

2021 Proposed Resolutions

Section 1: School Finance

SF-1 Education Trust Fund Budget

AASB urges the Legislature to fulfill the state's constitutional responsibility to provide Alabama schoolchildren with an equitable, adequate school system and when considering the annual ETF budget to:

- Prohibit unfunded mandates in the ETF budget;
- Ensure full funding for existing K-12 public school programs and mandates and a sustained state effort to increase access to pre-kindergarten, before funding any other entity;
- Establish full funding of public elementary/secondary programs as the highest priority by passing a constitutional amendment guaranteeing elementary and secondary education equitable per pupil funding relative to higher education of the annual ETF budget;
- Provide budget flexibility at the local level by avoiding restrictive language directing or prohibiting school board expenditure of funds;
- Oppose efforts to re-direct or reduce any taxes presently dedicated to financing education in Alabama without corresponding measures to offset revenue losses or an alternative economic mechanism to ensure funding for K-12 education programs at current year levels;
- Oppose any effort to abolish the ETF, to un earmark dedicated taxes, to co-mingle ETF and General Fund revenue, to fund legislative discretionary projects through the budget or to fund non-state or non-education agencies from the ETF;
- Pass a reliable education budget in time for school boards to make local personnel and budget decisions before the end of the school year;
- Enhance the governor's authority to line-item veto appropriations;
- Ensure each participating entity is assessed its share of costs associated with state-funded benefits programs;
- Ensure K-12 schools share proportionately in any growth in ETF revenue;
- Support revenue initiatives to provide stable funding to the ETF; and
- Permit the state Department of Education and local school boards to carry over ETF funds at the end of the fiscal year.

SF-2 Local School Property Taxes

AASB supports increasing the minimum local property taxes required to qualify for state education funding. AASB also supports:

- Flexibility to increase local education taxes without a reduction in state funds;
- Clarifying the law to require county commissions to call for an election on a proposed property tax for schools at the rate and duration specified by the school board and on the date requested;
- Amending the law to address elections in which a tax district is in more than one county;

- Allowing school boards to pay for the cost of a special election;
- Giving school boards authority to call for property tax referenda;
- Annual property reappraisals;
- Revising current law to make it easier for school boards to seek additional school funding by allowing school boards to hold referenda levying additional school taxes without prior legislative approval; and
- Providing an incentive to communities to raise school taxes.

AASB opposes statutory restrictions on the levy or collection of taxes, i.e., the current use law or limiting the school taxes communities can levy. AASB urges the development of an accurate, comprehensive state database on local education property taxes so the impact of state initiatives can be objectively analyzed.

SF-3 Fully Funded Initiatives

AASB opposes state, legislative and federal mandates not fully funded. AASB urges government entities to accurately analyze the financial impact of decisions on local school boards prior to action and to include a local impact fiscal note.

SF-4 State Education Funding Program

AASB supports a funding program for elementary/secondary schools to promote student achievement while assuring adequacy and equity. The state funding formula should provide maximum flexibility to local school boards to determine system budgets, staffing and programs. AASB supports a funding program which:

- Provides stable funding;
- Defines wealth on each school system's tax base;
- Bases funding on the state-mandated program and is supported by local and state revenue;
- Prevents school systems from losing funds while phasing in a new program;
- Provides funds for capital outlay, mandated programs and personnel benefits;
- Regularly assesses program adequacy and equity;
- Provides state funding for all transportation costs, including costs related to student activities;
- Recognizes the unique attributes of some systems/schools such as rapid growth and location in an urban, rural or geographically isolated setting or size;
- Provides funding for other current expense at least equal to 25 percent of the state allocation for all system employee compensation and no less than last year's allocation;
- Addresses the increased demand for electives at the secondary level as a result of the 4x4 curriculum;
- Provides full funding for textbooks, instructional materials, classroom supplies and equipment, current units, common fund purchases and technology;

- Provides funding based at least on current COGNIA standards; and
- Provides full funding for such employee positions as principal, counselor, librarian, nurse, computer network administrator, psychometrist, physical education teacher, athletic trainer, and others such as teachers of music, theater, dance and the arts.

AASB opposes efforts to set constitutional caps for categorical spending.

SF-5 Fiscal Year

AASB supports a July 1-June 30 fiscal year for the ETF.

SF-6 Proration

AASB urges preventing proration of the ETF budget or minimizing the impact should it occur. AASB supports provisions to:

- Minimize the reliance upon borrowed funds to subsidize the ETF;
- Maintain a data-based limit to annual ETF appropriations;
- Discourage use of windfall gains in the ETF for recurring purposes;
- Establish a revenue forecasting commission;
- Give the governor authority to declare proration when warranted;
- Discourage legislative pay raises during proration or when it is anticipated;
- Preserve and maintain the integrity of Education Trust Fund Rolling Reserve Act which contains both a mechanism to prevent proration and an automatic savings component;
- Permit transfers among all local budget line-item allocations during proration;
- Recognize K-12 schools as an essential function of state government and not subject to proration; and
- Require the governor to declare proration at the effective rate based on when it is called during the fiscal year.

AASB opposes short-term fixes which divert state funds from other state services and programs without a responsible plan to replace the revenue diverted.

SF-7 Tax Reform

AASB urges immediate action to develop and enact an equitable, adequate, comprehensive tax reform package to generate additional funds for public schools.

SF-8 Legal Fees

AASB urges legal fees and settlements from lawsuits affecting segments of the education community be paid from that segment's traditional share of ETF revenue. AASB further urges such payments be restricted to actual costs incurred.

SF-9 Agency Audits

AASB urges all agencies receiving ETF funds be required to submit an annual audit to the Legislature detailing use of the current year's ETF funds and a detailed request for an appropriation, including a statement of projected non-ETF revenue.

SF-10 Federal Funding

AASB urges national leaders to make a commitment to fund fully federal education programs and innovative reform efforts, including adequate funds for program management, at the state and local levels. AASB supports local school boards having flexibility within federal programs to allocate funds to best meet local needs. AASB urges strict limits on the amount set aside for state administration to only the amount necessary to perform mandatory federal requirements but requests full reimbursement for costs associated with local outreach activities for other federal programs.

SF-11 Finance Research

AASB supports ongoing study of school finance needs and development of equitable, adequate school funding proposals to generate needed school revenue.

SF-12 Supernumeraries

AASB requests the state Legislature abolish all supernumerary positions and add no new retirement for elected officials.

SF-13 State Bond Issues

AASB supports issuing and releasing in a timely manner, state bonds to fund long-term capital improvement projects in Alabama public schools provided ETF revenue is adequate to support debt service. AASB opposes state prioritization of local building needs and use of bond issue money for non-capital expenses, particularly financing initial payments. AASB urges legislation authorizing bond issues specify allocations for accrued interest and mandatory, regular and cumulative reporting on discretionary allocations; and requiring a competitive bid process for the selection of the bonding officials.

SF-14 Alabama Public School and College Authority

AASB urges APSCA discretionary allocations be approved by the state Board of Education and reviewed by the State Auditor to ensure compliance with statutes authorizing issuance.

SF-15 Voter Education

AASB opposes use of public funds and facilities for partisan campaigns and activities. AASB supports allowing school boards the flexibility to responsibly use public funds, time and property to discuss and educate voters and residents about initiatives involving public education. AASB believes any restrictions on such activities must apply to all public officials and entities.

SF-16 Enrollment Fraud

AASB opposes fraudulently enrolling a full-time virtual student to receive state funding through Average Daily Membership (ADM) when the student is simultaneously enrolled in another public or non-public K-12 school.

SF-17 Simplified Sellers Use Tax (SSUT)

AASB supports an increased ETF share of SSUT revenue to offset decreases in traditional sales tax revenue. AASB believes local school boards which receive local sales taxes should receive their fair share of local SSUT revenue.

Section 2: Governance

G-1 Local Governance

AASB opposes state and federal legislative measures which would limit authority and autonomy of local school boards over local policy, curriculum and instruction, personnel, financial, and facilities authority and management. Site based authority should be granted by the local school board and not legislated.

G-2 School Board Composition

AASB supports both elective and appointive methods of selecting school board members. AASB opposes changing school board member selection methods without a vote of the affected residents through a specific constitutional amendment with local application. AASB advocates:

- Selection of school board members for their good character;
- Prohibiting the appointing authority from removing board members before their terms expire;
- Non-partisan selection for school board members; and
- Prohibiting employees from serving on the boards which employ them.

G-3 Superintendent Selection and Removal

AASB supports local school board appointment of superintendents, including those who are currently elected. AASB opposes any effort to limit or restrict a board's ability to terminate the superintendent.

G-4 Open Meetings Act and Open Records

AASB urges school boards and other public bodies to abide by the letter and spirit of the open meetings law.

AASB supports a reasonable and balanced open records law to promote transparency but opposes costly, overly burdensome and time-consuming mandates to fulfill requests that serve no valid purpose. AASB opposes categorizing internal email and other non-final documents as open records. AASB opposes a mandate to allow vendors and other out-of-state entities to benefit from an open records law intended to serve state stakeholders.

G-5 Bid Law

AASB supports revising the bid law to allow school boards to: (1) manage construction projects without requiring a general contractor; and (2) increase the monetary threshold for projects which must be bid. AASB opposes requiring bids for professional services and other efforts to expand the law as it relates to school boards.

G-6 School Board Member Training

AASB advocates mandated state and local school board member orientation and ongoing training as a cornerstone of good governance. AASB also urges:

- Allocation of available state and national funds directly to school boards for leadership development; and
- Designation of AASB as the provider of school board member training.

G-7 School Board Member Qualifications and Governance

AASB supports requiring new school board members to have a minimum of a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma. AASB supports requiring prospective candidates to meet minimal pre-qualifications to be eligible for school board service including:

- attend at least 2 board meetings;
- complete a minimum 2 hours approved training; and
- acknowledge/agree to Affirmations and Code of Conduct.

AASB advocates that prospective candidates demonstrate compliance to qualify for election and to provide a timeframe for appointed school board members to comply.

AASB supports a process to promote school board member compliance with service requirements including:

- Creating a peer review panel to consider allegations of non-compliance;
- Authorizing the peer review panel to make findings and recommend disciplinary action to the State Superintendent; and
- Authorizing the State Superintendent to determine and impose appropriate disciplinary action up to and including removal from office upon State Board approval.

G-8 Shared Decision Making

AASB urges school boards to consider voluntary implementation of shared decision making to promote input from the community.

G-9 Campaign Financing Requirement

AASB supports competitive elections for local and state offices. To encourage competition, AASB supports:

- Stronger campaign reporting requirements;
- Limits on campaign contributions; and
- Bans on political action committee contributions to other PACs.

G-10 System Boundaries

AASB advocates changing school system boundaries only by state law, court action or mutual agreement of affected school boards.

G-11 Charter, Innovation and Virtual Schools

AASB supports school choice as a local option. AASB supports local school board efforts to creatively meet student needs by petitioning for relief from certain state regulations. AASB supports legislation granting the state superintendent of education the authority to waive state education-related statutes. AASB opposes federal efforts to require charter schools as a condition for the receipt of federal grants or waivers. AASB believes any state charter school legislation must include provisions that require a charter school to:

- Be approved by the local board of education;
- Participate in the state assessment program, including publication of disaggregated test data, to determine measurable student achievement performance;
- Be audited annually;

- Not exclude students due to physical or mental ability, race, ethnicity, religious preference or socio-economic background;
- Focus on underserved student populations;
- Ensure the same flexibility charter schools enjoy is available to traditional public schools; and
- Allow local school boards to determine accountability and retain authority to decertify or non-renew each charter or innovative school that fails to meet criteria set forth in the charter/innovative school agreement.
- AASB supports the state Superintendent of Education’s authority to provide leadership to the Alabama Public Charter School Commission.

AASB supports virtual education programs governed by local board policy using effective monitoring and performance practices and specified criteria for student participation. AASB opposes virtual charter schools.

G-12 School Board Representation

AASB advocates AASB and NSBA representation on state and national groups that will address education matters.

G-13 Accountability and Intervention

AASB supports a statewide accountability system to improve student performance. AASB supports state intervention provided local school officials have the opportunity and resources to correct deficiencies prior to punitive measures. AASB supports state authority to reconstitute schools under intervention with freedom from specific statutes to re-staff a persistently low-performing school.

G-14 School System Rights

AASB recognizes the rights of cities and counties to maintain separate school systems but supports voluntary school and school system consolidation.

G-15 Policies, Regulations and Statutes

AASB urges local and state officials to amend or repeal any policy, regulation or law impeding efficient, effective education management and to give local education leaders flexibility or grant waivers to encourage innovation.

G-16 School Trustees

AASB supports abolishing county school trustees.

G-17 School Board Member Code of Conduct

AASB supports local school board adoption of a code of conduct consistent with the model adopted by the state Board of Education pursuant to the School Board Governance Improvement Act. AASB encourages reasonable measures concerning nepotism.

G-18 Fund Raising

AASB supports school boards adopting stringent policies governing student fund raising.

G-19 Prayer at School-Sponsored Activities

AASB supports student-initiated prayer at school activities and on school premises consistent with state and federal law.

G-20 Tax Credits, Vouchers and Education Savings Accounts

AASB opposes:

- Permitting tax credits for individuals and businesses that make donations to provide scholarships to K-12 non-public schools;
- Providing vouchers for students to attend non-public schools; and
- Permitting privately funded education savings accounts for higher education expenses to be used for private K-12 tuition expenses.

AASB advocates that any non-public school whose students are beneficiaries of a state-funded tax-credit, scholarship or voucher should participate in the state assessment program, including publication of disaggregated test data, to determine measurable student achievement performance.

G-21 Open Enrollment

AASB opposes efforts to mandate open enrollment (inter-system choice).

G-22 Military School Autonomy

AASB urges the federal government to respect decisions by school boards governing schools located on military installations.

G-23 Long-Range Strategic Planning

AASB encourages school boards to engage in comprehensive, long-range strategic planning, to set measurable annual goals, and to review periodically existing plans.

G-24 Constitutional Reform

AASB supports constitutional reform. AASB believes constitutional revisions should include proposals that:

- Recognize K-12 education as an essential state function;
- Permit greater local autonomy;
- Permit fund-raising mechanisms for public schools;
- Eliminate discriminatory language; and
- Recognize a right to equal protection.

G-25 State Board of Education Advocacy

AASB urges the state Board of Education to solicit local school board input when considering major statewide initiatives and to refrain from taking action to implement such proposals until an appropriate local impact assessment has been conducted and school boards have received notice of the board's intent to act on a specific proposal. Whenever substantive changes are proposed to pending proposals between their announcement and date of proposed action, AASB requests that the state Board provide 30 days to permit appropriate input by those affected by the proposal. AASB urges local school boards to give their state board representative feedback on all pending proposals and to, at a minimum, designate one member in addition to the superintendent responsibility for

ensuring regular communication with their state board representative on pending education issues.

G-26 Unitary Status

AASB supports proactive, community-based efforts to bring closure to desegregation lawsuits.

G-27 Student Warranties

AASB encourages school boards to guarantee their graduates have attained basic workplace and academic skills by providing remedial programs for graduates found to be deficient in these areas. AASB urges state colleges and universities to monitor their admittance requirements so only students performing at the college level will be admitted.

G-28 Contracted Services

AASB opposes efforts infringing on school boards' rights to contract services.

G-29 School Board Evaluation

AASB urges school boards' annual evaluation and encourages use of AASB's evaluation service.

G-30 Review of Title 16

AASB urges review of Title 16, *Code of Alabama* as it relates to elementary and secondary education to streamline laws to improve the governance and management of local schools to lead to higher student achievement.

G-31 Electronic Posting

AASB supports legislation allowing school boards to satisfy any requirement to post or publish an announcement/notice to be satisfied by publishing such information on the board's official website and/or a state-maintained website.

G-32 School Census

AASB urges repeal of legislation mandating conducting periodic school censuses.

G-33 Data-based Decision Making

AASB advocates use of data-based decision making to facilitate efforts to improve student achievement, financial efficiency and public accountability. AASB urges colleges of education and in-service centers to teach the skills and provide the resources necessary for educators to implement data-based decision making in their schools.

G-34 State Board of Education

AASB supports an elected state Board of Education with the authority to appoint the state Superintendent of Education. AASB supports a constitutional amendment establishing the structure and duties of the state Board of Education.

Section 3: Personnel

P-1 Tenure

School boards support a law that:

- Links student progress as a component of effective teacher performance in obtaining and retaining teacher tenure status;
- Gives school boards the final decision-making authority in personnel decisions;
- Gives school boards the flexibility to transfer teachers throughout the school year and gives teachers limited rights to appeal to the school board;
- Provides school boards with options for disciplining teachers which cannot be appealed beyond the school board level;
- Limits tenure eligibility to teachers;
- Lengthens the probationary status period to five years before becoming eligible for tenure; and
- Considers offering teachers an alternative to tenure track.

P-2 Employee Relations

AASB encourages school boards to maintain appropriate dialogue with their employees, taking steps to ensure mutual understanding of concerns and to develop grievance procedures to assure employees are afforded opportunities to resolve grievances. AASB encourages school boards to effectively document employee performance to support appropriate personnel actions and/or to improve performance.

P-3 Collective Bargaining/Strikes

AASB opposes compulsory union membership and collective bargaining for school personnel. AASB opposes strikes by educational employees and supports imposing penalties, including the loss of certification, on striking employees for neglecting their duties.

P-4 Unemployment Compensation

AASB opposes unemployment compensation benefits for substitute teachers and providing such benefits to employees during non-contract days.

P-5 State Retirement System

AASB supports a cost-effective, financially stable school employee retirement system. AASB opposes changes which adversely affect current participants or incur additional state costs without careful review. AASB supports allowing education retirees to return to teaching and retain their retirement benefits, provided the additional years do not count toward retirement benefits, and their salary is set on an alternative salary schedule.

P-6 Employee Compensation

AASB supports competitive employee salaries that treat employee categories equitably. AASB opposes mandated statewide salary schedules or requirements to match regional or national salary averages without considering employees' entire compensation packages and school needs and without considering the financial impact on the ETF and local budgets. AASB supports salary increases based on state allocations. AASB encourages

school boards to consider merit pay, rewards for additional academic achievements and incentives for teachers in “critical needs” areas and underserved geographical areas.

P-7 Employee Leave

AASB opposes permitting leave accumulation or increasing education employees’ leave days. AASB supports full state funding for substitutes during employees’ sick and personal leave. AASB opposes requiring payment at the highest local rates for employees’ unused personal leave and allowing conversion of personal leave for which actual supplemental state or local funds are not provided.

P-8 Payroll Deductions

AASB opposes requiring school boards to provide payroll deductions for employee contributions to a political party, candidate, political action committee or other private or public entity. If payroll deductions are mandated, school boards should be able to assess an administrative fee and/or require a minimum level of participation.

P-9 Employee Personnel Records

AASB supports school boards’ rights to maintain confidential personnel records accessible to employees. AASB supports employees’ right to place written responses to material found in their files. AASB opposes burdensome personnel records procedures and allowing appeal of placement of information in employees’ files.

P-10 Employee Insurance and Benefits

AASB supports legislative approval of benefit increases or reserve account transfers involving the Public Education Employees Health Insurance Plan. AASB opposes requiring school boards to pay for additional coverage. AASB encourages state and national leaders to reform the nation’s health care delivery system and supports providing incentives for employees to make healthy lifestyle choices. AASB opposes establishing new employee benefits programs at state cost such as an employee injury and disability fund. AASB believes participants should share in rising premium costs. AASB urges the review of the PEEHIP program to ensure premiums are equitably allocated to participants and participating agencies. The composition of the boards of the retirement and health systems should not be dominated by any one political group or entity and should protect the long-term financial viability of the programs.

P-11 Superintendent, Employee Recruitment

AASB encourages aggressive employee recruiting programs to assist in attracting high-quality candidates and broaden candidate pools for all system vacancies. AASB urges school boards to be inclusive in the candidate recruitment and review process and to encourage racial and gender diversity. As part of this process, AASB encourages school boards to announce employment vacancies within their school systems in specified locations accessible to all school employees and the public but opposes restrictions on duration and content of such announcements.

P-12 School Employee Immunity

AASB supports immunity for school board employees from lawsuits and civil liability arising from acts committed in the course of their employment, particularly providing

information about a former employee's job performance, except for those willful acts resulting in foreseeable intentional injury.

P-13 Background Check

AASB supports national criminal background checks for prospective board members, elected or appointed, at the candidates' expense; public school employees at the prospective employees' expense; and for volunteers with direct, unsupervised contact with children. AASB believes school boards should have the authority to conduct national criminal background checks of all employees whenever there is reasonable suspicion. AASB believes non-public schools and agencies should have the option of conducting such checks.

P-14 Teacher Licensure

AASB supports programs that promote teacher success. AASB advocates a state teacher certification process that encompasses:

- Higher standards for teachers, including additional requirements in the subject area in which the teachers are earning licensure and instructional technology;
- Requiring universities to provide remedial assistance to graduates performing unsatisfactorily;
- Linking state authorization with graduate performance;
- Ensuring teacher preparatory programs are aligned with current state initiatives and practices;
- Expanding teacher internships and mentoring programs;
- Expanding alternative methods to utilize non-career educators;
- Requiring initial teacher certification testing in content areas they will teach; and
- Offering reciprocity to teachers that earn valid certification in other states.

P-15 Professional Development and Professional Pathways

AASB supports increasing quality professional development opportunities for certified staff, including training in educational technology, as well as educational programs for other staff. AASB advocates allocating directly to school boards all state professional development funding so schools can target their professional development to identified school goals. AASB urges school boards to establish partnerships with institutions of higher education to promote professional development. AASB urges state Board of Education oversight to require strong accountability and efficient programming and delivery of consistent, quality content by the state's in-service centers. AASB urges legislative restraint from statutorily mandating specific professional development and flexibility for local boards in providing professional development in fiscal years that line item is not fully funded in the Foundation Program. AASB supports the development of professional pathways for teachers to pursue career growth options in the teaching practice as alternatives to pursuing administrative supervisory positions.

P-16 School Leadership

AASB recognizes local school superintendents, principals, assistant principals, coordinators, supervisors and other administrators as vital members of the school management team and supports reinforcement of their management role through training

programs, assessment centers, regular evaluations and other such programs. AASB recognizes principals as the instructional leaders of schools. AASB supports development of a voluntary state program to recruit, promote and prepare prospective school administrators. AASB urges regular assessment of the availability of qualified administrative candidates.

P-17 Communicable Diseases

AASB urges school boards to adopt policies relating to communicable diseases in compliance with state and federal law, including Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), governing the status of employees with such diseases with respect to individual privacy and rights while ensuring staff and student safety.

P-18 Evaluations

AASB advocates student growth be a component of teacher evaluation as a measure of effective teacher performance. AASB advocates annual evaluation of non-tenured staff and regular evaluation of tenured employees through a reliable instrument or the state plan to ensure instructional excellence and student achievement. AASB urges an annual goal-based evaluation of the superintendent by the local school board.

P-19 Drug Testing

AASB supports school board prerogative to adopt employee drug testing policies in accord with legal precedent.

P-20 Sexual Harassment

AASB urges school boards to adopt stringent policies to:

- Prohibit sexual harassment;
- Instruct employees about inappropriate behavior in this area; and
- Establish procedures for handling allegations of sexual harassment.

AASB supports criminal penalties for school employees engaging in sexual conduct with K-12 students.

P-21 National Board Teacher Certification

AASB supports voluntary national certification for teachers and encourages state and local officials to support individuals seeking this distinction and to reward their successful accomplishments for as long as they maintain their certification and are employed in a public school. AASB urges the financial incentive for educators to seek National Board Certified Teacher status be included as a salary component in the Foundation Program and include the cost of associated benefits.

P-22 ADA Job Descriptions

AASB urges school boards to develop job descriptions consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

P-23 Ethics Law

AASB supports changes to the ethics law to exclude public school employees from the two-year “revolving door” provision. AASB supports employees’ right to seek public office and believes such employees should not be compensated at public expense while serving as a public official unless using leave or flex time under an approved board policy applicable to all employees.

P-24 Internet Usage

AASB urges school boards to adopt policies addressing employee access and conduct while using the Internet and other electronic mail systems.

P-25 Planning Period

AASB opposes allowing teachers to use their paid planning period to meet with marketing representatives for personal finance services and products or conduct personal business.

P-26 Nepotism

AASB encourages school boards to adopt policies prohibiting assignment of employees to supervise members of their immediate family. AASB supports reasonable restrictions on the new employment and promotion of sitting local board and superintendent family members within a school system.

P-27 Professional Code of Conduct

AASB urges school boards to adopt the Professional Code of Conduct approved by the state Board of Education.

P-28 Teacher Shortage

AASB urges immediate efforts to address the teacher shortage with a multi-pronged approach, including:

- Recruiting students and other professionals to the teaching field, includes efforts in high school to increase students entering the teacher pipeline;
- Funding academic scholarships or provide student loan repayment to those pursuing education degrees;
- Offering incentives to those willing to teach in subject areas or geographical areas with critical teacher shortages and who commit to teach in the state of Alabama for a specific number of years;
- Increasing teacher salaries and revising Tier 2 teacher retirement benefits including conversion of sick leave to retirement service credit;
- Providing incentives for retired teachers to return to schools;
- Eliminating the requirement to pass a Praxis exam to be eligible to complete a college of education program;
- Allowing alternative competency-based educator preparation programs;
- Expanding opportunities for work experience to be used in lieu of course work in critical high needs academic subjects;

- Upgrading to an electronic state certification process and increasing capacity of the SDE certification department; and
- Promoting career pathways in education.

Section 4: Student Programs/Services

SPS-1 Special Education and Special Needs

AASB encourages school officials to be responsive to children with special needs and provide them with education services in the least restrictive environment, including placement in the regular classroom where appropriate. AASB supports early detection of student learning disabilities. AASB advocates placement decisions be made at the local level. AASB opposes providing medical care not pertinent to the disability or special education students and expanding recognized disabilities under state and federal education law. AASB supports less restrictive federal law and regulations governing discipline issues.

SPS-2 Compulsory Attendance Age/Kindergarten

AASB supports compulsory school attendance from ages 6 to 17. AASB supports mandatory completion of kindergarten before entering first grade.

SPS-3 Student Health

AASB urges school boards to:

- Collaborate with community partners to sponsor and or promote programs to develop student skills and attitudes fostering healthy, intellectual, physical and emotional well-being;
- Require students to have certain immunizations and be tested for communicable diseases prior to entering school;
- Test and/or screen for certain life-threatening or crippling diseases and for sight and hearing deficiencies;
- Adopt practical policies for dealing with students with special health needs, including those with communicable diseases or who are medically frail, that permit flexibility, promote privacy and protect students and staff;
- Comply with *Alabama Code* § 16-40A-2, Sex Education Law, and promote abstinence from sexual intercourse as the only completely effective protection against unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) when transmitted sexually; and
- Promote innovative programs on nutrition and physical activity that would contribute to healthy lifestyles for students.

AASB opposes mandating schools report students' body mass index (BMI).

SPS-4 Uniform or Dress Code Policies

AASB supports school boards establishing school uniform or dress code policies.

SPS-5 Preschool Education

AASB supports voluntary, diverse delivery of preschool programs for non-school-aged children. AASB supports collaborative efforts at the local level to ensure school readiness. AASB supports sustained state efforts to increase access to pre-kindergarten.

SPS-6 Student Conduct

AASB urges school boards to implement a variety of strategies to direct student conduct which promote student achievement and a conducive learning environment, including efforts to:

- Develop with parent, teacher and community input fair, firm student conduct codes permitting flexibility to consider the age of the student and the offense while prohibiting corporal punishment.
- Encourage evidence-based positive behavior discipline alternatives and programs;
- Craft programs and policies seeking to eliminate violent and disruptive behavior such as those focusing on bullying, verbal disrespect, racial insensitivity, and other forms of harassment which contribute to fear, low self-esteem and lower academic achievement;
- Adopt programs concentrating on conflict resolution such as peer mediation;
- Provide alternative classes or schools, provided at state expense, for continually disruptive students;
- Link school behavior with student privileges; and
- Adopt random drug testing policies within legal parameters.

AASB urges school boards to review periodically student violations of the Code of Conduct and their subsequent punishments to ensure equity and fairness. AASB advocates school boards be given wider latitude to remove or restrict attendance for students charged with or convicted of serious off-campus offenses for the protection of students and staff.

SPS-7 Child Abuse and Neglect

AASB supports efforts to detect and report child abuse and neglect.

SPS-8 Extracurricular Activities

AASB encourages school boards to provide a broad spectrum of extracurricular activities that:

- Meet varied student interests;
- Are funded equitably in terms of academic, athletic and artistic activities;
- Comply with Title IX;
- Limit participation to students who have maintained a minimum grade average of 70 in six courses or its equivalent in block scheduling, including core courses, the prior semester;
- Do not interfere with the school day nor extend late into the school night; and
- Limit travel for regular play on school nights to no more than a two hours' drive.

AASB urges the Alabama High School Athletic Association to schedule playoff games at times and locations so students do not have to miss school. AASB supports school boards' option to test participating students for drug use. AASB opposes access to extracurricular activities to anyone who is not an enrolled public school student.

SPS-9 Missing Children

AASB supports programs which help locate missing children.

SPS-10 Cheerleading/Majorette/Dance Team Safety

AASB urges local school boards to regulate stunts and activities performed by cheerleaders, majorettes and dance teams, prohibiting such activities as multi-person or multi-level stunts and twirling fire batons.

SPS-11 Personal Responsibility

AASB encourages school boards to promote student personal responsibility and encourages the instilling of virtues such as honesty, integrity, justice, compassion, duty, fairness and responsibility.

SPS-12 Sexual Harassment

AASB strongly opposes sexual harassment. AASB urges school boards to educate students regarding appropriate behavior, adopt procedures for handling harassment allegations and communicating such procedures to students to maintain a harassment-free environment.

SPS-13 Extended Day Programs

AASB urges school boards to offer extended day programs.

SPS-14 Student-Teacher Ratios

AASB supports state efforts to lower student-teacher ratios, provided school boards are given sufficient flexibility and funding. AASB advocates reasonable caps on class size, provided long-term waivers can be obtained to support innovative programs or for unique situations.

SPS-15 Athletic Safety

AASB encourages school boards to ensure the safety and well-being of student athletes by:

- Informing students and parents of risks;
- Providing safe facilities and equipment, including defibrillators;
- Using certified athletic trainers at school athletic events;
- Banning steroid use and informing students of its dangers; and
- Taking appropriate safeguards based on weather conditions.

SPS-16 Federal Lunch Program

AASB urges Congress to maintain the National School Lunch Program.

SPS-17 Selective Service Registration

AASB urges local school boards and all high schools to participate in the Selective Service Registrar Program.

SPS-18 Mentoring Students

AASB supports increased involvement of responsible adults in the community as positive role models and mentors for children throughout the year.

SPS-19 Equal Educational Opportunities

AASB urges school boards to provide equitable access and to promote educational opportunities to all students regardless of such factors as race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, English proficiency, socioeconomic status or disability. AASB encourages schools to recognize the special needs and strengths of every student and to facilitate their development of a quality education.

SPS-20 Student Expression

AASB encourages freedom of student expression but asserts school boards' right, consistent with legal precedent and students' First Amendment rights, to place restrictions on the content of student publications and speech that disrupts the educational process.

Section 5: Student Achievement

SA-1 Student Achievement

AASB urges government, parents, community, business leaders and the media to support local school system efforts to enable all public school children to achieve at high levels. School boards should focus their leadership efforts and commit to raising student achievement through such measures as:

- Creating the expectation that students read at grade level;
- Establishing high academic standards to ensure students are prepared for the future;
- Establishing policies and programs to focus school board and community resources on the school boards' high academic expectations and goals;
- Using accountability, evaluation and reporting mechanisms to set, measure and support student achievement goals as a system priority;
- Involving the community and parents in supporting the achievement of academic goals that close the achievement gaps and ensure that every student achieves at high levels; and
- Recognizing and rewarding student and staff achievement.

SA-2 Student Assessment

AASB supports a comprehensive state testing program for grades K-12 that permits a wide variety of assessment strategies but uses minimum student instructional time and includes a reading assessment to measure literacy for all students entering the school system. AASB is opposed to mandated national testing by the federal government but supports state testing which provides individual student achievement data. AASB encourages the use of student growth data to be used for formative and informational instructional purposes by a school and school system. AASB discourages the use of such data by the state for punitive measures.

SA-3 At-Risk Students

AASB supports an aggressive, multi-faceted approach to identify and assist students at risk for school failure, including intervention and prevention strategies for potential dropouts and effective policies regarding truant students. AASB urges dedicated state and local efforts to address chronic absenteeism.

SA-4 Education Standards

AASB urges federal and state policy makers to take action to:

- Support state and local efforts to provide students with a 21st century skills appropriate education to compete in the global and technological economy and fund appropriate education entities to develop model standards for voluntary adoption; and
- Support funding for research and financial assistance to states in developing and implementing 21st century skills content standards.

AASB opposes federal efforts to impose federal model standards as mandatory for states or local boards or make the adoption of those standards a condition for the receipt of federal funds. AASB supports participating in voluntary national standards but resists linking the standards to mandatory national assessments or participation in federal programs or as a condition for the receipt of federal grants or waivers. AASB supports the state's voluntary effort to ensure K-12 standards are aligned with common core standards that clearly outline what students are expected to know so learning can be seamless, uninterrupted and transferrable. AASB supports Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards as a minimum standard to increase rigor and achievement for all students.

SA-5 Curriculum

AASB advocates school boards adopt challenging curricula and meet high performance standards and learner outcomes for students. AASB encourages school boards to ensure their curriculum is aligned with state assessment programs.

SA-6 Instructional Techniques

AASB supports local determination of instruction methods tailored to meet students' needs. AASB encourages school boards to keep abreast of innovative techniques and to support a variety of proven techniques to meet different needs

SA-7 Secondary Education

AASB supports school board authority to design a secondary school curriculum which prepares students to be successful in life, encompassing a rigorous academic program for all students, advanced courses for college-bound youth, meaningful skills training for those pursuing a trade, and sufficient job skills preparation for graduates immediately entering the workforce. AASB urges school boards to participate in student workforce development programs. AASB urges local school boards to work with local colleges and universities to develop dual enrollment programs.

SA-8 Student Grouping

AASB supports allowing teachers to group students for instructional purposes as needed but opposes tracking students.

SA-9 Graduation Standards

AASB believes minimum graduation standards should be established by the state Board of Education. AASB urges school boards to implement strategies to help students meet stringent state graduation requirements.

SA-10 Textbook Selection

AASB supports allowing local school boards to select any text which has not been rejected by the state textbook committee or state Board of Education. AASB advocates allowing school boards at their discretion to use state funds to purchase electronic textbooks or later editions. AASB urges parent, teacher and technical expert involvement in evaluating and selecting textbooks.

SA-11 Technology

AASB supports use of communication and information technologies to improve instruction, broaden curriculum and enhance community and student services. AASB encourages school boards to integrate technology throughout the curriculum and at all grade levels. AASB urges state and national leaders to provide funds for educational technology, including online, virtual, and distance learning. AASB supports a comprehensive, state-funded technology plan with flexibility for school boards to meet local technology needs which does not involve long-term financing.

SA-12 Homework

AASB encourages assignment of challenging, relevant homework.

SA-13 Arts Programs

AASB supports visual and performing arts education as part of the regular curriculum.

SA-14 Accreditation

AASB encourages school boards to seek regional school accreditation. AASB urges regional accreditation agencies to review and increase their standards consistent with effective schools research. AASB opposes regional accreditation agencies' interference with board-superintendent relationships.

SA-15 Instructional Calendar

AASB advocates a school calendar with a minimum of 185 instructional days or equivalent for students per year with local flexibility. AASB urges school boards to:

- Provide additional instructional time for students who need assistance;
- Maximize current instructional time;
- Adopt a calendar that complements local needs; and
- Allow alternative scheduling.

AASB opposes efforts to place any restrictions on setting the school calendar.

SA-16 Multiculturalism

AASB urges school officials to promote awareness of, and sensitivity toward, the myriad races and cultures in our society by incorporating a multicultural perspective.

SA-17 Comprehensive Health Curriculum

AASB encourages all local school boards to support a coordinated school health program (CSHP) built on a foundation including eight interactive components: health education,

physical education, health services, nutrition services, counseling and social services, healthy school environment, health promotion for staff and family, and community involvement. AASB supports the Alabama Course of Study on Health Education and Physical Education, to promote the goal of maintaining the health and safety needs for students. AASB encourages school boards to offer a comprehensive health curriculum providing instruction on the:

- Merits of sexual abstinence;
- Dangers of illegal drug and alcohol abuse;
- Prevention of communicable diseases;
- Benefits of physical exercise and good nutrition; and
- Dangers of tobacco use and substance abuse.

SA-18 Character Education

AASB supports a comprehensive character education program allowing local school systems the scheduling flexibility to offer a program with a minimum of 50 minutes of instruction per week.

SA-19 Internet Usage

AASB urges school boards to adopt policies addressing student access and conduct while using the Internet on school time and at school locations or on school-issued devices.

SA-20 Education Improvement Planning

AASB urges school boards to regularly assess their systems' strengths and weaknesses and develop education improvement plans based on these assessments. AASB encourages school boards to commit to allocating appropriate resources to these goals and measure progress toward attaining them.

SA-21 Social Promotion/Retention

AASB supports efforts to ensure students are working at grade-level, particularly efforts to pilot programs aimed at eliminating social promotion and retention.

SA-22 Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

AASB supports efforts to improve the quality of educational services while ensuring maximum authority and flexibility to local systems that provide such services. AASB urges the U.S. Department of Education to restrict its regulatory authority and to comply with the intent of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. AASB supports state and local decision-making to best address teacher preparation, student achievement, school accountability; early education; and programs to address persistently low performing schools. Local school leaders support full federal funding of the ESEA law and federal assistance programs that are critical to successfully achieving the goals of the federal law.

SA-23 School Climate

AASB recognizes the importance of a positive school climate. To that end, AASB urges school boards to take proactive steps to ensure a positive climate to raise student achievement to enhance staff performance. AASB supports local board efforts to promote

teacher success and satisfaction in work to reach student achievement goals. AASB supports strengthened mentorship and other creative programs to enhance recruitment and retention of skilled teachers in the classroom.

SA-24 College and Career Ready

AASB supports aggressive efforts to ensure students are college and career ready upon graduation to meet demands of the workforce or rigor of a college curriculum.

SA-25 Remediation

AASB urges state adoption of a standard definition for remediation to consistently apply and identify students that are in need of remedial courses for use by K-12, post-secondary colleges and universities.

SA-26 Career and Technical Education

AASB strongly supports Alabama's Career and Technical Education programs as a parallel and equally valuable education pathway for students. AASB urges alignment of state business and industry workforce development efforts directly with K-12 school systems to focus on essential career skills. AASB supports streamlining federal and state funding programs that flow to Career and Technical Education programs.

Section 6: Operations/Facilities

O-1 Elimination of Health Hazards

AASB advocates public schools free of health hazards and encourages school boards to test for such hazards as radon and lead in school drinking water. AASB supports efforts ridding public schools of environmental hazards, but opposes health mandates if not fully funded. AASB supports voluntary efforts to evaluate and to improve indoor air quality of every school building. AASB opposes mandatory regulatory or statutory requirements of such measures.

O-2 Transportation

AASB supports school board option to provide student transportation.

O-3 Student Transportation Safety

AASB encourages school boards to ensure student safety by:

- Replacing aging buses;
- Restricting students from standing in buses;
- Properly maintaining vehicles;
- Participating in driver training programs;
- Increasing penalties for drivers who violate laws related to school bus safety;
- Monitoring student behavior;
- Regularly inspecting vehicles and evaluating drivers; and
- Complying with National Transportation Safety Board regulations.

AASB urges state officials to ensure state roads and bridges meet safety standards for school buses.

O-4 Tobacco-Free Schools

AASB supports banning use of tobacco products and electronic cigarettes in school vehicles, at school facilities and other public facilities when school-related functions are held.

O-5 School Safety

AASB supports making schools safe places to learn. To that end, AASB encourages school boards to:

- Adopt plans to ensure student and staff safety;
- Aggressively target “bullying” behavior;
- Ban unauthorized weapons on school premises;
- Educate students on the dangers of weapons;
- Involve community groups and agencies in school safety plans;
- Require regular inspection of school facilities and equipment;
- Encourage federal and state leaders to commit resources to violence prevention; and
- Join forces with community agencies to prevent/reduce gang activity.

O-6 Waste Reduction

AASB encourages school boards to implement waste reduction, conservation and recycling measures and encourages student and community involvement in efforts to protect and preserve the environment.

O-7 Use of School Facilities

AASB supports school board determination of school board facility use.

O-8 Privatization/Collectives

AASB encourages school boards to explore innovative relationships with private firms, other school boards and agencies to provide improved, efficient and effective services.

O-9 Portable Buildings

AASB advocates replacement of portable classrooms in an equitable, practical and prudent manner. AASB opposes requiring state waivers for local decisions to use portable classrooms.

O-10 Cyber Security/School Technology Operations

AASB urges proactive efforts to address cybersecurity threats to protect school system data, operations and infrastructure. AASB encourages a multi-pronged approach encompassing threat assessment, prevention, emergency plans, mitigation and response to cyberattacks. AASB urges each school system to put in place critical components to ensure technology security including:

- A computer network administrator to manage technology operations and maintenance;
- Employee cybersecurity training;
- Antivirus software;
- System network back up;

- Firewall protection; and
- Content filters.

AASB supports accountability through annual audits and security reports.

Section 7: Unclassified

U-1 Home Schooling

AASB opposes home schooling without requiring state certified teachers and state monitoring of student progress in accordance with state accountability standards. AASB opposes allowing home-schooled students to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities. AASB urges the state Department of Education to tighten regulations and oversight of home school programs.

U-2 Licensing for Non-Public Schools

AASB urges strict licensing for non-public schools. AASB believes non-public schools should conform to state laws relating to the health and safety of students.

U-3 Community Engagement

AASB advocates the development and implementation of a community engagement plan targeting school board relationships with constituents, parents, news media, education and parent organizations and government agencies. The plan should engage, support and acknowledge community input and partnerships that support efforts of the school system.

U-4 Governmental Relations

AASB encourages school board members to communicate with local legislators, state board members, and congressional representatives to assure quality educational programs. AASB encourages school board members to participate in AASB's advocacy network and other grassroots lobbying efforts.

U-5 AASB Programs

AASB encourages school board participation and utilization of association programs.

U-6 School-Business Partnerships

AASB encourages school boards to participate in school-business partnerships.

U-7 Parent and Family Involvement/Education

AASB encourages school boards to implement programs to increase parental and family involvement in schools, such as establishing regular parent-teacher conferences and conducting parenting classes. AASB encourages school boards to participate in the Statewide Parenting Month.

U-8 Education Summits

AASB encourages state and local education summits focusing attention on removing obstacles to learning and improving education in Alabama and establishing broad-based community support for these improvements.

U-9 Interagency Cooperation

AASB encourages school boards to promote interagency cooperation among social service agencies and urges school board members to serve on state and national commissions addressing intergovernmental relations.

U-10 Public Support and Understanding

AASB urges statewide efforts to promote higher citizen awareness of the value of education for our state.

U-11 Advertising

AASB urges school boards to establish policies regulating the types of products which can be advertised in schools and at school events and use of advertising in curriculum material.

U-12 Adult Programs/Community Education

AASB supports providing quality educational programs to meet community and family needs.

U-13 Collaborative Efforts

AASB encourages efforts to collaborate with organizations with similar goals and to coordinate programs and efforts which:

- Enhance relationships and understanding between and among minority and other school board members, their local boards, local communities and state school board associations; and
- Provide means for active participation of minority board members to dialogue on educational issues related to the growth and development of minority children and a better education for all children.

U-14 Community Service Learning

AASB encourages school boards to implement community involvement programs. AASB advocates service learning within the K-12 curriculum. AASB encourages school boards to promote service learning concepts through their policies.