



## 2009 Legislative Positions

Texas ASCD has developed a set of legislative position statements designed to focus attention on critical issues for educators across the state. The position topics are as follows:

- **Educating Students in a Changing World**
- **High School Renewal and Rigorous High School Courses**
- **Decision Making Authority at State Level**
- **School Funding**
- **Accountability and Assessment**
- **Instructional Staff Quality**

*The following Texas ASCD members served on the Legislative Team and provided the leadership in the development of the position statements that follow:*

*Deana Lopez, Team Leader  
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**Texas ASCD  
2009 Legislative Positions**

The following are statements reflecting issues of greatest concern for the members of Texas ASCD:

**EDUCATING STUDENTS IN A CHANGING WORLD**

As educators in the 21st century, we are charged with educating students to be successful in a complex, interconnected world. This responsibility requires schools to prepare students for technological, cultural, economic, informational, and demographic changes.

ASCD and Texas ASCD support changes in teaching, learning, and leadership that adequately prepare students for the 21st Century and graduate students who:

- acquire and apply core knowledge and critical-thinking skill sets that are essential in an information age;
- demonstrate creativity, innovation, and flexibility when partnering with business and community members to advance common goals;
- make decisions and solve problems ethically and collaboratively;
- utilize technology to gather, analyze, and synthesize information for application in a global economy;
- exhibit positive interpersonal relationships that value multiple languages, cultures, and all persons; and
- display leadership skills that inspire others to achieve, serve, and work together.

*Source: ASCD 2008 Position Document*

## **HIGH SCHOOL RENEWAL AND RIGOROUS HIGH SCHOOL COURSES**

Texas ASCD believes that high school renewal with rigorous expectations in all high school courses should be a top priority of the legislature. To best prepare for college, students should take rigorous courses in high school. AP courses have college-level standards, are taught by teachers trained to teach these rigorous courses, and have instructional materials that reflect the standards. Students may take the AP exam for each AP course. The exam reflects the course content and the scores provide an indication of the student's mastery. Texas ASCD believes students should have choices in math and science course offerings at the high school level. Texas ASCD has adopted a position on the following high school renewal and rigorous course issues:

- Oppose any legislation that diverts PK-12 public education funds to post-secondary institutions for dual credit courses.
- Support the continuation of Advanced Placement Incentive program.
- Support the 4 x 4 graduation plan.
- Support the expansion of state approved mathematics and science courses.
- Also support legislation for high school renewal that includes
  - multiple assessments,
  - personalized learning,
  - flexible use of time and structure
  - professional development for teachers and school leadership,
  - business and community engagement. (*ASCD High School Position Document*)

## **DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY AT STATE LEVEL**

Texas ASCD believes the state decision making authority for high school policies and guidelines, to include grade point averages should remain with the Commissioner of Education.

Texas ASCD supports the following position on grade point averages:

- Supports that any state decision making on a grade point average should be by the Commissioner of Education, with the broad base input of the educational field. This also supports the repeal of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's authority to establish a uniform GPA calculation.

## **SCHOOL FUNDING**

Texas ASCD believes that the adequate and appropriate funding of public schools in Texas is one of the most important functions of the state legislature and, consequently, it must be a major priority of state political officials. The Texas ASCD supports any legislation designed to increase the state's share of funding for public education through the application of adequate funding mechanisms. In addition, the Texas ASCD has adopted a position on the following school funding issues:

- Oppose any legislation that would divert state monies to private schools by way of program funding, tax credits, or vouchers.
- Support flexibility with textbook allocations that enable the purchase of textbooks and/or other resources designed to employ technology-based solutions.
- Oppose the expansion of existing or the adoption of new state mandates without full state funding.
- Support legislation to provide local school districts with greater flexibility over the utilization of state monies.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT**

The Texas ASCD supports an accountability system that holds local districts accountable for the performance of all students. The organization encourages the careful development of a state accountability system that will include accurate indicators of student performance while also incorporating the accountability provisions within No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Texas ASCD believes that a coordinated accountability system, as opposed to separate state and federal systems, will better serve educators and students in continuous improvement efforts. The Texas ASCD has developed the following position statements related to accountability systems in Texas:

- Support a statewide accountability system that provides accurate and timely data for continuous improvement efforts.
- Support a statewide accountability system focusing on improvement in student performance.
- Support multiple indicators of achievement as assessment options.
- Support reliable and valid assessments, including growth measures, and hold harmless students that have reached the ceiling of an assessment.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF QUALITY**

**Texas ASCD supports any concerted effort to provide every student in this state with the most skilled and qualified instructional staff. To accomplish this goal, agencies must work collaboratively to provide innovative teacher, administrative, and paraprofessional preparation programs, employ intensive recruitment efforts, provide on-going professional development, and increase salary and benefits for educators. The Texas ASCD has adopted the following positions related to teacher and staff quality:**

- **The State of Texas bears primary responsibility for ensuring that all fully certified teachers have demonstrated abilities to manage a classroom and facilitate student mastery of the required curriculum.**
- **Teachers must demonstrate content knowledge and effective understanding of pedagogy in the content areas for which they would be responsible for instruction.**
- **Support the implementation of standards for professional development to positively impact professional knowledge and practice.**