Educating the nation’s young people is one of the most important endeavors our system of government undertakes.

Public education is the great engine for equality, improvement, and progress in the United States.

Our expectations for schools and students have never been higher, and our educators and students have never been more successful, as evidenced by our thriving economy and a high school graduation rate that is the highest in history.

But while our schools play a lead role in these accomplishments and educators embrace their role with a deep sense of duty, they cannot do it alone.

Schools are reflective of our larger society and of both our interdependence on and our collective responsibility to one another.

Schools, families, and communities need to support one another and work more closely together to best support each child’s cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development.
INVESTMENT IN EDUCATORS

Classroom teachers and school leaders are the two most important in-school factors influencing student achievement. In light of this fact, supporting educators and school leaders in all facets of the profession must be the paramount improvement strategy and investment priority for improving student outcomes.

We call on policymakers to

- Increase investments in educators along the career continuum: recruitment, induction, retention, and retirement;
- Provide the necessary resources to help educators meet students’ needs in real time;
- Ensure that each classroom and every student is served by a trained, qualified, and caring educator; and
- Incentivize teaching as a profession by increasing salaries, professional development opportunities and resources, and autonomy of practice.

WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

Each student is unique in their interests, development, and learning style. But all students require the same educational foundation. Moreover, today’s students are coming to school with greater socio-economic needs than ever before. All students must learn about healthy lifestyles, feel physically and emotionally safe, be provided with personalized learning opportunities, receive adult support, and access challenging coursework.

We call on policymakers to

- Provide every student with personalized learning and multiple academic pathways (and multimetric evidence of proficiency) to a diploma and the world beyond graduation;
- Define a comprehensive education as one that is well-rounded and includes workforce skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication so that students graduate ready for college, career, and citizenship; and
- Fully fund all the federal K–12 programs that provide educational equity, notably Title I, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Perkins career technical education (CTE), and ESSA Titles II (professional development) and IV (student support and academic enrichment).

MULTIMETRIC ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Student development, well-being, and success are more than just test scores. Any meaningful measures of student proficiency, growth, or readiness must include an array of data points from a variety of sources. Moreover, different types of data are required for accountability, improvement, and informational purposes. We call on policymakers to

- Collect only as much data as needed for accountability requirements;
- Provide flexibility at the state and local levels for innovation and context;
- Use accountability to inform improvement strategies and not for punitive measures;
- Fully fund assessment and data collection requirements; and
- Provide a variety of pathways for students to demonstrate mastery and proficiency and meet graduation requirements.

Visit www.educatoradvocates.org for information about policy resources and to become an ASCD Educator Advocate. Educator Advocates are informed about policy developments and engage with decision makers at all levels and in a variety of ways to promote the policies that best support students and schools.

ASCD is dedicated to excellence in learning, teaching, and leading so that every child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Comprising 115,000 members—superintendents, principals, teachers, and advocates from more than 128 countries—the ASCD community also includes 51 affiliate organizations. ASCD’s innovative solutions promote the success of each child.

To learn more about how ASCD supports educators as they learn, teach, and lead, visit www.ascd.org. Printer-friendly copies of the 2020 Legislative Agenda are available at www.ascd.org/legislativeagenda. For additional information, contact ASCD Advocacy & Government Relations at gr@ascd.org.

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