



# **BELIEFS**

## **OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

(Amended April 10, 2026, NSBA’s Delegate Assembly, San Antonio, TX)

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The public school boards of America, united in their school boards associations and members into the National School Boards Association and its Association Members, believe that education is a civil right and is necessary to the dignity and freedom of the American people. Further, the public school boards believe that all students should have equal access to an education that maximizes their individual potential.

### **MISSION OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

To equip school board members with resources to advocate for each student in each community, in partnership with our members.

### **NSBA’S VISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION**

The National School Boards Association believes local school boards are the nation’s preeminent expression of grass roots democracy and that this form of governance of the public schools is fundamental to the continued success of public education. Adequately funded, student-centered public schools will provide, in a safe and supportive environment, a comprehensive education for the whole child and will prepare all of America’s children for a lifetime of learning in a diverse, democratic society and an interdependent global economy. By focusing on raising student achievement and by actively engaging the community, school boards will provide leadership for academic success in the nation’s public schools. America’s school boards, by creating a vision of excellence and equity for every child, will provide performance-oriented schools that meet today’s problems as well as the challenges of tomorrow.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **CONTROL AND SUPPORT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

#### **Section 1 – State and Local Governance of Education**

Public education is the responsibility of the states and of the local school boards created thereunder. NSBA believes that to help all students achieve state standards and reach their full academic potential, federal, state, and local policy makers should:

- provide the highest quality education for each student, and equal educational opportunity for all children;

- engage parents, guardians, and community stakeholders by involving them in public education, and keeping them informed of its critical importance to our nation’s success in today’s competitive global economy, and our capacity to govern ourselves in a free, democratic society;
- eliminate barriers to learning through policies that coordinate all services for youth at all government levels and enable schools to meet the needs of young people more effectively;
- recruit and retain high quality and effective teachers and administrators, with an emphasis on increasing racial diversity among educators;
- accelerate investment in education research and development to achieve breakthroughs in school improvement through data-based decision-making and professional development;
- integrate technology fully into the learning process of all students;
- ensure that all children receive the services for which they are eligible; and to which they are entitled; and,
- require full funding of all federal and state mandated programs.

### **1.1 School District Organization**

School districts should be organized so they can provide the best education programs for all public elementary and secondary students. School district governance should be vested in a local school board, accountable to the local community. As a whole, school boards should be diverse and representative of the community. School boards should have the authority to develop restructuring strategies, as they deem appropriate.

### **1.2 Fiscal Independence**

To discharge their responsibilities properly, local school boards must control the funds used to operate schools. Therefore, school districts should be fiscally independent.

### **1.3 Accountability**

School boards are accountable to the total community for providing programs of educational excellence and demonstrating accountability through student achievement. School boards should recognize and emphasize that educational quality is a function of what students know and can do as a result of schooling. When needs are identified and/or student achievement standards are not met, NSBA supports the development of prevention and intervention policies that include utilizing the background knowledge of local school boards for implementation by school districts. NSBA also urges state education policy makers to provide the funding and flexibility necessary to help all students and schools achieve their academic goals.

### **1.4 State-Local Education Agencies**

To maintain effective local control of, and accountability for, public elementary and secondary schools, separate state and local agencies responsible for public education are needed.

## **1.5 Interagency Collaboration for Student Services**

State and local governments should develop programs and adopt youth policies that coordinate the delivery of services to students such as counseling, health, nutrition, family support, and juvenile justice. These services must be coordinated and focus on the total needs of the child.

## **1.6 Appointment of School Board Members to Education Policy Forums**

Governors, state legislatures and other state officials should recognize school boards as the governors of education and should appoint school board members to commissions, advisory committees or other forums that directly or indirectly affect the development of education policy.

## **1.7 Term Limitation of Elected Local Public Officials**

NSBA opposes any effort to limit the number of terms that school board members can serve.

## **1.8 State and Local Laws Requiring More Than a 50 Percent Voter Approval on School Issues**

NSBA believes that state and local referendum provisions that require state and local school financing issues to be approved by more than a simple majority vote are unfair and inconsistent with the principles of democracy.

## **1.9 School Governance Takeovers**

NSBA is opposed to takeovers of local schools/school districts. Similarly, NSBA opposes efforts by any political jurisdictions to remove, diminish or interfere with the authority of local governing boards and districts. State and municipal governments should provide the resources and technical assistance needed to raise student achievement. Mayors and school boards should respectively address their core missions and define common areas on which to collaborate in support of public education and to the benefit of the overall community.

Prior to any intervention, state, municipal, and territorial governments in collaboration with education policy makers (which must include state school boards associations) should establish specific criteria, conditions, timelines and procedures under which:

- (a) intervention in local schools/districts may occur;
- (b) local schools/districts shall receive the necessary resources, support, and time period to improve; and,
- (c) local schools/districts must be returned to local school board governance.

NSBA recognizes the essential connection between schools and their communities. Communities must consider becoming partners with public school districts and support local initiatives for dropout prevention, at-risk students, early childhood learning, and to assist schools by providing children with safe housing, proper nutrition and quality healthcare, to ensure that these out-of-school factors support children's abilities to learn. NSBA believes such issues provide a role for civic leaders and elected or appointed officials and/or policy makers in the education system.

NSBA believes that to help all students reach their academic potential, local civic leaders and policy-makers should:

- ensure that neighborhoods are safe and free from crime, and that students have safe access to and from school;
- assist in providing students with access to healthcare and other support services, including the expansion of community and parent outreach centers to help parents/guardians access services;
- support teacher recruitment efforts by addressing obstacles, such as housing costs that serve as deterrents to providing a quality teaching force; and,
- work effectively with school districts to develop joint use projects to make the best use of public space.

### **1.10 Charter Schools**

NSBA recognizes “charter schools” as one of several mechanisms available to local school boards, provided that the local school board:

- (a) retains sole authority to grant the charter and receives full funding for monitoring costs;
- (b) determines accountability, such as determining the criteria that will be used in establishing the charter;
- (c) retains authority to decertify or not renew the charter of any school that fails to meet criteria set forth in the charter or as otherwise specified by the local school board, including but not limited to a requirement that charter schools demonstrate improved student achievement;
- (d) has the authority to ensure that a charter school does not foster racial, ethnic, social, religious or economic segregation or segregation of children by disability, ability, sexual orientation or academic performance; and,
- (e) determines that funding for the other schools under its jurisdiction will not be adversely affected.

In cases where entities other than the local school district authorize the charter, the law should require that all schools receiving public funds meet the same standards of accountability and that funds for traditional local schools are not diminished or reduced by the funding mechanism for charter schools.

## **ARTICLE I, SECTION 2 STATE AND LOCAL FINANCING OF EDUCATION**

### **2.1 Financial Support of Public Education**

NSBA recognizes that it is a state and local responsibility to provide adequate and equitable funding for public education. States must assure that taxpayers, individual and corporate, contribute a proportionate share to the financial support of public education.

## **2.2 State Support of Education**

Each state must guarantee to its local school districts a level of financial support that:

- (a) ensures adequate and equitable educational opportunity for all children;
- (b) adequately supports individual school efforts to enhance teaching and learning;
- (c) facilitates students' efforts to increase their academic proficiency in core subject areas and achieve state learning standards;
- (d) sustains a steadily improving state support for education; and,
- (e) maximizes local discretion over expenditures.

Any method of state funding must ensure that all state mandates are fully funded and that local districts are permitted to raise additional local funds to supplement state funding.

## **2.3 Tax-Exempt Financing**

NSBA supports the utilization of tax-exempt bonds for construction and other capital improvement projects approved by traditional local school boards. Further, NSBA opposes any efforts to limit the issuance, tax-exempt status and advance refunding of such bonds through changes in the federal tax code.

## **2.4 Use of Public Funds**

NSBA believes that public funds raised by general taxation for education purposes should be administered efficiently by public officials, and that public funds for elementary and secondary education should be spent only for public education.

## **2.5 Non-Public Education**

NSBA recognizes and upholds the right of any group to establish and maintain schools so long as such schools are fully financed by their own supporters. Private and home schools should be subject to governmental regulation that assures the health, safety, academic growth and/or achievement, and well-being of students, a minimum standard of instruction under state law, and adherence to the Constitution and laws of the United States. Private schools or other entities that receive public subsidies, funding, or support under state or federal law, whether directly or indirectly, should be held to the same reporting and accountability standards, including the same annual assessments of student proficiency, required of public schools as a condition of continued eligibility to receive public subsidies or funding. Schools that receive any public funding should be subject to the same statutory and constitutional requirements as public schools.

## **2.6 School Finance Systems**

NSBA supports efforts by states and Association Members to redesign state and local school finance systems to ensure adequate resources, to make opportunities equitable, and to align resources more closely with the goal of educating all students to higher performance standards. NSBA supports school finance decision-making by school boards and opposes federal and state school finance legislative initiatives that limit the role of school boards.

## **2.7 Contracting Out**

NSBA upholds the right of school boards to pursue the most efficient and cost-effective means of delivering education and related services, including contracts with outside providers, and urges local school boards to retain all necessary decision making authority when contracting with private companies in the operation of public schools.

## **2.8 Pension Program Accountability to Local School Boards**

NSBA believes all pension programs for school district employees should be independently governed in order to protect their fiscal integrity and to prevent the diversion of those funds to other uses.

# **ARTICLE II, SECTION 1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS**

## **1.1 Philosophy of Local Board Responsibility**

Local school boards are an essential and enduring part of the American institution of representative government. Directly accountable to the people, local school boards are the educational policy makers for the public schools in local communities. They are advocates for local public education with other local, state, and federal governmental entities. The American system of public education best meets the needs of our students, communities, states, and nation when all local school boards recognize and meet their full legal, civil, social, economic, moral, and ethical responsibilities.

## **1.2 Key Work of School Boards**

NSBA urges all levels of government, parents/guardians, community groups, business leaders, and the media to support the efforts of local school systems to enable each child to achieve at the child's full potential. Local public school boards are encouraged to demonstrate excellence in governance and to provide strong leadership in order to raise student achievement.

NSBA believes that school boards should concentrate on raising student achievement by focusing on these five key areas:

### **1. VISION**

Effective school boards establish a clear vision with high expectations for quality teaching and learning that supports strong student outcomes. They establish clear and specific goals to move districts forward.

### **2. ACCOUNTABILITY**

Effective school boards ensure high academic standards, transparency, and accountability. True accountability depends on open decision making, community engagement and support, and receptivity to new ideas and constructive criticism.

### 3. POLICY AND BOARD OPERATIONS

Effective school boards use policy to sustainably exercise power to serve students. Through policy, school boards establish a set of cohesive guidelines able to transform vision into reality.

### 4. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Effective school boards governing through public advocacy and community engagement, sharing their concerns and actions with the public. Community leadership that builds public support is vital to implement the board's vision.

### 5. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each in their respective roles with strong collaboration and mutual trust. Both the school board and the superintendent have essential leadership roles that are interconnected, but unique.

## **1.3 School Board Development**

NSBA supports Association Member professional development programs for school board members. Training and professional development for school board members should aim to increase board members' knowledge and awareness of (1) federal, state, and local legislation and judicial decisions that affect the operation of local districts and schools, and (2) new educational reform initiatives and research-based instructional strategies that enhance student achievement. Thus, board members will be better equipped to lead and guide district and school staff, and make educational decisions that best support a student's ability to achieve high academic standards. School boards are encouraged to inform their constituents about the need for board development activities, workshops, seminars, and conferences.

## **1.4 Board Self-Evaluation**

School boards should conduct a regular self-evaluation and develop an action plan for continued improvement. A comprehensive, ongoing program of continuing education should be part of that plan.

## **1.5 Implementation of Federal Laws**

It is the responsibility of local school boards to provide leadership to meet the goals and objectives of federal laws, and to ensure that school board members, administrators, principals, teachers and other staff are knowledgeable regarding implementation requirements. It is also the responsibility of the local school board to engage the community in discussions regarding the impact of the federal law on student achievement as well as the fiscal and personnel resources that will be needed.

## **1.6 Civility**

NSBA believes public officials at all levels of government should model civil discourse in their deliberations, allowing for the thoughtful, beneficial, productive exchange of ideas and perspectives. NSBA urges school boards to provide opportunities for students to develop their skills in collaborative engagement, conflict resolution, and consensus building, including but not limited to restorative practices, and for school board members to model these skills in their own conduct.

## **ARTICLE II, SECTION 2**

### **PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

#### **2.1 Leading the Change in Public Education**

NSBA, its member associations, and local school boards should focus resources and leadership training opportunities on innovative and transformational strategies to amplify and further advance the success of America's public schools and the students they serve.

#### **2.2 Commitment to Professional Development**

School boards, administrators, and teachers should work cooperatively to improve teacher evaluation and performance, and strengthen administrative leadership capabilities. School boards and Association Members should continue to take a leadership role in improving the quality of teaching and administration in our schools. School boards and their associations should continue to support excellence in teacher education, development of standards, hiring practices, in-service education for personnel consistent with district goals and priorities, and constructive evaluation of administrative and teaching personnel.

#### **2.3 Teacher Education**

NSBA supports methods of teacher training that are aligned with research-based school improvement strategies and are responsive to the academic needs of students and the overall interests of public schools. Local school boards should develop strong partnerships with institutions of higher education to improve the quality of teacher and administrative training programs while supporting veteran teachers' ongoing development. Special attention should be paid to providing teachers and administrators with the time and resources necessary to prepare and implement the curriculum and instruction strategies or education reform models that have been selected.

#### **2.4 Teacher Accountability**

NSBA supports the use of qualified and effective teachers to teach students at all levels of achievement. Teacher licensing and certification should be based on rigorous standards that objectively assess teachers' knowledge and application of subject matter, children's development, classroom management, instructional techniques, and other fundamental research-based teaching tools.

#### **2.5 State Certification Requirements**

NSBA encourages local school boards to support instructional employees and other professional staff in their efforts to secure the training and required qualifications necessary to assure continued employment in their current position.

#### **2.6 Teacher Tenure Reform**

NSBA supports tenure reform with the goal of teacher employment based on high standards and improved student performance. Standards should be developed by boards of education in conjunction with administrators, teachers, parents/guardians, and community members.

## **2.7 Teacher Compensation**

NSBA supports efforts by states, Association Members, and school districts to redesign and implement teacher compensation systems that are linked to the goals of increasing student achievement and high standards. To attract and retain highly-qualified teachers, school boards should seek and support flexible compensation programs to reward teachers who have the qualifications and experience to teach students, especially in the most challenged, hard-to-staff schools and in the content areas of any schools experiencing shortages of qualified personnel.

## **2.8 Teacher and Principal Evaluations**

NSBA supports efforts by states, Association Members, school administrators, and teachers to work together to develop and implement a fair evaluation system for classroom teachers and principals that includes student performance.

## **2.9 Professional Development Plan**

NSBA believes that school boards should support professional development plans for teachers and administrators that include the following elements:

- (a) the purposes and benefits of professional development;
- (b) the current research on the characteristics of effective professional development activities;
- (c) identification of school system, school, and individual needs;
- (d) alignment with the district's goals;
- (e) the processes that should be used to plan, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive program; and,
- (f) the current resources available for professional development.

## **2.10 Professional Standards**

NSBA supports proven voluntary national certification for teachers that have a demonstrated impact on raising student achievement. NSBA encourages and supports the development of a voluntary national certification program for administrators.

## **2.11 Equality of Employment**

Each individual is worthy of opportunity, dignity, and respect. School district policies and practices should ensure that recruitment, employment, training, retention, and promotion are provided without regard to age, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, color, or socioeconomic status. NSBA believes the right of privacy for all students, faculty, and staff should be respected. NSBA believes school boards should implement aggressive strategies to increase the racial and gender diversity of the school district workforce.

## **2.12 Responsibility for Uninterrupted Education During Employee Job Actions**

School boards should develop plans of action to ensure the uninterrupted education of students during emergency situations. Strikes, sanctions, boycotts, or other concerted actions that interfere with the orderly functioning of the public school system are improper procedures when used by

public school employees. When such actions occur, special emphasis should be placed on communicating with staff and the community.

### **2.13 School Boards as Employers**

NSBA supports the application of federal and state labor and employment laws to school boards, collectively the largest employer in the nation, in a manner that recognizes the unique employment concerns of schools to ensure all students receive a high quality education in a safe environment.

### **2.14 Mental Health and Wellness Resources for School District Staff**

School districts are encouraged to develop policies and regulations that support mental health and wellness resources for the school district workforce. Mental health issues are not only detrimental to individual employees, but they can impact the workplace in the form of absenteeism, poor performance, substance abuse, work-related accidents, and workplace violence or harassment. NSBA believes school boards should implement effective policies that support employees and help to foster a healthy and productive learning environment.

## **ARTICLE II, SECTION 3 COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND EQUITY**

### **3.1 Diversity and Equity**

School boards should provide resources that recognize the needs and strengths of each student and facilitate access to a high-quality, safe, and supportive education that prepares students for success. NSBA urges education professionals and policy makers at all levels of government to promote and support the significant benefits of learning in racially, ethnically, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse settings by creating and/or adopting an equity policy and associated regulations to promote and support the commitment to equity and excellence for each student.

### **3.2 Non-Discrimination**

NSBA believes that school boards should ensure that students and school staff are not subjected to discrimination on the basis of socioeconomic status, race, color, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, age, pregnancy, disability, or sexual orientation.

### **3.3 Quality Integrated Education**

The United States is a complex, racially diverse society. School boards should take positive action to support integration and to avert re-segregation in their districts, individual schools, and programs to promote equality of educational opportunities. Stereotyping should be eliminated from educational materials and school district policies and procedures. The total school environment, including its curriculum, should reflect and encourage respect for the multicultural nature of the world.

### **3.4 Integrating Cultural Practices of Tribal Nations**

NSBA believes, to integrate cultural practices into the educational experience of its tribal nation students, that school boards should consider the inclusion of tribal cultural activities, such as ceremonies, seasonal observances, language instruction, and traditional arts, during instructional

hours. These activities shall be coordinated in consultation with tribes, elders, cultural leaders, and school administration to ensure alignment with academic goals and cultural integrity.

### **3.5 Equity in Gifted & Talented Programs**

NSBA supports and encourages each school board to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the admission criteria used to identify gifted and talented children, and if necessary, make revisions as needed to be more inclusive. NSBA believes that exceptional academic ability and/or exceptional talent in the arts or specific subject areas are qualities that transcend all races, incomes, and family circumstances.

### **3.6 Achievement Gap and Graduation Rate**

NSBA supports state and local school boards' efforts to develop, design, and implement initiatives with measurable outcomes that close the educational achievement gap and improve graduation rates for all students. A special focus should address the causes of, and solutions to, the underachievement of any student, including, but not limited to African American, Hispanic, Native American, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. NSBA urges federal, state, and local governments to provide funding for the efforts.

### **3.7 School Board Leadership on the Issue of Race, Culture, and Diversity**

School board members, as community leaders, should encourage and promote productive dialogue about diversity including but not limited to socio-economic status, culture, gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical and mental abilities, religious beliefs, and political beliefs in their communities, model and encourage inclusive thinking and behavior, and provide credible and balanced information on issues of socio-economic status, culture, gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical and mental abilities, religious beliefs, and political beliefs, ultimately creating positive change.

### **3.8 Federal Efforts to Reduce and Address the Impact of Poverty**

As school board members advocate for greater resources to effectively address the effects of poverty on our nation's students, NSBA urges Congress and the Administration to target a greater concentration of resources among federal agencies that will help mitigate and address the impact of poverty on students. NSBA supports the establishment of an effective, coordinated interagency structure to ensure seamless delivery of resources to our public school districts and other state and local agencies that serve our students is needed to meet the needs of all students and help end the cycle of poverty.

### **3.9 Opposition to Hate Crimes and Violent Acts Against Individuals of Color and/or Minorities in School**

NSBA opposes hate speech, hate crimes, hate motivated crimes, and violent acts. NSBA condemns and takes a firm stance against any and all forms of violence, threats of violence, hate, hate-motivated actions, hate speech, or violent crimes towards race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability, particularly regarding minorities in a school setting. NSBA acknowledges that such acts can directly or indirectly affect school environment, classroom environment, student achievement, and student behavior. Further, NSBA encourages schools to develop policies outlining their condemnation of such acts, to develop programs that will address

the occurrence of any hate crime, and to assist in developing a culture that respects differences and celebrates diversity.

### **3.10 Anti-Hate Speech**

NSBA believes that all students deserve to learn in an environment that is safe, affirming, and free of bias and discrimination. NSBA denounces the use of words or images that harass and directly attack individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender or gender expression, disability, or any other aspect of identity.

NSBA believes that when students or adults speak explicit hate language at school, it is the responsibility of the school district to actively respond to these incidents.

NSBA urges boards to foster school climates where differences are appreciated and not used to ridicule, single out, intimidate, disrespect, or exclude different groups. We recognize that these injustices can have a negative impact on the educational experience that we expect for each child.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION**

#### **Section 1—Philosophy of Federal Role in Education**

There are educational goals and concerns that transcend the boundaries of local school districts and states. These include improvements in student achievement and the attainment of high standards by all student groups, the elimination of widespread disparity in educational opportunities among students, improvements in the physical and mental health and safety of schoolchildren, and the intelligent participation in the democratic process by all citizens. NSBA encourages federal, state, and local governments to adopt education as a civil right and to work closely with other organizations to achieve this goal.

NSBA believes that national and state leaders and lawmakers must fulfill their responsibility to support students and schools by providing adequate federal and state funding and encouraging business and community involvement in education. States and districts should not be required to implement any federal legislation impacting education until funding amounts authorized in the legislation are appropriated. NSBA also believes that state and federal governments should focus on supporting comprehensive education reform which addresses:

- (a) providing resources to ensure that all children receive appropriate early childhood education;
- (b) encouraging creative and critical thinking;
- (c) supporting efforts to attract, provide professional development for, and retain high quality and effective teachers;
- (d) supporting state efforts to ensure that what is taught and what is tested are important, reasonable and challenging to every student and what is tested is aligned with what students are taught;
- (e) providing funding for the development of research based instruction in all areas of curriculum;
- (f) supporting efforts to focus on the social, emotional, physical, and mental health of students; and,
- (g) factors outside the classroom that impact student learning.

## **Section 2—Federal Funding for Public Education**

NSBA believes that full funding of federal public education programs is an essential step in improving educational opportunities for all children. NSBA supports federal legislative and regulatory efforts to ensure that the allocation of federal funding for school districts is directly utilized for school-based services, with strict protections to ensure that statutory caps on federal funding reserved for state administrative purposes are adhered to thoroughly. NSBA urges Congress to ensure that oversight is provided that addresses the goals for program administration and does not extend or expand state authority in the distribution or suballocation process so that funding is allocated to school districts in the manner that Congress intended. NSBA believes education funding should be of the highest federal priority to ensure that our nation’s students have the opportunity to meet the challenge of world-class standards and responsible citizenship through these priorities:

- (a) improving equity in educational opportunity by making schools with significant indices of poverty a high priority for increased federal aid;
- (b) increasing federal special education aid to meet Congress’ obligation to fund 40 percent of the cost of educating children under the requirements of the federal law, and supporting the placement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) within mandatory spending portions of the budget to ensure that, over a period of time, the obligation will be met as a federal budgetary priority;
- (c) ensuring that the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) are fully funded as authorized in the law;
- (d) supporting teacher preparation programs at colleges or other post-secondary institutions that lead to certification or licensing of teachers in accordance with the ESEA provisions for teacher qualification; NSBA also seeks increased federal support to provide resources for districts to address the teacher qualification certification requirements of ESEA, including funding to assist in teacher recruitment and retention;
- (e) ensuring that school districts serving immigrant students or Limited English Proficient/Multi Language Learners (LEP/MLL) are provided with the necessary resources for those students as they make the transition into our society;
- (f) providing direct allocations to local school districts whenever possible;
- (g) relaxing burdensome regulatory and paperwork mandates, and enabling districts to use a combination of federal programs in order to target these funding streams to significant local concerns;
- (h) maintaining other educational technology funding programs, with a priority of helping school districts that lack local resources, acquire the infrastructure, hardware, software, and staff training necessary to provide a technology rich instructional environment;
- (i) providing funding to advance the application of technology to teaching and learning while connecting the students and the schools to employment opportunities and educational experiences available in the work environment;
- (j) providing funding for technology resources for school districts to integrate technology into the curriculum, enable the use of computer-based assessments aligned with state standards, and adjust curriculum and instructional practices;

- (k) providing funding to meet school infrastructure and personnel needs to improve the safety and health of all students and to improve the quality of the learning environment;
- (l) establishing, at the local school board's option, a needs-based federal funding program to reduce school district costs for public school construction and renovation;
- (m) providing full funding for Impact Aid; to local school districts to help support the education of all students whose parents or legal guardians reside and/or work on federal tax-exempt property or within local school districts that include federal tax-exempt property;
- (n) providing full funding for all federal mandates;
- (o) providing funding to ensure that migrant children have the resources necessary to reach full academic potential;
- (p) modifying provisions for the Title I funding formula so that a hold harmless provision is created, ensuring that no school district receives less money as a result of census or other changes during the school district's fiscal year;
- (q) providing funding for the development of research-based instruction;
- (r) enacting legislation to provide financial resources to school districts to meet the rising costs of energy and explore alternative energy sources and energy cost-saving measures;
- (s) providing full funding for the Native American Language Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-477);
- (t) providing funding for programs that help all students learn multiple languages while attending public schools;
- (u) providing funding for voluntary foreign language programs in elementary schools;
- (v) providing funding for community-based mental and emotional health services for youth and incentives for collaborative systems of care; and,
- (w) providing full funding to meet the costs associated with the development and maintenance of state longitudinal data systems that track student's performance on assessments.

## **2.1 Refugee Resettlement Funding**

NSBA believes federal funding should be provided to local education agencies for students who are placed in local education agencies through the federal Refugee Resettlement Program. School impact grants and other grants under the office of refugee resettlement should be expanded to allow school districts to directly apply for funding when impacted by federally placed refugee students, both through family relocations and through the unaccompanied children program. The federal government needs to provide appropriate levels of funding for students being placed into school districts under the federal Refugee Services Program in order to ensure that these students can receive all the appropriate education services they need to succeed.

## **Section 3—Federal Authorization and Appropriations Process**

NSBA supports the provision of adequate funding and efficient procedures for financing federal public education programs and urges Congress to:

- (a) eliminate the practice of imposing federal unfunded and/or underfunded mandates on states and local education agencies;

- (b) make full funding of mandated public education programs the top priority in adopting the federal budget, and fully fund all federal public education programs;
- (c) meet the funding levels authorized as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA);
- (d) oppose general budget reductions by formulations that circumvent Congress' responsibility to set funding priorities among government functions;
- (e) consider the establishment of a separate capital budget to conform with present budget practices of local and state governments;
- (f) recognize local cash-flow requirements by not deferring or rescinding previously enacted appropriations;
- (g) ensure that changes in federal tax laws do not adversely affect public schools; and,
- (h) exempt education programs from across-the-board cuts that often affect discretionary spending.

#### **Section 4—Federal Policies**

NSBA supports federal education policies that make the education of all children a national priority, while recognizing that education is primarily a state and local function for which the federal role should be one of support and assistance rather than direct regulation. Federal legislation and policies should recognize:

- (a) the responsibility of the federal government to provide for excellence and equity through its support of public elementary and secondary education;
- (b) the value of supplemental programs that address local and national educational objectives by meeting the academic needs of all students, and the federal responsibility to help fund these programs when and where they are needed;
- (c) the educational, physical, social, emotional, and economic needs of the whole child and the child's family and be designed to meet these varied needs;
- (d) the need to distribute funds to local school districts equitably and based on student need;
- (e) the need for local school districts to have the primary role in developing accountability procedures for federal education programs in local schools;
- (f) the need to establish limits on the regulatory authority of the Department of Education and other federal agencies as they pertain to education;
- (g) the cost of all federal education programs and the costs associated with implementing federal mandates that affect public education and fully fund these costs accordingly; and,
- (h) the impact of federal immigration policies on local public education and fully fund the additional programs and services that are required as a result of these policies.

#### **4.1 Protect and Promote State and Local Control of Education**

Federal policies should protect state and local control and accountability as follows:

- (a) Any federal funding allocated to the state level should be administered by the state agency through local school boards in accordance with state policy and without restrictions other than simple accounting of receipts and disbursements. Controls should be placed in federal legislation to

limit the amount of federal funds used for state administration to those amounts that are absolutely necessary to perform mandatory federal requirements and provide adequate funds to local school districts for the management of the program.

(b) Any federal program involving education should be under authority of the local educational agency as defined in federal law and wherever possible should avoid diverting funds from and disrupting public elementary and secondary school systems.

(c) The President, Congress, and state, territorial, and other government entities should recognize school boards as lay governors of public education. Federal law should require the appointment of school board members to commissions, advisory committees, or other bodies that in any way directly or indirectly affect the development of educational policy, funding, regulations, and guidelines.

(d) Any national test should be administered on a strictly voluntary basis and with no adverse impact on the receipt of federal funds for those school districts that do not choose to participate. Any national test should be conducted, developed, and administered by an entity other than the federal government. NSBA believes that testing of students is primarily a state and local concern that should be done at consistent intervals to measure student progress. Federal requirements for periodic assessment of student progress should be satisfied by meeting state mandated testing requirements.

(e) NSBA opposes attempts by the federal and state government to expand the scope of information that it collects from school districts in a manner that is confusing, burdensome, and conflicts with the responsibilities of school districts and the rights of students unless the data collection is authorized by the statute.

## **4.2 Unfunded Mandates**

NSBA opposes unfunded and/or underfunded mandates imposed by federal laws and regulations. To address this issue, NSBA endorses the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 requiring Congressional budget office estimates of projected costs and the government's ability to fund the new legislation that mandates action by state and local government. NSBA further endorses provisions of the Act, which require a study of current mandates and their impact on state and local governments. NSBA urges Congress to modify the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 so that it applies to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and other relevant statutes.

## **4.3. Vouchers/Tuition Tax Credits**

NSBA believes public tax dollars should only support public schools. NSBA opposes any efforts to subsidize tuition or expenses at elementary or secondary private schools, religious schools, or private home/correspondence schools with public tax dollars. Specifically, NSBA opposes vouchers, tax credits, and tax subsidies for use at non-public K-12 schools.

## **4.4 Intergovernmental Tax Policy**

NSBA urges Congress to support federal tax legislation to strengthen state and local efforts to fund public education, and to reject proposals that would negatively affect those efforts.

## **Section 5—Federal Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 General Leadership and Support**

The federal government, through the Department of Education, should support, promote, and advocate on behalf of public education at the national, state, and local levels. The Department of Education should:

- (a) be an advocate for American public education by providing a positive image of our education system;
- (b) provide leadership in seeking increased federal funding of public education;
- (c) be a clearinghouse to coordinate national education information;
- (d) appraise the educational environment and report findings to responsible agencies;
- (e) enter into educational research programs with qualified profit and non-profit organizations;
- (f) provide safeguards against federal control of curricula in American schools;
- (g) offer consultative services and technical assistance to the states and local school districts;
- (h) coordinate international educational activities in which the U.S. government is interested;
- (i) coordinate educational and related programs of all federal agencies;
- (j) publicize programs which have been evaluated and judged to have excellent outcomes;
- (k) provide sufficient time between the issuance of regulations and mandated compliance with regulations;
- (l) ensure consistent rulings from state to state on regulatory interpretations; and,
- (m) encourage and promote collaborative efforts among all levels of government and the nation's educational organizations and support groups.

### **5.2 Special Areas of Concern**

(a) **Urban Communities.** Most urban communities are faced with large concentrations of social and economic challenges. The attendant social services needed to improve student academic achievement create an added financial burden on the local urban district. The solution may require direct funding from federal and state sources to improve student academic achievement and assist in recruitment and retention of high quality and effective teachers.

(b) **Rural Communities.** Rural, isolated, and small districts have special instructional delivery challenges that place an added burden on these local districts. The solution may require direct funding from federal and state sources to improve student academic achievement and assist in recruitment and retention of high quality and effective teachers.

(c) **Career and Technical Education.** It is critical that the federal government provide necessary support to ensure that all students have access to a high quality career and technical education with a strong academic component. Our nation needs to prepare and maintain a productive and skilled labor force, and our students need the necessary skills for employability. NSBA resolves that additional funding is needed to expose students to career & pathway opportunities through field trips which identify community services; hospitals, government /legislative proceedings, fire/emt divisions, libraries, post office, police stations, agricultural & produce markets, banks, restaurants & bakeries, automotive, marine, aviation sites etc.

(d) Educational Technology. NSBA urges states and the federal government to ensure adequate funding so that all students are provided equitable access to educational technology. Educational technology resources should include: (i) “E-rate” programs and other federal initiatives designed to advance the infusion of modern technology into teaching and learning; and (ii) initiatives designed to address teacher training in technology, software development, affordable hardware acquisition, and technology infrastructure.

(e) Adult Education and Training. NSBA supports programs that provide basic education and skills training for adults. Where such programs are a requirement in order to remain eligible for public assistance and employment, the federal government should fully fund all basic education skills training and student support services such as childcare and early childhood education.

(f) Special Education. NSBA supports efforts to ensure that increased federal funding for special education does not result in a reduction of state-level support for education.

(g) Access to Higher Education. NSBA supports efforts to address the increased cost of higher education and resulting student debt that impacts access to students and their ability to participate.

## **ARTICLE IV THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

Local school boards should develop strategic educational plans and then establish procedures and board policies designed to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of all educational programs.

### **Section 1—Desired Learning Outcomes**

#### **1.1 Public Education**

NSBA supports locally elected school boards in expanding public school programs to meet the needs of students in a rapidly changing world. Local school boards should be encouraged to implement innovative strategies and means of delivery within their publicly funded and publicly accountable school systems to better prepare students for the future.

#### **1.2 Comprehensive Education of Children**

NSBA recognizes the importance of the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children and encourages local school boards to adopt policies, pass resolutions, to ensure a well-rounded curriculum is available to all students, and to support effective practices toward that end.

#### **1.3 Access to Educational Opportunities**

Public schools should provide equitable access and ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills to succeed as contributing members of a rapidly changing, global society, regardless of factors such as race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic background, English proficiency, immigration status, socioeconomic status, or disability.

#### **1.4 Student Achievement in Reading**

Reading is absolutely necessary to a child’s success. NSBA believes it is essential for every child to learn to read at least at grade level and urges educators and policy makers to adopt balanced instructional approaches that are consistent with educational and child development research on

effective teaching and reading, while affirming the authority of local school boards to make decisions regarding grade level retention.

### **1.5 Student Achievement**

NSBA believes that all students should successfully complete a challenging K-12 curriculum in literacy, social studies, science, technology, arts, physical education, and mathematics.

### **1.6 Secondary Education**

Every effort must be made to facilitate and encourage all students to complete at least a high school education program. Where there is a continuing or increasingly low graduation rate among some populations, including, but not limited to, African American, Hispanic, and Native American students, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty, school boards should adopt policies, programs, and practices and provide resources to address the needs of these students. Efforts must also be made to encourage and direct students who do not obtain a high school diploma to complete an alternative high school experience.

### **1.7 Artificial Intelligence in Education**

NSBA believes that artificial intelligence has transformative potential in education, offering opportunities to enhance teaching, personalize learning, and streamline administrative tasks. At the same time, we are committed to its ethical and equitable use, ensuring transparency, safeguarding privacy, and addressing risks like bias and over-reliance on technology to create a future-ready, human-centered educational environment.

## **ARTICLE IV, SECTION 2 MAINTAINING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE**

NSBA believes that students must have safe and supportive climates and learning environments that support their opportunities to learn and that are free of abuse, violence, bullying, weapons, and harmful substances including alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. NSBA urges federal, state, and local governments, as well as parents/guardians, business, and the community, to cooperate fully with local school boards to eliminate violence, weapons, neglect, negative expectations, and harmful substances in schools and to ensure safe, crime-free schools. NSBA urges local school boards to incorporate into their policies and practices approaches that encourage and strengthen positive student attitudes in, and relationship to, school.

### **2.1 Safety and Health of Students, Employees, and Visitors**

NSBA encourages local school boards to recognize that prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and emergency response and recovery plans are critical to protect the safety and health of students, employees, and all who visit school facilities. Such plans should be developed and maintained in coordination with appropriate local, state, and federal agencies including local public health, police, fire departments, transit authorities, or other agencies and first responders, and should address environmental, health, and safety risks; the need for immunizations; and potential security breaches. NSBA encourages state legislatures to enact legislation to allow school boards and administrators to discuss matters related to safety in executive session.

## **2.2 Collaboration with Law Enforcement and/or School Resource Officers**

NSBA encourages school boards to foster collaboration and communication with law enforcement agencies. NSBA encourages school boards that place school resource officers in schools to create a culture of restorative justice practices. Districts should require annual training designed to prepare school resource officers such as provided by the National Association of School Resource Officers and consider and evaluate the roles and responsibilities of such officers.

## **2.3 Air and Water Quality**

NSBA urges local school boards to improve the learning environment including air and water quality in schools. NSBA supports voluntary state, municipal, and local school board partnerships that monitor and improve air and water quality affecting school grounds in order to ensure a healthy learning environment.

### **Water Stations**

NSBA believes that access to safe, clean, reliable water and safe sanitation are baseline conditions for health, prosperity, and wellbeing. However, water access remains out of reach of some of the most vulnerable people in the United States, which includes communities of color, lower-income people in rural areas, and tribal communities, among others. Better water access would allow vulnerable communities to thrive, and many child nutrition programs can offer a reliable source of safe and appealing drinking water for students who come from these communities.

NSBA believes that as a matter of public health, consumption of plain water is a healthy substitute for the sugary drinks that harm children’s oral health and contribute to their risk of developing type 2 diabetes and other metabolic diseases; obesity; and cardiovascular diseases. Fluoridated tap water has been proven to protect against dental caries.

NSBA believes that water is essential to maintain, optimize, and improve health of students in school districts and encourages public schools to adopt policies and regulations that ensure that safe and appealing drinking water is available to all students without charge and that schools provide such drinking water by either providing water bottle stations or some other source of safe, potable drinking water.

## **2.4 Food Allergies**

NSBA encourages local school boards to develop policies and crisis response plans which address food allergies.

## **2.5 Food, Blood, and Airborne Illness Prevention and Response**

NSBA encourages local school boards to address in their policies and crisis response plans the prevention of, and response to, foodborne illness outbreaks and outbreaks of illnesses from airborne and bloodborne pathogens.

## **2.6 School Climate Assessment**

NSBA recognizes the importance of a positive school climate in raising student achievement. To that end, NSBA urges school boards to assess the school climate and establish goals for its improvement.

## **2.7 Student Conduct and Due Process Policies**

School boards should enact and implement written policies that set rigorous standards for student conduct to maintain an optimal learning environment. Written policies on student and parental rights and responsibilities should be established that are in accord with federal and state laws and establish due process procedures for the administration of these policies.

## **2.8 Student Discipline and Exclusionary Practices**

NSBA urges local school boards to continue to analyze data with regard to student discipline. NSBA further urges school boards to 1) increase the use of other proven intervention and prevention strategies to maximize the opportunities for all students to have a safe and successful in-school experience; 2) consider out of school disciplinary practices as a last resort to address behavioral issues in schools to the extent school safety is not jeopardized; and 3) work toward reducing suspension and expulsion of students by using strategies such as restorative practices.

## **2.9 Elimination of Violence and Disruptive Behavior**

NSBA supports state and local school board efforts to become more proactive in the elimination of violence and disruptive behavior at school, school-sponsored events, during school bus travel and while traveling to and from school. Such behavior, includes, but is not limited to, physical violence, “bullying” by any means, disrespect of fellow students and school personnel, and other forms of harassment.

## **2.10 Education Programs for Dangerous and Disruptive Students or Youth within the Juvenile Justice System**

NSBA urges school boards to develop alternative education programs for dangerous and disruptive students or youth in the Juvenile Justice System, if within the local school board purview, and to seek broad financial support for such programs.

## **2.11 Civic Engagement**

NSBA believes that local school boards play a critical role in fostering civic engagement to strengthen the foundations of our democracy. School boards should establish policies that promote programs emphasizing civic education and democratic participation, ensuring these initiatives are tailored to reflect the unique values of their communities while upholding principles central to a democratic society.

## **2.12 Harassment**

NSBA believes that all public school districts should adopt and enforce policies stating that harassment for any reason, including but not limited to harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, and religion against students or employees will not be tolerated and that appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken against offenders. Such policies should include an effective complaint mechanism. Districts should institute in-service programs to train all school personnel, including volunteers to recognize and prevent harassment against employees and students. Districts should investigate complaints, initiate education programs for students, and institute programs to eliminate harassment.

### **2.13 Use and Abuse of Alcohol, Steroids, and Other Drugs**

NSBA urges school boards to enact policies to ensure that schools and school-related activities are free from alcohol, anabolic/androgenic steroids, substances that degrade physical and/or mental health, and all unauthorized or illegal drugs. NSBA also believes that the legalization of such drugs would interfere with our students' school behavior, student learning, and the maximum achievement of learning, thus creating an obstacle in our efforts to educate. Therefore, NSBA opposes legalizing any illegal, addictive drug or substance.

### **2.14 Comprehensive Tobacco-Free School Policies**

NSBA urges local school boards to enact and enforce Comprehensive Tobacco-Free School Policies that include:

- (a) prohibition of the use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, and other vaporizing devices by students, school staff, parents/guardians, and visitors on school property, in school vehicles, and at school-sponsored functions;
- (b) prohibition of advertising or products promoting tobacco, e-cigarettes, or other vaporizing devices on school property, in school vehicles, in school publications, and at school-sponsored functions;
- (c) provisions for informing students, school staff, families, visitors, and the community about the policy;
- (d) tobacco use impact and prevention education for students;
- (e) provision of information about or referrals to tobacco cessation programs for students and school staff; and,
- (f) subject to any state laws to the contrary, a stipulation that it shall not be a violation of this policy for an American Indian adult to utilize tobacco on school district property as a part of a traditional Indian cultural ceremony.

### **2.15 Media**

NSBA opposes violence, pornography, and the promotion of alcohol, tobacco, and prescribed and non-prescribed illegally used drugs in the media. Furthermore, NSBA supports efforts to work with the media and advertising industries to de-glamorize the use of these substances.

### **2.16 Prioritizing Student Mental Health and Well-Being – Suicide Awareness and Prevention**

NSBA encourages state educational agencies and local boards to promote suicide awareness and prevention. These efforts should include (1) the dissemination of information, translated into prevalent languages in each district, on suicide awareness and prevention to their students, families, and local communities; (2) providing contact information for local, state and federal support services for people in crisis; (3) encouraging school counselor training in suicide awareness and prevention, crisis intervention, and postvention.

## **2.17 Domestic Minor Trafficking and Exploitation**

NSBA strongly urges Congress to recognize the increase in human trafficking by providing more funding and resources to encourage collaboration with organizations that work to prevent minor/student trafficking and exploitation. NSBA supports and advocates for evidence-based policy and services for survivors of minor trafficking and exploitation, protecting the human rights of trafficked student victims, and the non-criminalization of such students.

## **ARTICLE IV, SECTION 3 CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT**

### **3.1 Local Control**

NSBA believes that the primary responsibility for approving courses of study and instructional programs of public schools should remain with local school boards with public input. NSBA believes that academic standards enacted by state governments should not adversely affect local control of curriculum.

### **3.2 Supporting Increased Funding for Staffing Needs**

NSBA supports the use of online, remote, or computer-based learning services to provide, supplement and enhance instruction to provide equitable access to educational opportunities. Local school boards are encouraged to develop policy that covers, at a minimum, the selection, implementation and periodic review of such programs of instruction.

### **3.3 High Academic Standards**

NSBA supports high academic standards for all students that are voluntarily adopted by states with local school board input, and free from federal direction, federal mandates, funding conditions or coercion. Local school boards are responsible for the implementation of any new academic standards which includes locally approved instruction and materials in a manner that reflects community needs. School boards are encouraged to offer rigorous course work at every school and to promote and to support at all grade levels the participation of all students, including under-served student populations, in such challenging course work. NSBA urges states to provide financial and technical support to enable school districts to innovate while implementing voluntarily adopted rigorous standards in an effective and timely manner.

### **3.4 Challenging and Appropriate Curriculum Materials**

NSBA encourages local school boards to adopt policies that take into account research findings when making decisions on curriculum and instructional practice. Curricular offerings should consider students' diverse needs, abilities, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. The effectiveness of the curriculum must be evaluated in terms of educational outcomes.

### **3.5 Controversial Issues**

NSBA urges local school districts to present a balance of factual materials relating to any controversial issue. Appropriate policies for the evaluation, selection, use, and removal of instructional materials should be developed, including a process for handling complaints. School boards must cultivate an

environment where active citizenship, ethical leadership and the practice of democratic values are integral to the education experience.

### **3.6 Closed Captioning of Educational Videos**

NSBA urges local school districts, intermediate units, and others who provide education materials to specify a preference for videos that are closed captioned when purchasing such materials.

### **3.7 Local Community Programs**

NSBA encourages school districts to participate in the planning and development of local community programs to ensure coordination and effective delivery of programs and services for children. NSBA urges local school boards to work collaboratively with other agencies to identify and develop resources to educate and provide social services to at-risk students and their families. In addition, NSBA supports efforts that are dedicated to enhancing the ways that public schools unite youth and adults in shaping healthy communities around the principles of service to others, sustainable environments, social justice, and civic duty.

### **3.8 Learning Time**

NSBA urges local school boards to ensure an adequate amount of time for instruction and student learning by redesigning or lengthening the school schedule and seeking funding to support such actions.

### **3.9 Pre-K and Kindergarten**

NSBA supports pre-K and full day kindergarten programs with academic standards to raise student achievement and urges the federal and state governments to provide the necessary resources.

### **3.10 Remote Learning and Online Courses**

NSBA supports the authority of local school boards to determine credit for courses taken online through the creation of distance learning policies, guidelines, and teacher certification rules that allow maximum flexibility to schools to use technology for student instruction, training of educators and others, remote learning, and data transmission. NSBA supports local school board authority to establish online courses and schools.

### **3.11 Data Collection and Reporting**

NSBA believes that data collection and reporting is valuable when it results in action that supports improved instruction and increased student achievement, and is consistent with student data privacy requirements.

### **3.12 Student Assessment**

NSBA supports efforts to ensure that student performance is appropriately and accurately measured. Policies and procedures should be established to ensure that, over time, curriculum, instruction, state and local standards, and assessments remain aligned. No single assessment should be the basis for measuring the performance of a student, school or school district for the purpose of creating rewards or imposing sanctions. NSBA opposes all mandatory, automatic grade level retention. Any assessment system should use multiple, ongoing assessment measures for knowledge, skills, and

abilities and provide instructionally relevant data, growth outcomes for all students, and timely results. The state and federal government should provide resources and technical assistance to districts to evaluate assessment data and allow greater use of data-driven decision making in the adjustment of curriculum and instructional practice.

### **3.13 Student Religious Activity**

NSBA supports an individual student's constitutional right to engage in religious activity. However, in accordance with the U.S. Constitution, school officials, when acting in their official capacity, should not solicit, encourage, or discourage religious activity.

### **3.14 Fairness in Special Education**

NSBA believes in fairness for students at every phase of special education. School boards should require through policy and on-going monitoring that assessments used to place children in educational settings are comprehensive, non-discriminatory, valid, reliable and appropriate as determined by the Individualized Educational Program (IEP)/Multidisciplinary Committee (MDC) Team and that such practices do not result in the misidentification and disproportionality of students by gender, race, or ethnicity. Further, NSBA believes that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) should be interpreted to promote collaboration between schools and families, allow for procedural flexibility, place reasonable limits on school districts' liability and obligations under the Act, and preserve district money and resources for the education of children rather than litigation costs. NSBA advocates for the federal government to fully fund IDEA.

### **3.15 College, Military, and Career Readiness**

NSBA supports federal and state efforts to enhance secondary education that allow local decision-making in implementing programs to improve the academic achievement of students and help them to graduate from high school prepared to enter postsecondary education, the military, or the workforce. NSBA opposes the implementation of a federally mandated high school curriculum and/or a federally mandated graduation test for high school students.

### **3.16 21st Century Skills and Knowledge**

NSBA encourages greater federal, state, and local support to adopt modern methods and new strategies to remain effective and relevant in the 21st century marked by innovation, knowledge, technology, and global competition. Such initiatives should promote more rigorous instruction in math, science, engineering, and foreign language.

### **3.17 Digital Learning and Technology Education**

NSBA recognizes that students who have little or no exposure to technology will be at an educational and economic disadvantage in comparison to their more technologically literate peers. Furthermore, NSBA believes that effective use of digital learning and other technology tools throughout the curriculum is critical to provide all students with learning experiences relevant to a global, knowledge-based economy. Digital learning and other technology tools can help meet today's education challenges by strengthening student learning and making content, instruction, professional development, and assessments more accessible, effective, and flexible, to meet student and school district needs. School districts should consider digital learning as a part of a comprehensive technology strategy to achieve equity and excellence in education.

### **3.18 Fostering Digital Citizenship**

NSBA believes that fostering digital citizenship and establishing a code of ethical behavior for student use of social media is necessary to promote responsible use of such forums. NSBA encourages local school boards to recognize [dangers and potential harms] both the benefits and risks inherently associated with student use of electronic devices for accessing social media and community networking websites and implement locally-appropriate programs for students, and parents, and caregivers to address such risks.

### **3.19 Arts Education**

NSBA urges local school boards to establish and maintain comprehensive, multi-faceted arts and humanities education programs in their school districts as a means of:

- providing students with training and experiences in the aesthetic qualities of the world around them;
- allowing them to express themselves through the arts;
- developing in them an appreciation for the arts as an expressive record of mankind's development;
- expanding students' ability to demonstrate 21-century skills; and,
- encouraging cross-cultural understanding.

### **3.20 Civic Education**

NSBA supports effective civic education programs and urges local school boards to:

- (a) provide opportunities for young people to participate meaningfully in the civic life of their communities; and,
- (b) identify service-learning opportunities that encourage and support the preparation of students for active civic participation.

### **3.21 Multi Language Learning**

NSBA believes local school districts must have the authority and flexibility to develop, design, and implement a broad range of Limited English Proficient/Multi Language Learner (LEP/MLL) programs, including bilingual education, dual language programs, English immersion, and other research-based programs and instruction that respond to each child's educational needs while meeting high academic standards. Model programs should include:

- provisions for timely parent/guardian notification and opportunity to direct the placement of their children; and,
- effective communication regarding opportunities for LEP/MLL students and their families to participate.

### **3.22 World Language Instruction**

NSBA encourages school policies and programs that promote K-12 opportunities for world language study to also teach students about other cultures and countries, so they are prepared to communicate and participate in a global society.

### **3.23 Physical Fitness Education and Healthy Eating**

NSBA supports locally determined school policies and programs that promote lifelong wellness through physical activity and healthy eating habits as necessary strategies for improving student achievement and preventing health problems. NSBA believes that local school boards should:

- (a) provide adequate opportunities for students to participate in physical education classes and related activities;
- (b) provide adequate opportunities for students to learn about nutrition and practice healthy eating habits;
- (c) offer healthy food and beverage items at school, encourage nutrition dense foods, and consider the use of locally-grown, fresh products;
- (d) facilitate enrollment of all eligible students in federal free and reduced food service programs; and,
- (e) engage parents/guardians and community members in the process of reducing childhood obesity.

## **ARTICLE IV, SECTION 4 SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

### **4.1 Counseling and Guidance**

NSBA believes that every school district should consider having a comprehensive guidance and counseling program, kindergarten through grade 12, staffed by professionally trained counseling personnel.

### **4.2 Native American Language Instruction**

NSBA urges Congress to support Native American language instruction for American Indian, Alaska native, native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students, while maintaining continued emphasis on English proficiency for all students.

### **4.3 Early Childhood Programs**

NSBA supports proposals to develop universally available, high-quality early childhood education programs that offer community support to all families. Facilities and programs should be provided to serve the needs and talents of pre-K children.

### **4.4 Adult Programs**

Facilities and programs should be provided to serve the needs and talents of adults when resources permit. NSBA supports proposals to develop high-quality, life-long learning programs that offer community support to all families.

### **4.5 Expanded Learning Opportunities**

NSBA encourages local school districts to create results-focused partnerships with schools, families, community and faith-based organizations, businesses, higher education institutions, and local governments in the development of expanded learning opportunities. NSBA believes that before and after-school, as well as weekend and summer programs, particularly when they engage diverse

community resources, are effective strategies for improving academic achievement, enhancing student wellness, reducing chronic absenteeism, preventing juvenile crime, and fostering 21st Century Skills while building and strengthening positive relationships between schools and communities.

## **ARTICLE IV, SECTION 5 THE PUBLIC SCHOOL—A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY**

### **5.1 Partnerships to Enhance Learning**

NSBA believes school boards must lead through community engagement, particularly with parents and guardians of the students they serve. NSBA urges school boards to encourage and support partnerships between schools, communities, community organizations, families and local government that bring together critical resources and enhance strategies that help students master academic and life skills and develop civic responsibility, and address students' emotional, social and physical well-being at school and beyond.

NSBA believes that parents and guardians are essential partners in the education of their children, and a crucial component in local governance of public schools. Effective public school boards engage, consult, and respond to families' concerns in school policies, programs, and curriculum.

### **5.2 Regional Metropolitan Planning Organizations**

NSBA believes that local school boards should be actively involved with regional planning organizations and regional planning authorities since such planning affects current and proposed needs and locations of schools including but not limited to the transportation required for students and personnel.

### **5.3 Community Service Learning**

NSBA urges school boards to implement student–community involvement programs. NSBA advocates service–learning within the K-12 curriculum and encourages school boards to promote service–learning concepts through policy.

### **5.4 School Volunteers**

School boards should adopt policies that establish the use of volunteers as a means of enriching the learning experiences of students and building school communities. These policies should help ensure that volunteers' skills and knowledge are targeted appropriately and are available to those students with the greatest need. Sufficient resources should also be provided to screen, train, and otherwise support the safe and effective use of school volunteers.

### **5.5 Mentoring Students**

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

### **5.6 Coordinated School Health Programs**

NSBA encourages local school boards to recognize that health and learning are integrally linked and that schools are a critical link in community-wide efforts to promote life-long health and prevent

health-risk behaviors. NSBA also encourages school boards to collaborate with community partners to maximize resources for achieving a coordinated school health program.

### **5.7 Education as a Financial Priority**

NSBA State Associations, school board members, and citizens must support public education as a matter of the highest priority notwithstanding social and economic crises. In order to improve public education and assure adequate support for public education, NSBA urges support for equitable tax reform that generates sufficient revenues for education. Public funds should not be used directly or indirectly through tax credits, vouchers, or a choice system to fund education at any elementary and/or secondary private, parochial, or home school.

### **5.8 Community Use of Public School Facilities**

Wider use of public school facilities for community purposes should be encouraged. School boards must retain the authority to determine, regulate, and maintain such programs, but should establish policies that ensure that particular groups and institutions are not illegally excluded.

### **5.9 Teaching about Public Education**

Students should learn about the public school system, its structure, and the services it offers as one of the important institutions of our society. Students should learn about school boards as a form of representative government.

### **5.10 Recruiting and Retaining Effective Teachers and Leaders for Under Performing Schools that Serve Economically Disadvantaged Students**

NSBA urges all educational leaders to support policies and practices that help under performing schools that serve economically disadvantaged students to recruit and retain effective teachers and leaders. NSBA urges educational leaders to recruit, prepare, hire, retain and promote racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educators. This initiative must be collaborative and requires the long-term commitment of teachers, parents, community leaders, school board members, school administrators, and institutions preparing teachers and principals, as well as the organizations representing these essential partners.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **RELATIONSHIPS WITH ASSOCIATION MEMBERS AND SCHOOL BOARDS**

NSBA commits itself to the principles of working with member state and territorial associations and with local school boards with an objective of strengthening the effectiveness of local boards through education, collective action, self-help, research, and dissemination of research and other information.

#### **Section 1—Support of School Boards Associations**

In order to continue improvement in school district governance and board member development, school board members should participate in professional development sponsored by national, state, and territorial associations. The cost of supporting school boards associations and attending meetings should be strongly encouraged and recognized as an essential district expense.

## **Section 2—Contact with Congress**

NSBA recognizes that it is the right and duty of each individual Association Member and local school board to express to its representatives in the Congress of the United States the positions of NSBA and its own position, with regard to educational issues, even if the two positions are different. Association Members and local school districts should keep NSBA informed when they actively pursue a position that differs from the position of NSBA.

## **Section 3—Services to School Boards**

NSBA recognizes that Association Members provide varying services to their local district school boards. NSBA further recognizes that the relationship between NSBA and its Association Members is characterized by cooperation and coordination. NSBA, therefore, is committed to fostering active cooperation with its Association Members by assisting them in improving the quality of services they provide to local boards and by developing joint programs that involve Association Members providing services to local boards.

# **ARTICLE VI**

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GROUPS**

### **Section 1—School Boards Bear Ultimate Responsibility for Public Education**

Local school boards should establish relationships with other groups knowledgeable in, and/or representative of, the interests served or involved with education. School boards should give primary consideration to the needs of children in public education as well as their obligation to the electorate in making educational determinations.

### **Section 2—Development of Public Policy on Education**

NSBA supports the development of proactive strategies to present the school board perspective on national and federal issues. NSBA supports efforts to establish forums that will represent various interests and points of view, and thus contribute to the development of sound public policy on education. The findings and suggestions created in these forums should be transmitted to the President, Congress, appropriate federal and state agencies, state legislatures, Federation Members, school boards, and the general public.

### **Section 3—Other Groups**

#### **3.1 Agency Collaboration**

NSBA supports eliminating barriers that hinder the collaboration of agencies providing services to children.

#### **3.2 Pre-Kindergarten-Post Secondary Education**

NSBA supports pre-kindergarten-post secondary collaboration among the various sectors of education and with business, industry, and government to enhance teaching and learning opportunities so that all students are prepared to live in and contribute to a vibrant society.

### **3.3 Relationships with Governing Boards of Post-Secondary Institutions**

NSBA encourages local school boards to work cooperatively with the governing boards of any post-secondary institutions that provide for the changing educational and employment needs of students.

### **3.4 Relationships with Groups**

NSBA encourages local school boards to maintain full and active cooperation with all groups working for the improvement of student achievement in public education. NSBA shall provide leadership for the establishment and enhancement of collaborative relationships with the nation's other leading educational organizations, in order to advocate for public education as the foundation of our political, economic, social, and cultural systems.

### **3.5 Relationship with Other Organizations**

NSBA will continue to build and explore relationships with national education and other organizations to further advance student academic achievement and equity and excellence in public education.

### **3.6 Veterans**

NSBA supports state and national programs to recognize the achievement of American veterans. NSBA supports commemorative activities that recognize veterans, including opportunities to teach our children the importance of military service to our history.

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# HISTORY OF NSBA BELIEFS

NSBA's Delegate Assembly originally adopted the NSBA Beliefs & Policies during their April 1973 meeting in Anaheim, California. In April 2003, the NSBA Delegate Assembly adopted a major reorganization and update of the Beliefs & Policies document and added the following policies: School Governance Takeovers, I:1.9; Implementation of Federal Laws, II:1.5; Unfunded Mandates, III:4.2; Student Prayer, IV:3.9; and, Fairness in Special Education, IV:3.10.

Amended Article I, Section 1.3. Added Article I, Section 1.10. Amended Article II, Section 3.3. and added Article IV, Section 4.9 on March 26, 2004, in Orlando, Florida.

Amended Article I, Section 1, Amended Article II, Section 2.3; Amended Article III, Section 3.2; Amended Article IV, Section 1.1; Amended Article IV, Sections 2 and 2.7; Added Article IV; Section 2.8; Added Article IV, Section 3.8, then renumbered Sections 3.9, 3.10, and 3.11. Amended Article IV, Sections 4.2 and 4.8; Added Article IV, Sections 4.10 and 4.11; Amended Article IV, Section 5.4; Added Article IV, Section 5.8 and amended Article VI, Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6 on April 15, 2005, in San Diego, California.

Amended Article, I Section 1.9 and 1.10; Amended Article II, Section 2.6 and 2.7; Added Article II, Section 2.11; Amended Article II, Section 3.3; Added Article II, Section 3.5; Amended Article III, Section 1; Amended Article III, Section 2; Added Article III, Section 2.3; Amended Article III, Section 3.1; Amended Article IV, Section 1.3; Amended Article IV, Section 2; Added Article IV, Section 2.1 and 2.2; Renumbered Article IV, Sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10; Added Article IV, Section 3.7; Renumbered Article IV, Sections 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, and 3.12; Amended Article VI, Section 3.5 on April 7, 2006, in Chicago, Illinois.

Amended Article I, Section 1 Bullet 4; Amended Article I Section 1.9; Amended Article I, Section 2.5; Amended Article II, Section 2.6; Amended Article II, Section 3.1; Amended Article III, Section 1(c); Amended Article III, Section 2.3; Amended Article III, Section 3.2(a) and (b); Amended Article IV, Section 2.1; Added Article IV, Section 3.13; Added Article IV, Section 4.1, then renumbered Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12 on April 13, 2007, in San Francisco, California.

Amended Article I, Section 1.6; Amended Article I, Section 2.4; Added Article II, Section 3.6; Added Article IV, Section 1.1, then renumbered Sections 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and amended Section 1.2; Amended Article IV, Section 2.5 and 2.7; Added Article IV, Section 2.8, then renumbered Sections 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, and added Section 2.12; Amended Article IV, Section 3.2 and 3.10; Added Article IV, Section 4.6, then renumbered Sections 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, and 4.13; Added Article IV, Section 5.2, then renumbered Sections 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, and 5.9 on March 28, 2008, in Orlando, Florida.

Amended Beliefs & Policies opening paragraph; Amended Mission of the National School Boards Association paragraph; Amended Article I, Section 2.1; Amended Article II, Section 1.3; Amended Article II, Sections 2.1 and 2.6; Amended Article II, Section 3.1; Amended Article III, Section 1; Amended Article III, Section 3.1(d); Amended Article IV, Sections 1.3 and 1.5; Amended Article IV, Sections 3.11 and 3.12; Amended Article IV, Sections 4.5 and 4.11; Amended Article IV, Section 5.6; Amended Article V, (title); Amended Article V, Sections 1, 2, and 3. Changed term "Federation and

Federation Member” to “Association and State Association Member” throughout on April 3, 2009, in San Diego, California.

Amended Article II, Section 3.5, Amended Article III, Sections 1 and Section 2.2, then added new Sections 2 & 3, then renumbered former Sections 2, 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 as Sections 4, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3; Amended Article IV, Section 1.1; Amended Article II, Section 2.1, 2.4, 2.11, and deleted Section 2.12. Added to Article IV, Section 2, new Sections 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4, then renumbered Sections 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, and 2.13; Added to Article IV, Section 3, Sections 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, and 3.19; Amended Article IV, Sections 4.7 and 4.10, then moved Sections 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, and 4.10 to Article IV, Section 3. Renumbered Article IV, Sections 4.2, 4.6, 4.8, 4.9, 4.11, and 4.12 as 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7; Added to Article IV, Section 5, new Section 5.2, then renumbered Sections 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, and 5.10; Added to Article VI, Section 3, as new Section 3.7, then renumbered former Section 3.7 to 3.8 on April 9, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois.

Amended Article I, Section 2.4; Added to Article II, Section 2, new Section 2.7, then renumbered Sections 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, and 2.12; Amended Article II, 3.5; Amended Article III, Section 1(a); Amended Article IV, Section 2.7, Amended Article IV, Section 2.10, Added to Article IV, Section 3, new Section 3.17, then renumbered 3.18, 3.19, and 3.20; Amended Article IV, Section 4.5; Moved Article IV, Section 4.6 to Article IV, Section 3, then renumbered Article IV, Section 4.7 to 4.6.; Amended Article VI, Section 3.7 on April 8, 2011, in San Francisco, California.

Amended Article I, Section 1, Bullets 2 and 3; Amended Article I, Section 2.3; Amended Article II, Section 1.2; Amended Article IV, Section 3.7 and title; Amended Article IV, Section 3.15 and title on April 20, 2012, in Boston, Massachusetts.

Amended Article I, Section 2 by adding new Section 2.3, then renumbered Sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8; Added to Article II Section 3, new Section 3.7; Added to Article III, Section 4, new Section 4.3, then renumbered Section 4.4; Amended Article IV Sections 2.3 and 2.11. Added to Article IV Section 2, new Section 2.3, then renumbered Sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, and 2.14; Amended Article IV, Sections 3.5, 3.8, 3.13 and title, 3.15, 3.18, and 3.20; Amended Article IV Sections 5.1 and title, and 5.10 on April 12, 2013, in San Diego, California.

Amended Article I, Section 1, Bullets 4, 5, and 7; Amended Article I Sections 1.9(c), 2.2(a), and 2.5; Amended Article II Sections 2.3, 2.8, 2.12; Added new section Article II, Section 2.1 then renumbered Sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, and 2.13; Amended Article III Section 2 (paragraph 1), Section 3(a), Section 4.1(e), Section 4.2; Amended Article IV Sections 1.3, 3.10, and 3.14; Amended Article VI, Section 3.7 on April 4, 2014, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Amended Article 1, Section 1, Bullet 3; Amended Article II, Sections 1.2 and 3.7: Amended, Article III, Section 4.3; Added to Article IV, Section 1, new Section 1.1, amended Section 1.4 and section title, then renumbered Sections 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6; Amended Article IV, Section 2.1 and Section 2.7; Added new section Article IV, Section 3.2, then renumbered Sections 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.20, and 3.21; Amended Article IV, Section 5.1 and section title on March 20, 2015, in Nashville, Tennessee.

Amended Article II, Section 2.3; Amended Article 3, Section 3.6; Amended Article IV, Section 1.1 and section title, and Article IV, Section 1.6; Added to Article IV, Section 2, new Section 2.2, then renumbered Sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, and 2.15; Amended Article IV, Section 2.14; Amended Article IV, Section 3.11 and 3.14; Added to Article IV, Section 3, new Section 3.17, then renumbered Sections 3.18, 3.19, 3.20, 3.21, and 3.22. Deleted Article IV, Section 4.6; Amended Article IV, Section 5.7; Amended Article VI, Section, 3.4; Deleted Article VI, Sections 3.5 and 3.6, then renumbered new Sections 3.5 and 3.6; Amended Section 3.5 on April 8, 2016, in Boston, Massachusetts.

Amended Article II, Section 3.1, Article II, Section 3.7 and section title; Amended Article IV, Section 2.1, and Section 2.8; Amended Article IV, Section 3.13 on March 24, 2017, in Denver, Colorado.

Amended Article I, Section 2.5; Added to Article II, new Section 1.6; Amended Article II, Sections 2.11, 3.2, and added new section 3.8; Added to Article III, new Section 2.1; Amended Article IV, Sections 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 2.3 and section title, 2.8, 2.14, 2.15, and 3.18 on April 6, 2018, in San Antonio, Texas.

Amended Article II, Section 1.2; Amended Article II, Section 2.11; Amended Article III, Section 3.1; Amended Article III, Section 4 (c); Amended Article IV Section 2.1 on March 29, 2019, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Amended Article I, Section 1 Bullet 1; Amended Article I, Section 2.1; Amended Article II, Section 2.11, and added new Section 2.14; Amended Article III Section 5.2(g); Amended Article IV, Section 2.2 on August 14, 2020, at NSBA's Virtual Delegate Assembly Business Meeting.

Amended Publication Title on December 2, 2020, at NSBA's Virtual Delegate Assembly Second Business Session.

No amendments were offered at NSBA's Virtual Delegate Assembly Second Business Session on August 13, 2021.

Amended Article II, Section 3 adding 3.9; Amended Article IV, Section 2, 2.3 Air and Water Quality adding Water Stations; Amended Article IV, Section 5, 5.1 on April 1, 2022, in San Diego, California.

No amendments were offered at NSBA's Delegate Assembly Business Session on March 31, 2023, in Orlando, Florida.

Amended Mission of the National School Boards Association; Added to Article II, new Section 2.9; Amended Article III, Section 5.2; Added to Article IV, new Sections 2.16 and 2.17; Added to Article IV, new Section 3.2, then renumbered Sections 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.20, 3.21, 3.22, and 3.23 on April 5, 2024, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Amended Article I, Section 1.9 Bullet 2; Amended Article II, Section 1.2; Amended Article II, Section 2.6; Amended Article III, Section 2(e); Added to Article IV, new Section 1.7; Amended Article IV, Section 2; Amended Article IV, Section 2.2 and section title; Amended Article IV, Section 2 section title; Amended Article IV, Section 2.11 and section title; Amended Article IV, Section 2.14(a); Amended Article IV, Section 3.3; Amended Article IV, Section 3.5; Amended Article IV, Section 3.10 and section title; Amended Article IV, Section 3.21 and section title; Amended Article IV, Section 3.22 and section title; Amended Article IV, Section 3.23(c), (e), and section title; Amended Article IV,

Section 5.10 and section title; Amended Article VI, Section 3.2 and section title on April 4, 2025, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Deleted Article II, Section 2.9; Added to Article II, new Section 3.4, then renumbered Sections 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, and 3.10; Amended Article IV, Section 3.18 on April 10, 2026, in San Antonio, Texas.

To obtain a complete history of the amendments adopted by the NSBA Delegate Assembly, contact the NSBA Office of Legal Services and Governance.