partnerships include community organizations, government entities, non-profit organizations, faith-based groups and volunteers. Partnerships with family and community can provide resources to schools that support students.

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

### **What do we believe about leadership and governance in Colorado?**

1. We believe effective school leadership results in greater success and higher academic achievement for all students.
2. We strongly believe in preservation of local control by elected school boards for educational decisions.
3. We believe a coherent and aligned comprehensive plan for public PreK-20 education for Colorado is paramount to guide policy development at the state level.
4. We believe a comprehensive plan for public education must include an efficient and effective *state level* data management system.
5. We believe state level policy making should occur with a large system view of public education. Proposed policy should be considered in terms of the impact on both urban and rural schools and districts that are part of the public education enterprise regardless of size or location.
6. We believe the active involvement of professionals should be at the forefront of state level policy development and implementation considerations, including accountability measures.
7. We strongly believe that required mandates should be fully funded at the state level.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### **What do we believe concerning student achievement and accountability?**

1. We believe in a standards-based system of educating students that is clearly defined and includes an embedded process for regular review so that all stakeholders (administrators, teachers, students, families and the community) understand what students should know and be able to do.
2. We believe in high expectations for all students supported by a challenging curriculum, engaging pedagogy, inclusive practices and a balanced assessment system geared towards increasing student learning measured against state and local standards.
3. We believe in minimizing the amount of time students spend on state level accountability assessments and maximizing the use of local assessment that informs and drives instruction.
4. We believe in the value of a comprehensive curriculum (e.g. art, music, P.E.) for development of the whole child.
5. We believe public policymakers, families, schools, and communities have responsibilities for creating conditions and providing the opportunities and resources necessary for the success of all learners.
6. We believe educators should be accountable for student learning and working to close the achievement gap.
7. We believe educators should use multiple approaches to teaching and learning.
8. We believe Colorado should continue with a single accountability system that includes longitudinal growth measures for marking student progress and that has educational purpose for schools and students.
9. For educators to be successful, we believe that continuous professional and personal development of all employees should be aligned and targeted to student outcomes.
10. We believe in funding and implementing a progressive PreK-20 structure to fully prepare students for college and career opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

11. Educators must clearly understand the standards in order to teach them. Students need to also own the standards to become an active participant in their learning
12. Assessments should gather a variety of data used to measure progress toward meeting the standards and to adjust instruction tied to the end result.
13. Families need access to student data to understand and support their child's progress.
14. Flexibility is needed to achieve these standards in order to meet the unique needs of each school and district.
15. Personalized learning pathways honor the uniqueness of each student.

## SCHOOL FINANCE

### **What do we believe about school finance?**

1. We believe adequate and equitable funding of public education for all learners, including those with special needs, is the most important State priority.
2. We believe the state government should fully fund all mandated programs. The state should restore per pupil funding rather than targeting funds for specific mandates, to allow local districts to fund and/or restore programs consistent with their local community values and unique district needs.
3. We believe school/district leaders have an obligation to educate the public and elected leaders about school operations using full financial transparency so that decisions they make are in the best interest of students.
4. Each local school district has the best knowledge and understanding of what is needed for their students. Local control is key.
5. We believe investing in our youngest learners is essential; thus, we support full funding for preschool and full-day kindergarten.
6. We believe funding for education should reflect a balance in the types of taxation from local and state sources.
7. We believe the state has allowed its per pupil student funding level to fall far below that of other states with the same relative wealth as Colorado and that the legislature must exercise responsibility to make the funding of public education a top priority.
8. We believe that changes must occur in Colorado's competing constitutional mandates – including Tabor and Gallagher – in order to better fund PreK-20 education.
9. We believe the school finance formula should provide adequate and equitable resources to educate children with diverse learning needs, including students who are at-risk, English Language Learners, special needs, and gifted.
10. We believe state-level assistance concerning the financing of capital construction is necessary.
11. Financing for post-secondary options, career technical education, concurrent enrollment, fifth-year programs and other higher education opportunities should be studied and funded appropriately by the state.

## SCHOOL CHOICE

### **What do we believe concerning school choice?**

1. We believe choice should be defined in the broadest sense and focused on increasing opportunities for all children to learn in ways that best meet their abilities and needs.
2. We believe that public schools are the cornerstone of American democracy. In order to guarantee an enlightened citizenry capable of governing itself, the American people must ensure quality education for each citizen. Choice programs should support, not detract, from this cornerstone purpose.

3. We believe choice programs should be supported by a funding source that does not divert funds from other public schools.
4. We believe choice programs should provide an opportunity for local school districts, given sufficient and equitable funding, to provide unique programs.
5. We believe choice programs should take into account equal access for all students in the district and be required to serve all student groups in the same ways as other public schools.
6. We believe public funds should not be used to support private or religious schools.
7. We believe choice programs should be subject to the same laws and regulations as all public schools in the state.
8. We believe choice programs should be governed by an elected board, whether state or local. We believe choice programs should be accountable to the public, adhering to the same standards to which all public schools must adhere. This would include such areas as health and safety, fiscal responsibility, curriculum content, academic achievement and test score disclosure.
9. We believe all recipients of public funds for educational purposes should be required to follow the same state and federal mandates including selection, admission, retention of all students; the licensing of all professional staff; and the participation in all state and/or district assessment programs required by other public schools.

#### SCHOOL CLIMATE, CULTURE AND SAFETY

##### **What do we believe concerning School Culture, Climate, and Safety?**

1. We believe every Colorado student deserves equal access to quality school resources including facilities, technology and transportation no matter their race, ethnicity, gender identify, level of ability, first language or socio-economic status.
2. Every student and educator must have an atmosphere that is safe and positive in which to learn and work.
3. All students have a right to a safe and comfortable educational learning environment.
4. Every student needs up-to-date technology devices with access to high-speed broadband to support their learning goals.
5. All facilities need to be physically accessible to all students.
6. Students must be transported in safe and reliable busses.

#### QUALITY PERSONNEL

##### **What do we believe concerning quality personnel?**

1. We believe educator and administrator qualities are the most important factors in student achievement.
2. To attract and retain the best-qualified individuals to work with students and staff, we believe the following conditions of employment are essential:
  - Licensure – all administrators and educators should have a high level of professional preparation with expectations for continuous growth.
  - Competitive compensation – compensation for school district employees should be comparable to salary and benefits of individuals with similar responsibilities in the private sector.
3. We believe efforts should occur at the state level to increase the pool of qualified, competent, and diverse personnel.
4. We believe schools should establish induction initiatives including mentorships and ongoing professional development to support all new staff members.

5. We believe continuous professional and personal development of all employees should be a high priority of school districts.
6. We believe educators should be qualified per state guidelines.
7. We believe all administrators should be afforded due-process in matters of contract renewal or discharge.
8. We believe in the use of evaluation to help employees enhance their skills and to support the elimination of poor performing employees.
9. We believe districts should explore alternative methods of teacher compensation.

#### EDUCATION DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY

##### **What do we believe concerning education data privacy and security?**

1. We believe appropriate student data use by schools, families, researchers, and service providers greatly enhances teaching and learning.
2. We believe that in order for schools to operate and make the best decisions for students, data must be collected, stored and utilized.
3. We believe ensuring student safety requires data such as addresses and phone numbers.
4. We believe that measuring progress and participation of students requires additional data collection of attendance, grades, etc.
5. We believe improving education programming involves the collection of local, state and national assessments.
6. We believe data helps to ensure success and its security must be taken seriously in order to build the trust required for successful school/community partnerships.
7. We believe school data should be used for education purposes only.