

INTRODUCTION

As stakeholders with a unique perspective on the education system, students must be involved in education policy discussions. Through this platform and its Governmental Affairs Program, the California Association of Student Councils (CASC) creates an avenue for students to share their voice in shaping their schools.

To accurately communicate the views of California's students, the CASC Governmental Affairs Program strives to annually surveys students about what they view as the most important issues at their schools. Additionally, CASC holds annual conferences where students develop proposals related to the most pressing issues facing California's education system.

This platform is meant to help focus and guide CASC's legislative affairs in regards to what will create the most positive change for current and future California students.

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VISION AND MISSION

Vision

Every student in the California education system is provided with an equal, free, safe, and high-quality education. Learning is exciting, interesting, and relevant for students, and real-world applications of curriculum are evident in classes.

Students are empowered by their learning and are able to make responsible decisions and constructively contribute to society with the necessary skills to succeed in college and beyond. The student voice is respected and welcomed throughout California and is valued and incorporated during policymaking.

California's K-12 education system is a model for the nation and world as it prepares citizens to lead meaningful and productive lives.

Mission

The California Association of Student Councils serves as a catalyst for change in the education system by serving as an advocate for youth, providing a channel for student views, and empowering youth to take action.

ABOUT CASC AND ITS LEGISLATIVE ACTION

About the California Association of Student Councils

Founded by the State of California in 1947, CASC is a non profit student-led organization, advised by educators. CASC focuses on the peer training of students and activities advisors to foster self-esteem and build citizenship and leadership skills. To inspire students and effectively represent their voice, CASC sponsors the annual Student Advisory Board on Education (SABE) and Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education (SABLE). Through these programs, students make proposals for education reform that are presented to the State Board of Education and Senate/Assembly Committees on Education. CASC also hosts the Youth Action Summit of California (YASC), High School Summer Leadership Conferences, Student Board Member Symposiums, Elementary and Middle School Leadership Workshops, special projects, and regional conferences throughout the state.

Recent Legislative Action

2015:

- SB 532: Requires a majority vote at a public board meeting to eliminate the student board member position and requires school districts to add a student board member within 60 days of a petition being filed pursuant to Education Code 35012. It was signed by Governor Brown on September 21, 2015.
- AB 1204: encourages the State Board of Education to add a student member to the Instructional Quality Commission, the panel which decides on curriculum and textbooks for the entire state of California, was signed by the Governor. The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) co-sponsored this bill and assisted CASC in driving it forward.

STUDENT INPUT

Students, as the direct recipients and primary stakeholders in the education system, have unique insight into the education and programs at the school and district level and should have the opportunity to provide perspectives on what they learn and how they are taught. Therefore:

CASC Supports:

- Establishing a student board member position with a preferential vote in every high school district board of education in California.
- Creating a network for school student board members to effectively ask questions about their position and communicate best practices.
- Mandating that schools and school districts provide simple and accessible budget breakdowns for students to analyze.
- Designing a feedback system for students to provide feedback on their teachers and the material that they are learning.
- Adding additional non-voting student positions on the Instructional Quality Commission of the State Board of Education.
 - On October 2, 2015, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 1204 that added a student member to the Instructional Quality Commission.
- Revising the State Student Board Member application election schedule.
- Creating a student input system for the state accountability standards for every school.
- Student surveys are incorporated as a metric in the state accountability system.

Student Vision:

In the ideal education system,

- School faculty and administration and their governing bodies have as much value for the student opinion as they do the opinions of adults.
- Students actively participate in the decisions being made for their schools and provide input to improve their schools.
- Students are aware of changes being made in their schools and have an active voice in shaping those changes.
- District boards of education have an effective system for the role of the student board member to be able to voice the opinions of the students in the district.

STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELL BEING

It is imperative that students receive a holistic education and are motivated to succeed. In order to achieve this, students should receive personal guidance and support along with their education. Therefore:

CASC Supports:

- Establishing peer mentoring programs of motivated high school students working with their peers and middle school and elementary school students.
- Mandating peer mentoring programs at “at risk” or Program Improvement schools.
- Establishing a greater focus on subjects with real world applicability such as financial literacy, technological literacy/proficiency, health/wellness curriculum, and presentation skills in all classes.
- Establishing peer counseling programs at schools to offer students emotional support and discourage “self-medication” with drugs or alcohol.
- Increase use of programs that prevent drug/alcohol abuse.
- Reflection of overall emotional health of the student body in the LCAP process.

Student Vision:

In the ideal education system,

- Students support one another emotionally.
- Students are aware of the importance of mental health and have the necessary resources to prevent drug/alcohol abuse.
- Students are well-prepared for challenges that come with adult life.
- Students have a vested interest in their schooling because current and practical lessons are incorporated into core curriculum.
- Students have an adult mentor at their school to guide them.

TEACHER QUALITY

Educators are rigorously trained before and during their credentialing period, but not enough is being done to reinforce these skills after teachers have been credentialed. Therefore:

CASC Supports:

- Using the existing structure of Common Core to provide periodical required/recommended teacher seminars on relevant educational and teaching advancements and techniques.
- Giving teachers the resources to teach Common Core effectively.
- Collaboration with the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to expand the use of California Teaching Performance Assessment periodically during the careers of educators.
- Implementing a system for student feedback to teachers.

Student Vision:

In the ideal education system,

- Teachers are updated on innovative and effective teaching methodologies through professional development.
- Teachers are able to collaborate with their peers to develop the best techniques and materials.
- The skills of educators are frequently improving through fair feedback that occurs throughout their careers.
- Students are able to provide a constant stream of feedback to teachers.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Standardized tests should efficiently and effectively assess the quality of education. Student input in the evaluation and design of standardized tests would allow education policymakers to receive more feedback on the testing system. Therefore:

CASC Supports:

- Forming a Standardized Testing Advisory Council, through which students, educators, and parents work together to provide feedback on California's standardized tests.
- Establishing a non-monetary recognition program as an incentive for improvement and high performance on standardized tests.
- Incorporating surveys into standardized tests to gauge student views on the quality and applicability of standardized tests.
- Consulting with University of California and California State University regents to create merit-based fee waivers for applications based on students' standardized test performance.

Student Vision:

In the ideal education system,

- There are incentives for students to perform well on standardized tests.
- Students are fully prepared by teachers for standardized tests, and extra test preparation is available for all students that need it.
- Student input is valued during the writing of tests, ensuring that tests allow students to display the full extent of their knowledge.
- Standardized testing is comprehensive and incorporates academic standards from a broad variety of subjects.
- All students have the opportunity to display their knowledge reflected by the education standards through standardized tests, despite their financial status.

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

In a world where technology is becoming central to education, it is necessary that California students and educators know how to use technology effectively.

Therefore:

CASC Supports:

- Promoting teaching methods that involve technology in all core classes, to increase student exposure to technology.
- Establishing teaching development programs that focuses on how technology can be integrated into the classroom.
- Teaching technology skills in all schools beginning in elementary school.
- Making programming classes available in all California schools beginning in middle school.
- Creating a method to assess all California educators' knowledge of the integration of technology in a classroom setting.

Student Vision:

In the ideal education system,

- All schools have access to updated technology.
- All students are proficient in coding and are able to utilize the technology available to them confidently.
- All teachers are proficient in using technology and integrate it into their lessons on a daily basis.

CASC DISTINGUISHED SCHOOLS

Students should be aware of and involved in the education reform process. The four main goals that CASC has adopted that the ideal school should have:

1. A student member on the school board of education.
2. A system for students to be educated on their rights.
3. A system by which students can give constructive feedback to teachers.
4. An effective Student Government. Therefore:

CASC Supports:

- Maintaining the creation of curriculum for Leadership/ASB/Student Government classes that includes standards for leadership skills.
- A system to commend schools and school districts for reforming education at the school level by declaring them as a “CASC Distinguished School.”
- A “Know Your Rights” campaign to inform students about their rights and responsibilities.
- Requiring California District Board of Education to respond to a student petition for a student board member to 30 days instead of 60 days.
- Requiring that in order to remove the student board member position, all board members must be unanimous in their decision to remove it.
 - On September 21, 2015, Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 532 that requires a majority vote by the school district board to eliminate the student board member position and requires school districts to add a student board member within 60 days of a petition (Ed. Code 35012).

Student Vision:

In the ideal education system,

- Every school board has a voting student board member.
- Every school has an effective student government.
- All stakeholders are educated about student rights and responsibilities.
- Every school has a process for student evaluation of teachers.

CASC LEGISLATIVE GOALS 2016 - 2017

CASC State Funding Augmentation:

- Our society needs competent and ethical leaders from all backgrounds and cultures. The growing income gap prevents lower income students from being able to attend CASC leadership training because our scholarship funds are very limited. CASC has the capabilities and the track record empower students and related stakeholders to transform the California education system.
- CASC received state funding from 1985 - 2012 beginning with a \$90,000 line item in the General Fund. The amount earmarked for CASC varied according to the economy until it was eliminated entirely in 2012.
- All state funding was eliminated in 2013 when Categorical Funding was removed from the budget.
- CASC is seeking a legislator to introduce a \$150,000 ongoing augmentation in the next budget to increase the state's investment in the youth development provided by CASC.

California State Student Board Member Election Schedule:

- The deadline for the appointment of the State Board of Education Student Member should be made by March 31 to allow for adequate time to inform the applicants of their position.
- The deadline for the State Student Board Member should be moved to September 15 to allow for ample time to review applications.

California Student Board Members:

- One of CASC's visions is that every school board has a voting student board member.
- It currently stands that school districts must add a student board member within 60 days of a petition being filed pursuant to Education Code 35012. CASC advocates that school districts must add a student board member within 30 days of a petition.
- Student board members are trained at CASC's Student Board Member Symposiums.
- Student board members are fully aware of their responsibilities.