




OPPORTUNITY & ACTION FOR
 **EVERY STUDENT**
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RAISING YOUR VOICE: SECURING THE SCHOOLS OUR STUDENTS DESERVE

A guide to support local Association efforts to bring educators to the tables where decisions affecting public schools and students are made.



The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the school improvement process it authorizes provides significant new opportunities for educators to participate in decisions that impact their schools and their students. Indeed, to ensure that those decisions improve schools and provide students the tools and resources they need to succeed, educators must be at decision-making tables ensuring their voices are heard.

Every day, individual educators speak up on behalf of their students. As members of their state and local Associations and the National Education Association, educators advocate collectively for the policies and resources their students need to succeed - at school board meetings, legislatures and other state offices, in the halls of Congress, at the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies, and at the White House. This guide is designed to support those local Associations as they amplify the voices of educators calling for great public schools for all students.

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NEA Education Policy & Practice

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INTRODUCTION

The ability to advocate on behalf of your students is empowering, but the responsibility can be daunting. Where do you start? The first step is determining whether students and educators at your school have everything needed to succeed. You can use NEA's Opportunity Checklist to review what you have, and identify areas needing improvement. NEA's Opportunity Audit can help educators, families, students, and community stakeholders narrow their focus on a school's strengths and challenges. If you have not already conducted one of these opportunity assessments, we recommend you start there. The data you collect will inform local planning, and conducting the exercises can help you engage additional members and the community in the school improvement process.



INTRODUCTION

NEA's Opportunity Audit facilitates analysis of your school's strengths and challenges, according to the following indicators of a great public school:

School Readiness

All children have access to high-quality early childhood education so they enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Standards and Curriculum

All students have access to a full, enriching, and rigorous curriculum, including advanced coursework.

Conditions of Teaching and Learning

Public schools feature quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning, such as positive school climates.

Workforce Quality

All students have access to qualified, caring, and diverse educators.

Accountability and Assessments

Public schools feature shared responsibility for appropriate school accountability using multiple sources of evidence of school quality and student learning.

Family and Community Engagement

Public schools engage families and communities as collaborative partners in student learning.

School Funding

Public schools are sufficiently, equitably, and sustainably funded.

INTRODUCTION

After you determine which opportunity gaps you and your team would like to address, you can then work on identifying solutions that will address those needs. That is where this guide can prove most useful. It suggests specific policy goals aligned with each indicator of a great public school, and provides sample school board resolutions, policy statements, and contract language that are aligned with those policy goals.

To get those school board resolutions adopted and policies implemented, please consult *Advocating for Great Public Schools*, NEA's advocacy guide. It is designed to support you through the four phases of developing and implementing an advocacy action plan - Prepare, Plan, Act, and Evaluate.



INTRODUCTION

Finding Your Voice in ESSA Design and Implementation

Educators have specific opportunities under ESSA to participate in decision-making teams, or otherwise influence local decisions. By taking advantage of these opportunities to change policies, and shape initiatives and interventions, you will help ensure all students have greater opportunities to succeed.

District Plans

Federal law requires school districts to engage in “timely and meaningful consultation” with teachers, principals, other school leaders, education support professionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and parents, to develop the district’s Title I plan. As part of the decision-making team, educators will have an opportunity to help define how the district will:

- ▶ Improve learning conditions;
- ▶ Develop and implement effective family and community engagement strategies;
- ▶ Decide on evidence-based school support and improvement strategies and describe the nature of the program to be conducted under a schoolwide program; and
- ▶ Implement a well-rounded, engaging, and culturally competent program of instruction.

District Report Cards

Under the law, school districts prepare and distribute report cards annually, and must include at minimum the same information as is provided by the state report card. This includes:

- ▶ Student performance across all indicators;
- ▶ Measures of school climate, quality, and safety; and
- ▶ The number and percentages of students enrolled in accelerated coursework to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school.

In addition to reporting those measures, districts will also be required to report which schools are identified for school improvement, and the reason for the identification.

Districts have latitude regarding what else may be included, and must hold hearings to gather feedback and suggestions regarding that additional content. This provides educators an opportunity to advocate for the inclusion of additional information, such as:

- ▶ The percentage of students completing accelerated coursework and earning college credit on accelerated coursework tests;
- ▶ Information on the school readiness of kindergarten students, which would support efforts to improve access to high-quality early childhood education; and
- ▶ Data on the characteristics of the teacher workforce, which could support advocacy for compensation packages to recruit and retain a high quality workforce, the need for cultural competence support, professional development opportunities, and more.

Schoolwide Program Plans

A school may operate a schoolwide program if it is a Title I school with 40 percent or more of its students living in poverty, or is a Title I school that has a waiver from the state educational agency to operate a schoolwide program. A school operating a schoolwide program must develop a comprehensive plan, and the plan must be based on a needs assessment.

School districts must work together with educators and other stakeholders to conduct a needs assessment, such as the NEA Opportunity Audit. Districts then must collaborate with educators and community stakeholders to identify and develop strategies that address specific identified needs. These may include such interventions as:

- ▶ Professional development
- ▶ Specialized instructional support services
- ▶ Additional learning time, access to advanced courses
- ▶ A high-quality preschool program
- ▶ School-based mental health services

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Other programs and services deemed necessary to increase student success

Federal funds to develop and implement these plans are available to schools that enroll a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students.

School Improvement Plans

ESSA identifies criteria for schools to receive federal funds for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) or Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI).

- ▶ TSI schools have a “consistently underperforming” subgroup of students. Subgroups are reported according to federal requirements, but states can choose to report performance of additional subgroups for assessment.
- ▶ ATSI schools are those that have a subgroup that is performing at the same level as the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools. If these schools do not meet exit criteria within a state-determined number of years, they will be re-designated as CSI schools.
- ▶ CSI schools are those that are either: (1) among the lowest-performing 5 percent of Title I schools in the state, (2) graduating less than 67 percent of their students, or (3) were previously identified under ATSI and have failed to improve.

Identified schools must develop partnerships with community stakeholders (including educators) to identify specific needs, and develop and implement interventions designed to correct the underperformance that led to their categorization. The goal of the school improvement plan is to guide schools in meeting exit criteria that will remove them from identification, i.e. they will no longer be underperforming or have underperforming subgroups. The development and implementation of these plans provide many opportunities for educators to advocate for policies and practices that will improve their schools. We hope this resource will guide you in taking advantage of this groundbreaking opportunity to elevate educator voice.

SCHOOL READINESS

Students attending great public schools have access to quality early childhood education; early identification of differing abilities; appropriate services to meet their individualized needs; and essential supports that strengthen social, emotional, and academic growth. Your voice can make a difference for students on these issues.

The following examples illustrate some of the ways educators can improve school readiness.

Policy or Practice	Action
District provides full-day kindergarten in all Title I elementary schools, with appropriate class sizes, and educators trained and licensed in early childhood education.	Advocate for full-day kindergarten with small class sizes and favorable teacher-child ratios as a component of the district plan. <i>See sample contract language in this section.</i>
District provides educators with professional learning opportunities in family engagement, developmentally appropriate practices, and early literacy.	Incorporate appropriate professional learning opportunities in school improvement plans.
District provides universal access to high-quality pre-kindergarten for all three- and four-year old children in public schools.	Advocate for adoption of a school board resolution defining criteria for high quality pre-k programs in public schools and prioritizing adequate funds for universal access to pre-kindergarten for all three- and four-year-old children. <i>See sample resolution in this section.</i>
Early childhood educator preparation programs are aligned with K-3 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards.	Advocate with institutions of higher education for early childhood education programs.
District supports access to and coordination of health care and social services.	Advocate for a policy that promotes a coordinated approach to providing access to health and wellness services. <i>See sample policy in this section.</i>

SCHOOL READINESS

Sample Contract Language: Class Size for Early Childhood Programs

1. Unweighted class size limits for Pre-K through 3rd grade:

To ensure teaching effectiveness and learning opportunities for the youngest students in the school district, all prekindergarten through 3rd grade classrooms shall have at most the following number of students in a class:

Grade	Maximum Class Size
Pre-Kindergarten	10 students
Kindergarten	15 students
1st-3rd	18 students

2. Weighted formula for class size limits:

To ensure teaching effectiveness and learning opportunities for all students in the school district, class size shall be determined according to the following formula, which recognizes the additional resources needed for some student categories:

Multiplier	Type of Students
1.0	Typically developing students not otherwise listed
1.25	Typically developing students in Grades 1-3
1.5	Students in gifted and talented programs, full-day kindergarten students, and students with Limited English Proficiency
2.0	Pre-kindergarten students; students with exceptional needs that require periodic monitoring and supervision of a Special Education teacher
2.5	Students with exceptional needs that require direct supervision of a Special Education teacher
3.0	Half-day kindergarten students with exceptional needs that require continual supervision by a Special Education teacher

The actual number of students in a classroom shall be determined by calculating the multiplier appropriate to each student by the number of students in that category. The unweighted maximum class size of any classroom shall not exceed 25 students.

3. Maximum Student-Instructor Ratio Requirements:

The ratio of students to instructors in any class in grades K-3 shall not exceed 22 students as of the last school day of October. In calculating such ratio, a classroom instructional aide shall count as equal to half a teacher. This shall apply to a class within which students are instructed in the core academic subjects of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Notwithstanding any other section of this Article, full-time kindergarten teachers will teach no more than one (1) full-day session or two (2) half-day sessions. If two half-day sessions are taught, maximum class size shall be half the class size limit for full-day kindergarten.

SCHOOL READINESS

Sample School Board Resolution: Early Childhood Education

WHEREAS, quality preschool programs prepare children to do their best by nurturing their social-emotional, cognitive, and physical development; enhancing their self-confidence; and fostering a lifelong desire to learn; and

WHEREAS, ensuring access to quality preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds whose parents choose to send them has proven to be one of the soundest educational investments the public can make, providing demonstrated, significant, long-term savings on the costs of special education, grade retention, public assistance and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, during their elementary and secondary education and beyond, children who attend quality preschool programs exhibit more positive behaviors in the classroom, are more likely to graduate from high school, continue their education and be more prosperous as adults; and

WHEREAS, quality preschool programs should be funded adequately to assure adherence to established standards of quality and be able to attract and keep caring, qualified professionals, and to support appropriate monitoring and evaluation; and

WHEREAS, quality preschool programs should be inclusive of children with disabilities, and should be provided in culturally, ethnically, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate settings; and

WHEREAS, the transition to elementary school is best supported when preschool programs are clearly aligned with the elementary school curriculum; and

WHEREAS, worker productivity is enhanced by access to affordable full-day, early care and education programs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of _____ supports state, local, and federal efforts to invest in voluntary, high-quality preschool programs for all 3- and 4-year-olds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board will work with a broad cross-section of community members and policy makers to increase voluntary access to high-quality preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Sample Policy: Healthcare and Social Services

In support of community-supported schools and thriving students, the _____ School Board ("Board") recognizes that social, emotional, and physical health are fundamental to students being college, career, and community ready.

Providing access to health care and social services ensures that students are healthy and ready to learn and is an important element of a comprehensive approach to preventing disease and disability in children and youth.

The _____ School District ("District") represents a diverse population with a wide range of health needs. The District is committed to an equitable distribution of health and wellness services and resources across the District, with data-driven program development and quality improvement.

To ensure the health and safety of our students, community partners that want to provide health services at public school sites, such as screenings, vision or dental services, vaccinations, physical exams and others, must be coordinated through the Health & Wellness Unit of the Family, School and Community Partnerships Department. This includes one-time as well as ongoing delivery of services to students.

School Nurses: The District will provide comprehensive, equitable, and holistic nursing services by credentialed School Nurses to all students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 (and until age 21 for some students with disabilities). Services include case management of students with chronic health conditions, state-mandated screenings and audits, screenings for behavioral challenges and disabilities, health education, and health-related trainings.

School Based Health Centers (SBHC): Through a partnership between the District, _____ County, and community-based organizations, SBHCs provide access to important medical, mental health, and health education services for students and community members regardless of insurance status or ability to pay, and are committed to reducing the unmet need for health care services among District youth and their families.

Behavioral Health: Because good mental health is critical to a student's ability to learn, the District shall collaborate with local and state health, mental health, and social service providers to offer integrated mental health services in district schools, including crisis response; and to provide equitable access to mental health and other health care services to all students within the District.

SCHOOL READINESS

Referrals, Coordination, and COST: The District acknowledges that while our schools play a critical role in helping children access health care services, it is essential to achieve this in collaboration with local agencies and community-based organizations. A Coordination of Services Team (COST) is a site-based multidisciplinary team composed of service providers, school administration, and school staff and is designed to enable the coordination and alignment of services to meet the needs of an individual student and family. All schools shall implement district-wide protocols for COST that ensure timely and equitable treatment for all referred students.

Health Coverage and Social Services Enrollment: Through a partnership with _____ County and other community-based agencies, the District will continue to conduct central and site-based enrollment into free and low-cost health insurance and other social services programs.

The Superintendent of Schools or designee shall be responsible for the oversight, implementation, and evaluation of this Policy. A council of key stakeholders, including educators and community partners, shall serve as an advisory group to oversee implementation of the Policy.

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM

Great public schools include educators in the development of curriculum guidelines and related resources, and promote their professional growth. They encourage students to develop their talents and skills by offering a comprehensive, engaging, relevant, and rigorous curriculum, holding students to high standards and expectations, and providing accommodations and differentiation in instruction and assessment to meet the range of students' needs.

The following examples illustrate some of the ways educators can advocate for high standards and a comprehensive curriculum.

Policy or Practice	Action
<p>District provides high-quality resources including textbooks, workbooks, technology, professional learning, and other supplies to help educators understand and apply content standards.</p>	<p>Negotiate procedures by which Association representatives are part of the decision-making teams regarding educational objectives, curriculum content, and textbook selection.</p> <p><i>See sample contract language in this section.</i></p>
<p>District supports various means to accommodate, scaffold, and enrich instruction for students with diverse needs.</p>	<p>Advocate for inclusion of professional development and coaching to improve instruction in your school improvement plan.</p> <p>Negotiate the provision of job-embedded professional development related to accommodations and differentiated instruction.</p> <p>Advocate for school board resolutions and policies that support diverse approaches to instruction, and associated professional development.</p> <p><i>See sample school board resolution in this section.</i></p>
<p>District curriculum is comprehensive, culturally relevant, and challenging.</p>	<p>Advocate for local policy supportive of a comprehensive, culturally relevant, and challenging curriculum.</p> <p><i>See sample policy in this section.</i></p> <p>Advocate for inclusion in the district report card data on student enrollment in physical education, fine arts, and advanced coursework.</p>

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM

Sample Contract Language: Consultation Procedures

The parties acknowledge that [the relevant state collective bargaining law] provides the exclusive representative of certificated employees the right to be part of decisions and to consult on the definition of educational objectives, the determination of the content of courses and curriculum, and the selection of textbooks and resources, which may include technology, workbooks, and other supplies. The parties agree that the following procedures shall be used:

1. The parties shall jointly manage a consultation committee.
 - a. The committee shall be composed of nine members: three District members and six Association members.
 - i. The District members shall be the Superintendent or designee, one principal, and one other certificated supervisory representative.
 - ii. The Association members shall be the Association President (or designee), one Association member from each of the following grade span assignments: K-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12, and one additional Association appointee.
 - iii. Each party shall select their own committee members within the categories delineated in a.i and a.ii.
 - b. The chair of the committee shall rotate each year between the District and the Association.
2. The committee shall meet at least four times each school year.
3. The committee shall discuss and decide the definition of educational objectives, the determination of the content of courses and curriculum, and the selection of textbooks.
 - a. The decision of the committee shall be by majority vote.
 - b. In the event that there is no majority vote for a particular issue, the Superintendent shall present the issue, including the options discussed by the committee, for decision by the school board at the next regularly scheduled school board meeting.
4. Decisions of the committee shall be reduced to writing and maintained by the parties. The committee decisions shall be enforceable under the grievance procedure of the parties' collective bargaining agreement.
5. The committee shall not make decisions that violate the collective bargaining agreement between the parties.

Sample School Board Resolution: Response to Intervention

WHEREAS, the _____ School Board (“Board”) supports the following principles of teaching and learning:

- ▶ We can effectively teach all children;
- ▶ Early intervention matters;
- ▶ Services are best delivered using a multi-tiered approach;
- ▶ Instruction and interventions need to be evidence-based, and matched to student needs;
- ▶ Student progress must be monitored to inform instruction;
- ▶ Data needs to inform instructional and intervention decisions;
- ▶ Assessments should be used for screening and diagnosis, and to monitor progress; and

WHEREAS, the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework provides a tiered system of academic and behavioral supports to enable all students to equitably access the core curriculum; and

WHEREAS, effective and rigorous implementation of the RTI framework requires professional development that focuses on quality instruction, interventions, and monitoring;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board supports implementation of the RTI framework throughout the district, including professional development to ensure a consistent approach.

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM

Sample Policy: Comprehensive Curriculum

The _____ School District believes that curricular offerings in music and arts, world languages, civics and government, economics, history, geography, and physical education and health are integral to a comprehensive educational program aimed at strong learning, achievement and development opportunities for all students.

The _____ School District further supports broad student access to courses in these areas, and district- and building-level support for educators aimed at continuous improvement in instruction.

To achieve these goals, the _____ School District commits to support the following:

- ▶ Ensuring or expanding access to curricular offerings in these subject areas, consistent with applicable state requirements;
- ▶ Expanding the amount of instructional time available or devoted to these subjects, consistent with applicable state requirements;
- ▶ Providing for curriculum development that is aligned with State standards where relevant;
- ▶ Supporting professional development to improve instruction, based on periodic formal solicitation of educator needs and input, and led by educators wherever possible;
- ▶ Providing essential materials and textbooks, aligned with State standards where relevant; and
- ▶ Collaborating with Federal, State, and community-based organizations and institutions to increase student learning in these subjects.

The _____ School District will annually publish on its publicly accessible website a report on course availability at each school, including the subjects identified in this policy, along with comparative information on such offerings for the previous school year. Within thirty (30) days of the release of this annual report, the district will hold an open public forum to respond to questions and obtain input from parents, students, educators, and other community members. The forum shall be convened at a date and time designed to promote maximum attendance, and to allow sufficient time to incorporate community input into decisions regarding the following school year.

To help implement the actions outlined above, the _____ School District shall create a Curriculum and Professional Development Committee, that shall include at least one educator

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM

and one instructional coach, designated by the President of the Association representing educators in this district.

_____ School District school administrators are hereby directed to convene school-level Curriculum and Professional Development Committees that include educators with instructional responsibilities in each of the subject areas identified in this policy to further support implementation, and to undertake such other related tasks as appropriate.

NOTES

CONDITIONS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

A great public school is one in which educators have sufficient time for instruction, collaboration, mentoring and reflection, and are part of the process when decisions are made about their professional practice. It provides students with adequate guidance as they prepare for postsecondary education, training, and careers, and also promotes a positive environment that supports their social and emotional well-being.

The following examples illustrate some of the ways educators can improve the conditions of teaching and learning.

Policy or Practice	Action
District limits the ratio of student to specialized instructional support personnel (SISP) to recommended caseloads.	<p>Negotiate contract language specifying the appropriate ratios of school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers to students.</p> <p><i>See sample contract language in this section.</i></p> <p>Advocate for inclusion of SISP ratios in your district report card.</p>
District provides time and resources for instructional support including professional learning communities, cohorts, and lesson studies focused on issues of instruction.	<p>Include in your schoolwide program plan language on professional development and/or planning time that is to be dedicated based on the needs assessment.</p>
District addresses school safety issues through programs and professional development in trauma-sensitive instruction, cultural competence, and restorative justice practices.	<p>Advocate for a safe schools program that includes appropriate professional development.</p> <p><i>See sample school board resolution in this section.</i></p> <p>Negotiate contract language that supports the adoption of restorative justice practices.</p>
District requires educator engagement in the development, pilot-testing, and implementation of policies and systems related to the education professions.	<p>Advocate for a collaborative approach that includes educators in the development of any educator support and evaluation system.</p> <p><i>See sample policy in this section.</i></p>

CONDITIONS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Sample Contract Language: Staffing Ratios

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

This Memorandum of Agreement is by and between the _____ School District (hereinafter "District"); and the _____ Education Association (hereinafter "Association"), exclusive representative for _____ teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, and education support professionals. It is entered into for the sole purpose of establishing appropriate staffing for licensed professionals in schools.

The District and the Association agree that educating the whole child requires the presence of a variety of skilled, licensed professionals in each school building.

To that end, the parties have agreed to the following:

1. A licensed school nurse will be on duty at all times in every school building that enrolls one hundred (100) or more students.
2. At least one (1) full-time licensed school counselor will be assigned to each elementary school. One (1) full-time licensed school counselor will be assigned for every three hundred twenty-five (325) students enrolled at a secondary school.
3. At least one (1) full-time school social worker will be assigned to each school. The district will maintain, at a minimum, the current social worker staffing at sites with more than one social worker.
4. Each elementary student will have access to instruction from a licensed performance or visual art and a physical education teacher during the school day. Each secondary student will have access to instruction by licensed art, music, and physical education teachers during the school day.

[Signatures]

Sample School Board Resolution: Safe and Supportive Schools Resolution

WHEREAS, _____ School District believes strongly in creating a District-wide, positive, relationship-based culture that is supportive of all members of the _____ District community and intends to be a statewide leader in initiating policies to support Restorative Practices, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Trauma Sensitive Practices; and

WHEREAS, _____ School District is committed to addressing disproportionality in suspension and expulsion rates; and

WHEREAS, the adverse effects of suspension can intensify misbehavior and subsequently contribute to retention, drop-outs, and contact with the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, the majority of out-of-classroom time is due to teacher referrals or classroom suspensions for non-compliance; and

WHEREAS, reducing the number of out-of-classroom referrals and suspensions requires targeted support that empowers educators to build effective instructional and classroom management tools that can be exhausted before referring a child out of the classroom.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the _____ School District shall establish a Safe and Supportive Schools district policy and implementation plan, to deepen and extend positive tiered behavioral interventions and alternatives to suspension, increase instructional time, and reduce racial disparities, and that the policy shall include:

- ▶ Full implementation of Restorative Practices (“RP”) and Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (“SWPBIS”) at all schools;
- ▶ A three-year plan to implement RP and SWPBIS at all schools;
- ▶ An appeal mechanism for students, families, educators, and advisory councils (as appropriate) to seek review if RP and/or SWPBIS are not being implemented according to district policy;
- ▶ An evaluation based on discipline data, to be shared with the school community to inform disciplinary practices and procedures.

CONDITIONS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the _____ School District directs the Superintendent to address this agreement with resources for educators including professional learning for restorative practices, working with students impacted by trauma, de-escalation techniques, Cultural Competency, relationship building, communication skills and working with students with disabilities, prioritizing schools with highest behavioral needs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the _____ School District directs the Superintendent to prioritize in labor negotiations with _____ Education Association the reduction of out-of-classroom time due to referrals and classroom suspensions for non-compliance.

Sample Policy: Teacher Support and Evaluation

To develop a teacher support, evaluation and peer review plan, the (District) will establish a Joint Teacher-District Teacher Evaluation and Peer Review Design Team (the Team). The Team is responsible for the development of a teacher support, evaluation, and peer review plan for probationary and continuing teachers.

- I. The Team will consist of:
 - a. (Number) teachers representing the Education Association.
 - b. (Number) representatives of the school district appointed by the Superintendent or his designee.
- II. The Superintendent will convene the first meeting of the Team no later than (enter date). The agenda of the first meeting will include the establishment of a regular meeting schedule.
- III. A designee of the Education Association and the Superintendent or a designee will serve as co-chairs of the Team.
- IV. The Team will establish practices and procedures for its operation.
- V. The District shall supply the necessary resources, including but not limited to secretarial support, to allow for the completion of the Team's responsibility.
- VI. The elements to be considered in the development of the plan shall include but not be limited to:
 - a. The processes and timelines that will be used in the three (3) year evaluation cycle.
 - b. Identification of multiple measures of teacher effectiveness.
 - c. Staff development opportunities aligned with the evaluation process established under (state statute).
 - d. Qualifications and training of mentors and evaluators, including:
 - i. Training and use of induction mentors for probationary teachers.
 - ii. Training and use of peer mentors for continuing teachers.
 - iii. Orientation for mentee teachers with regard to working effectively with a mentor.

CONDITIONS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- e. Assistance plans and procedures for teachers identified through the evaluation and peer review processes as not meeting the performance standards established in the evaluation process.
- f. An evaluation and peer review implementation schedule that includes:
 - i. Timeline for adoption.
 - ii. Timeline for implementation.
 - iii. Timeline for training of mentors and evaluators in advance of the implementation date.
 - iv. Notification in advance of observations and evaluations to teachers being observed or evaluated. The Team shall determine the manner and timing of this notification.

WORKFORCE QUALITY

A great public school employs educators with the experience and skills to meet the needs of their students, promotes on-going professional development, and supports the rights of public school employees to organize and bargain the terms and conditions of employment as well as education policy issues.

The following examples illustrate some of the ways educators can address workforce quality.

Policy or Practice	Action
District provides differentiated pay structures for clearly defined roles and responsibilities that recognize multiple roles within a school.	Negotiate compensation models that recognize multiple educator roles. <i>See sample contract language in this section.</i>
District recruits promising educators from under-represented populations, and promotes the equitable distribution of qualified educators.	Advocate for the inclusion of information regarding the distribution of educators in district report cards. Incorporate incentives in school improvement plans to improve the equitable distribution of experienced and effective educators. Advocate for a recruitment and retention plan that will improve equitable access to experienced and qualified educators. <i>See sample school board resolution in this section.</i>
Educator support and evaluation systems are based on multiple measures of performance.	Negotiate contract language requiring the collaborative development of educator support and evaluation systems.
Comprehensive professional development plans address induction and mentoring, and support educators' professional growth.	Incorporate professional development, including induction and mentoring, into district plans and school improvement plans. Advocate for policies that enhance support for mentoring. <i>See sample policy in this section.</i>

Sample Contract Language: Career Ladder

1. Positions

- a. Teachers who apply for the following positions must have a summative evaluation rating of Distinguished and a most recent state student growth impact rating that is “average” or higher; or have a summative evaluation rating of Proficient and state student growth impact rating of “high.”

- 1) Demonstration Teacher
- 2) Mentor Teacher
- 3) Master Teacher
- 4) Content Demonstration Teacher
- 5) STAR Mentor Teacher
- 6) Evaluation Support Consulting Teacher
- 7) Academic Coach
- 8) Consulting Teacher
- 9) Curriculum Specialist
- 10) Special Education Program Specialist

All schools and programs will be eligible for career ladder positions.

- b. To be considered for Career Ladder positions, an employee, in addition to meeting position-specific criteria, must:
 - 1) Have a summative evaluation rating of Distinguished and a state student growth impact rating that is “average” or higher; or have a summative evaluation rating of Proficient and state student growth impact rating of “high”.
 - 2) Agree to have his/her student growth and academic goals reviewed more closely.
 - 3) Show that he/she achieved high student growth over two years.
 - 4) Show that he/she achieved goals developed under the Teacher/Principal Evaluation System guidelines.
 - 5) In the case of positions at a high needs school, have taught at least two years in a school defined as high needs when the employee taught there.

To be eligible for a Master Teacher position, the applicant must have prior experience as a Demonstration or Mentor Teacher.

- c. Eligible candidates will apply for positions within their building using the Site-Based Process. The principal will make the final offer. Content Demonstration Teachers will be hired at the District level.
- d. In the event that a school has no qualified candidates, and there is an open certificated position, the school may advertise the Career Ladder position to all eligible candidates within the District.
- e. Positions will be two-year appointments and an employee may re-apply.
- f. Each school will be allotted ten (10) substitute days for the year. For schools that have a Career Ladder Master Teacher, an additional four (4) substitute days will be allotted and used to support the Career Ladder Program goals of an individual school.
- g. Content Demonstration Teachers will have eight (8) substitute days allotted each year.

2. Duration

District-based Career Ladder Positions, Curriculum Specialists, Special Education Program Specialists, Academic Coaches, and Consulting Teachers will be four (4) year positions and an employee may reapply. In order to reapply, an employee must be overall Proficient and be Distinguished in at least one domain on his or her most recent summative evaluation. Evaluation Support and Consulting Teachers (ESCTs) do not need to reapply for their positions. An employee selected by _____ will be part of the hiring teams for all District-based Career Ladder positions.

3. Compensation

The Compensation Schedule for Special and Supplemental Assignment shall be shown in Appendix __ of this Agreement.

WORKFORCE QUALITY

Sample School Board Resolution: Equitable Distribution of Effective Educators

WHEREAS, our district's future well-being relies on providing our most vulnerable students access to high quality education and program support; and

WHEREAS, our district's public schools do not reflect an equitable distribution of experienced and effective educators; and

WHEREAS, all students should have the opportunity to an experienced, qualified educator regardless of where they live; and

WHEREAS, educator recruitment and retention policies and practices can support or undermine equitable allocation of educators within a school system;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the [your School District Governing Board name] supports the development and implementation of an educator recruitment and retention plan in collaboration with the [your Local Affiliate name], families, students, and community members, to ensure all students have equitable access to experienced and qualified educators; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [your School District Governing Board name] supports the inclusion of the definitions for hard-to-staff schools and experienced educators within all educator recruitment and retention plans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [your School District Governing Board name] supports the district in recruiting promising educators from under-represented populations and promotes the equitable distribution of effective educators.

Sample Policy: Teacher Mentoring

1. Description

The Mentoring Program includes a one-day training for designated mentors and five after-school meetings for teachers new to the district to receive induction in the instructional and other practices and policies of the district. Mentors and mentees will be provided with 12 hours of release time to meet and observe one another's classes. A mentor coordinator will oversee accountability for the program. The program will incorporate on-going, post-completion opportunities for continued learning and networking with other mentors.

2. Process

- a) Principals and the local Education Association will develop criteria for the selection of mentor nominees and a program description. Once these have been completed, the initiative will be announced to school staff. Adequate time will be provided to recruit applicants. The principal and local Association will agree on and submit a list of mentor nominees to the superintendent by the third week of August. The superintendent will confirm nominees or request alternative nominees. Mentors must have professional status.
- b) The mentor coordinator will send a confirmation letter to mentors and mentees prior to the start of school with details on the Mentoring Program and applicable dates. Only one mentee will be assigned to one mentor.
- c) The one-day training for mentors will take place in September after the first week of school and will be facilitated by the superintendent, local Association, and mentor coordinator or designee.
- d) The mentor coordinator will facilitate the five after school workshops for mentees, consulting with the Superintendent or designee and the local Association in developing the approach. The Superintendent or designee and the local Association, at their option, may attend the workshops.
- e) Designated mentors and mentees will be provided with up to 12 hours of release time in order to meet and observe in each other's classrooms. The mentor will complete at least one observation in the mentee's classroom during the school year, and the mentor will provide informal feed back to the mentee. The entire content of the mentor/mentee observations and meetings will remain confidential and will not be shared with the mentee's supervisor.

WORKFORCE QUALITY

- f) The Mentor Coordinator is responsible for accountability of trainings, meetings, mentor-mentee assignments, observations, and organization of hours for release time for mentors and teachers new to the district to meet. The Mentor Coordinator will follow-up with mentors during the course of the school year.
- g) The mentor will be responsible for maintaining records (on logs to be provided by the School Department) of all contact time between the mentor and his/her assigned mentee. The record will include meeting time, telephone contact time, classroom observation time and any time spent with supervisors (with the mentee's approval) discussing the mentee. The log must be co-signed by the mentee. The log must be submitted to the Mentor Coordinator no later than June 15th. The log will also serve as the application for PDPs for the mentoring activity.

3. Stipends & Professional Development Points (PDPs)

- a) A trained mentor will receive \$400 for each new teacher he/she mentors.
- b) One Professional Development Point (PDP) can be earned for each hour of mentoring. The [State Department of Education] will allow a maximum of 15 PDPs in a year and a maximum of 30 PDPs in a five-year period for this professional growth activity.
- c) The mentors will receive training during school time and will be released from their duties to attend the training. Substitute coverage will be provided if required.
- d) If an approved workshop, seminar, and/or other professional improvement session occurs on a work day, the teacher will receive his/her regular compensation without deduction from his/her leave time.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENTS

Great public schools use accountability systems based on multiple sources of evidence to assess student learning, instructional effectiveness, and school performance. They incorporate programs designed to achieve positive outcomes for all students, by reducing learning gaps and increasing the number of students who graduate, and who are prepared for postsecondary education and careers.

The following examples illustrate some of the ways educators can support student learning by implementing better accountability systems and assessment policies.

Policy or Practice	Action
<p>District assessment systems employ multiple indicators of student learning, such as educator-designed pre- and post-tests, percentage change in GPA, group work or presentations, end-of-course papers or portfolios, and project-based inquiry activities.</p>	<p>Incorporate data on multiple indicators of student learning in district report card.</p> <p>Advocate for a testing audit, reduction in the use of standardized tests, and an assessment system that incorporates performance- or project-based activities or portfolios.</p> <p><i>See sample contract language and school board resolution in this section.</i></p>
<p>District promotes equitable access to courses and programs that ensure all students graduate prepared for postsecondary success, including college and career.</p>	<p>Incorporate into district plans programs that reduce the drop-out rate, increase graduation rates, and promote college readiness.</p> <p>Include in district report cards graduation rates disaggregated by demographics, information on the numbers of students who take college entrance exams, and their average performance.</p>
<p>District provides professional development, resources, and time for teachers to become proficient users of formative and summative assessment data.</p>	<p>Advocate for professional development on assessment literacy, as well as data management and evaluation (including the protection of student data privacy).</p> <p><i>See sample policy in this section.</i></p> <p>Incorporate this professional development into district plans and school improvement plans.</p>

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENTS

Sample Contract Language: Assessment Audit

To reduce the number of formal assessments required during the school year and to advance a shared interest in maximizing instructional time, the _____ School District (hereinafter “District”) and the _____ Education Association (hereinafter the “Association”) will form an Assessment Audit Task Force (“Task Force”) to analyze the number, purpose of, and need for each academic assessment required of students in the District.

The Task Force will make recommendations to the Chief Academic Officer, Chief of Schools, and Superintendent in the following areas:

- The number of assessments administered and the purpose for each;
- Instructional time lost to test preparation and administration;
- Financial cost of test preparation, administration, and scoring;
- Value of data provided by assessments to improve teaching and learning;
- The quality of each assessment, including alignment to academic standards and the curriculum;
- Redundancy;
- Whether assessments are fairly constructed and bias-free;
- The ability of the district technology infrastructure to support testing, and data management;
- Impact on school facilities when libraries/media centers are unavailable due to test administration.

The Task Force shall include educators—teachers, education support professionals, and specialized instructional support personnel—from a variety of grade levels and content areas, appointed by the Association President, and an equal number of District personnel.

The Association President shall meet quarterly with the District to review and evaluate Task Force recommendations and the implementation thereof.

Sample School Board Resolution: End the Overuse and Misuse of Standardized Testing

WHEREAS, our nation's future well-being relies on a high-quality public education system that prepares all students for college, careers, citizenship and lifelong learning, and strengthens the nation's social and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, our nation's school systems have been spending growing amounts of time, money, and energy on high-stakes and standardized testing, in which student performance on standardized tests is used to make major decisions affecting individual students, educators, and schools; and

WHEREAS, the overreliance on high-stakes and standardized testing in state and federal accountability systems is undermining educational quality and equity in U.S. public schools by hampering educators' efforts to focus on the broad range of learning experiences that promote the innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and deep subject-matter knowledge that will allow students to thrive in a democracy and an increasingly global society and economy; and

WHEREAS, it is widely recognized that standardized testing is an inadequate and often unreliable measure of both student learning and educator effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the over-emphasis on standardized testing has caused considerable collateral damage in too many schools, including narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, reducing love of learning, pushing students out of school, driving excellent teachers out of the profession, and undermining school climate; and

WHEREAS, high-stakes standardized testing has negative effects for students from all backgrounds, and especially for low-income students, English language learners, children of color, and those with disabilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the [your School District Governing Board name] supports locally developed, authentic assessments as drivers of instruction and more time for educators to teach and students to learn;

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENTS

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [your School District Governing Board name] calls on the governor, state legislature and state education boards and administrators to re-examine public school accountability systems in this state, and to develop a system based on multiple forms of evidence that does not require extensive standardized testing, more accurately reflects the broad range of student learning, and is used to support students and improve schools.

Sample Policy: The Use of Student Data to Improve Instruction

To improve the use of student assessment data to improve instruction, the _____ School District is committed to providing educators and administrators appropriate professional development in the collection and analysis of student data.

A work group/committee of educators and administrators in each school shall, on an annual basis:

- Conduct an inventory of all assessments required by the state and district of students in each grade in the school, including time spent preparing for and administering each assessment, as well as related costs¹;
- Evaluate the normative and summative value of each assessment, taking into account particularly the timely return of results;
- Survey instructional staff to determine the extent and self-perceived staff expertise in using classroom-based assessments to inform and improve instruction;

Each work group shall develop recommendations for professional development to (1) enhance instructional staff proficiency in using classroom-based assessments, and (2) support understanding, interpretation of and appropriate use of data to improve instruction.

¹ Working with FairTest, NCUEA developed an adaptable survey available at <https://www.jotform.com/form-templates/2017-time-to-learn-survey>

NOTES

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Every student can be a successful and resilient learner regardless of his or her zip code. Great public schools engage with families and communities to collaborate in learning, advocacy, and securing resources. This is best accomplished by providing information in formats and languages that are clear and understandable, and providing genuine opportunities to engage families and community stakeholders as partners in student learning and the development of school policies and procedures.

The following examples illustrate some of the ways educators can improve family and community engagement.

Policy or Practice	Action
District engages families by supporting home visits by educators.	Negotiate contract language that supports home visits by educators. <i>See sample contract language in this section.</i>
District supports publication of state and local academic standards, policies and procedures, and information about student progress through multiple mechanisms designed to maximize family access.	Incorporate in district report card delivery mechanisms that employ assistive technology and practices that recognize diverse needs.
District provides access to extended onsite services for students and families and transformation of schools into full-service community schools.	Advocate for implementation of a community schools transformation plan. <i>See sample school board resolution in this section.</i> The community schools model may also be incorporated into your district plan or school improvement plan.
District supports family and community partnerships.	Incorporate partnerships with community stakeholders, and site-based decision-making councils into your district plan. Advocate for policy that promotes family engagement, including by providing professional development opportunities. <i>See sample policy in this section.</i>
District promotes professional learning that builds capacity to engage families.	Negotiate for the provision of culturally appropriate professional learning on how to engage diverse students, families, and community stakeholders.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Sample Contract Language: Home Visits

Memorandum of Understanding between _____ School District (hereinafter "District") and _____ Education Association (hereinafter "Association")

The District and the Association are memorializing our collaborative initiative, the Home Visit Program (HVP).

The expectations and understandings of the parties are as follows:

1. The program is partly administered by the Home Visit Program Board that includes representatives from the community, District, and Association. The program also is subject to the District/Association Collective Bargaining Agreement (hereinafter "CBA").
2. The program includes training for educators provided by the HVP at the Association and District offices.
3. Educators make visits in pairs to homes and are compensated at the CBA per session volunteer rate of pay. Educators are covered by the CBA while making the visits.
4. The District and the Association shall complete a modified salary schedule program that provides for HVP stipends to be part of educators' annual salary.
5. The parties shall also identify a HVP site coordinator position(s) for placement on the Extra Duty Schedule. The funds are HVP funds.
6. The funds for the HVP come from the local site categorical budgets, grants, and other sources.
7. The Association and District shall jointly develop and offer professional development and training for educators to ensure program continuity.

Sample School Board Resolution: Community Schools

WHEREAS, the _____ Board of Education (hereinafter “Board”) recognizes the positive impact community school strategies can have on schools and communities, and endorses Community Schooling as an evidence-based strategy for school improvement and community development which expands access to:

- Enriching curricular and extracurricular experiences that support the holistic development of all students; and
- School-based health, mental health, and social services that offer essential supports for students and their families; and
- Community-centered curriculum that engages youth in social inquiry and civic action; and
- Restorative justice programs that build a non-violent, respectful, and justice-enhancing community; and
- Professional development programs that link educators with families and community partners and provide educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to support community-based curriculum and school-community partnerships; and
- Inclusive and democratic leadership structures that engage family members and community partners alongside educators as vital members of community school teams; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board shall deliver a presentation on the community schools strategy at an open Board meeting on or before [insert date]; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorizes a joint committee (hereinafter the “Community Schools Committee”) comprised of District staff, community stakeholders, and educators (teachers, education support professionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and librarians/media specialists) appointed by the President of the _____ Education Association to develop a community schools transformation procedure; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Committee shall:

- Evaluate the optimal number of school sites for an initial cohort of community schools; and
- Develop the selection criteria for this initial cohort of community schools; and

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Establish a system for evaluating effectiveness of the cohort schools; and
- Draft a proposal for scaling effective community schools; and
- Calculate the net costs associated with providing each community school a dedicated community school coordinator, full staffing, and adequate resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Community Schools Committee shall present its findings and recommendations to the Board within 90 days of the passage of this resolution.

Sample Policy: Family, School and Community Partnerships

_____ School District ("District") recognizes that parents, caregivers, and families are their childrens' first and most influential teachers. Continued family engagement in the education of students contributes greatly to lifelong learning, and to a positive school environment and experience.

The responsibility for a child's education is shared by the school and family during the time the child spends in school. To support the goal of the school district to provide a high-quality education to all students, staff, and parents, these stakeholders must work together as partners.

To this end, the _____ Board of Education ("Board") supports the development, implementation and regular evaluation of family engagement strategies in each school, and at the district level, that will involve family members at all grade levels in a variety of roles. The family, school, and community partnerships program will be comprehensive and coordinated, and will include as a guide the six standards of family, school, and community partnerships outlined by the National Parent Teacher Association:

1. Effective two-way communication between the home and school personnel;
2. A welcoming environment for all families;
3. A full partnership between families and schools in the decisions that affect students;
4. Enhanced family partnerships to support student learning at home;
5. Developing lasting partnerships between schools, families, businesses, and the community; and
6. Increased community and district resources aimed at strengthening families, schools, and community partnerships.

Moreover, the District will ensure accountability of all staff in working with families as academic partners and establish avenues of two-way communication to keep families informed and to promote transparency and build trust. The District will also support professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance understanding of effective family, school, and community partnership strategies.

The District recognizes the importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to family, school, and community

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

partnerships. In collaboration with the District Accountability Committee, the Board and District staff will commit to providing district and community resources to support the efforts of schools to reach out to parents as equal partners.

SCHOOL FUNDING

Great public schools are sufficiently, equitably, and sustainably funded so they can provide all students the resources and supports required to meet their needs.

The following examples illustrate some of the ways educators can improve school funding and resource distribution.

Policy or Practice	Action
<p>District convenes an independent body of stakeholders that includes active preK-12 educators and administrators who annually assess if funding is sufficient to provide all students the opportunity to meet rigorous academic standards.</p>	<p>Negotiate contract language requiring inclusion of educators and administrators in analysis of funding adequacy and sufficiency. <i>See sample contract language in this section.</i></p> <p>Advocate for inclusion of educators in budget development and implementation.</p>
<p>District provides adequate funding based on student needs, and allocates funding equitably across schools.</p>	<p>Advocate for a school board resolution calling for sufficient, equitable, and sustainable funding to support public schools and students. <i>See sample school board resolution in this section.</i></p> <p>Include per-pupil funding, including any need-based “weighting” in district report cards.</p> <p>Advocate before the school board during budget development and implementation for funding adjustments based on student characteristics and costs.</p>
<p>District has the capacity to generate sufficient revenue to meet student needs.</p>	<p>Advocate for a policy authorizing multiple sources of revenue to fund public schools. <i>See sample policy in this section.</i></p> <p>Advocate for a dedicated and reliable source of school funding for public schools.</p>
<p>District provides information to the public in an accessible format on per-pupil expenditures on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Advocate for inclusion of per pupil spending on district report cards, disaggregated by source (federal, state, and local).</p>

SCHOOL FUNDING

Sample Contract Language: Collaborative Funding Analysis

The parties are committed to working collaboratively with representatives of the other employee organizations in a variety of structures and processes created to address the priorities of _____ Public Schools (__PS).

One mechanism for promoting such collaboration shall be the Association/ District (Superintendent)/ Chief Operating Officer (ADC) Committee.

- a. Membership of the ADC Committee shall include the president and executive director of each of the employee organizations, the superintendent, and the chief operating officer.
- b. The ADC Committee shall meet monthly, at a regularly scheduled date and time, for regular, ongoing discussions and decision making on matters germane to the employee organizations and management.
- c. The charge of the ADC shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - i. Addressing matters of mutual interest or concern
 - ii. Identifying how decisions that are made with other employee organizations will impact unit members and how all parties will be involved in these decisions so that the impact of any decision will be known before the decision is made
 - iii. Discussing decisions that impact the members of multiple associations
 - iv. Developing guidelines and processes for implementing collaboration throughout the school system
 - v. Identifying supports and resources to sustain collaboration
- d. The ADC Committee shall also convene annually an independent body of stakeholders that includes educators (teachers, education support professionals, specialized instructional support personnel, librarians/media specialists), administrators and independent economic analysts, to assess funding sufficiency relative to the need to provide all students equitable opportunities to meet rigorous academic standards. The findings of this analysis shall be discussed at a meeting of the ADC Committee, published to the __PS website, and presented to the __PS School Board and [insert local taxing body].

Sample School Board Resolution: Sufficient Funding

WHEREAS, Article ____ of the ____ State Constitution mandates that a uniform system of free public schools sufficient for the education of, and open to, all the children of school age in the state shall be established and maintained; and

WHEREAS, the _____ School Board takes seriously its responsibility to provide the very best education possible to each and every student enrolled in (District) Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, the success of our children will determine the future success of the state; and

WHEREAS, student success depends on, among other things, access to:

- High quality early childhood education;
- A comprehensive, culturally relevant and challenging curriculum that prepares students for college, careers, and citizenship;
- Class sizes small enough to allow individual attention
- Accommodations and differentiated instruction designed to meet the range of student needs;
- Experienced and effective educators who are provided the time and resources needed to maintain and improve their professional practice;
- High quality resources, including textbooks, workbooks, technology and other supplies;
- An accountability and assessment system that incorporates multiple measures of student learning;
- Genuine partnerships between families, schools and the communities in which they are located;
- Facilities that are safe, well-maintained and that provide the infrastructure to support learning;
- Transportation to and from school; and

WHEREAS, public schools are increasingly responsible for also providing professional counseling services, access to quality health and dental care through school-based health clinics, and assistance to families in need of trained social workers; and

SCHOOL FUNDING

WHEREAS, the ability to adequately fund the above-described essential elements of a great public school is contingent on State funding; and

WHEREAS, the State consistently fails to meet its minimum funding obligations to general education and special education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the _____ Schools Board formally calls upon the state Legislature to prioritize public education funding according to the needs of each school district, its local community, and most importantly, its students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature and the Governor are encouraged to develop a vision and strategic plan for economic development that generates sufficient revenue that sufficient education funding is not achieved at the expense of other critical governmental programs.

Sample School Board Policy: School Finance Transparency

1. To enhance transparency, public understanding, analysis, and usability, the _____ School District Department of Finance (hereinafter "Finance") shall prepare an annual Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) in accordance with the accounting requirements promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).
2. Finance shall provide the public with detailed, understandable information about how it makes its revenue projections each year, including projected federal, state, and local revenues, and how revenues are calculated and projected.
3. Finance will deliver a presentation annually during an open School Board meeting in which it will provide information on projected federal, state, and local revenue, as well as all tax expenditures, whether direct or indirect
4. To ensure that every student has the same opportunity to receive the highest-level of education afforded by our district, and students have equal access to courses, programs and opportunities, all future budgeting shall fund schools equitably.
5. Finance shall develop and implement an efficient system for monitoring the district's facilities, grounds, and vehicles to ensure students and faculty are provided safe, clean and efficient facilities,
6. To provide the district and the public with a clear understanding of the district's property tax base, Finance shall publish an annual report demonstrating the tax capacity of local revenue sources, including property tax values, growth in property tax values, and information on the millage rates (with an explanation of millage). The information is to be available for a period of 10 years, with previous years being archived.
7. The _____ School District shall develop budget allocations for schools using a needs-based methodology. Finance shall include in its annual financial report an identification of how revenues were dispersed per school based on projected needs of students. Every attempt shall be made to aggregate data as to not allow for the potential identification of any individual student. The district shall institute a system of school-based budgeting and shall provide annual professional learning opportunities for administrators and staff in the appropriate development, planning, and management of such a system.

SCHOOL FUNDING

Sample Policy: Revenues from Local Tax Sources

BUSINESS AND NON-INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS

The Board of Education shall have the power to set a tax levy for the operation of the school district. Each municipality having territory in the School District of _____ shall be requested to provide a proportionate share of the local taxes collected on behalf of the district.

The administration of the property tax levied by the school district for operation and maintenance shall be governed by the school finance laws under the constraints of the state statutes. The Board and administrative staff shall be responsible for implementing the law in all details.

CONCLUSION

By combining your voice with the voices of your colleagues, and engaging in coordinated collective action through your Association, you can secure great policy wins to improve conditions for your students.

We encourage you to post your questions and share your experiences on NEA edCommunities, so other educators can “eavesdrop” and build on the conversation. This online professional learning community is also where NEA will provide technical assistance and post additional resources, such as bargaining language, school board resolutions, and policy proposals not included in this publication.

We look forward to hearing from you and supporting your advocacy efforts as you engage with other educators and your Association staff to seek these policy changes. Please send questions, comments, and requests to us at ESSAinfo@nea.org.

NOTES



National Education Association
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
nea.org