



2007 ASCD Legislative Agenda

Using the Association's positions as a foundation, the ASCD Legislative Committee developed the 2007 Legislative Agenda to set the course for ASCD's influence action with the U.S. Congress and domestic policymakers during the coming year. The 2007 Legislative Agenda identifies the Association's top legislative priorities:

- Innovative High School Redesign.
- Closing the Achievement Gap.
- School Readiness and Early Development of the Whole Child.

These priorities apply to specific U.S. legislation that is currently under consideration as well as future legislation that may arise. Most importantly, they illustrate ASCD's core beliefs and principles surrounding the future of education policy in the United States and the issues we believe are central to the success of each learner.

The 2007 ASCD Legislative Committee is chaired by ASCD President Nancy DeFord. Committee members include the cochairs of the Leadership Council's Position Development Team and other members appointed by the ASCD President.

Founded in 1943, ASCD, a nonprofit association, is one of the largest professional development organizations for educator leaders. It provides education information services, offers cutting-edge professional development for effective teaching and learning, and supports activities to provide educational equity for all students. ASCD's 178,000 members reside in 135 countries and include principals, teachers, superintendents, professors of education, and other educators.

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Printer-friendly copies of the ASCD Legislative Agenda, policy papers, and key messages are available at www.ascd.org/legislativeagenda.





Innovative High School Redesign

ASCD supports high school redesign that includes rich and rigorous curriculum, meaningful and relevant learning experiences, and relationships with caring adults who know students well.

ASCD calls upon the U.S. Congress to support the efforts of states and local education agencies to use research-based approaches that engage high school youth and improve educational outcomes. These outcomes should enable high school graduates to become productive world citizens, prepared for economic success in a competitive global market.

To achieve this, ASCD proposes five key areas for innovative high school redesign:

- **Multiple Measures of Assessment**, including a progress-based interpretation of the data as an essential element in determining adequate yearly progress.
- **Personalized Learning** to enable students to take ownership of their learning with a caring adult/mentor to support academic efforts achieving graduation.
- **Flexible Use of Time and Structure** to allow high schools to determine the appropriate learning, classroom, calendar, and graduation time and to free them from the 100-year-old Carnegie unit and other inflexible structures.
- **Professional Development for All Educators** that builds capacity for successful school leadership and effective instructional practice. High school innovation requires that teachers and school leaders are supported in gaining and sustaining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to address the evolving needs of students.
- **Business and Community Engagement** to provide expanded business and community support for new learning opportunities and increased student engagement.

ASCD opposes school choice programs that do not provide equal access for all students. ASCD also opposes policies that evaluate schools and students according to a narrowly constructed testing system.





Closing the Achievement Gap

The following legislative agenda priorities, clustered together under the broad title of Closing the Achievement Gap, primarily call for changes to the U.S. No Child Left Behind Act; however, their core principles also apply to other relevant education legislation.

ASCD calls for

- **Adjustments to the Adequate Yearly Progress Model** to incorporate multiple measures of assessment, including progress-based accountability.
- **Preparation and Professional Development** to ensure effective educators that is data driven, flexible, learner outcome based, and addresses the needs of the whole child.
- **Effective Interventions to Support Students** to ensure school improvement approaches are flexible, proven through data, and meets the locally determined needs of students.

Effective Assessments and Progress-Based Accountability

ASCD supports valid and reliable information based upon multiple data sources and the use of multiple and formative assessments, which provide appropriate evidence of student learning.

Appropriate assessment systems must be reflective of curricular and developmental goals and representative of content that students have had an opportunity to learn. It is critical that they are valid, reliable, and designed to accommodate English language learners and students with disabilities.

ASCD calls upon the U.S. Congress to enable the use of multiple assessments for evaluating student growth and performance. Using a single test as the sole determinant for student, individual school, and school district achievement does not present an accurate assessment and will result in inappropriately and inaccurately labeled students, schools, and school districts. ASCD also calls upon the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Department of Education to ensure calculation of student achievement across all subgroups using equitable and consistent methodology.

ASCD opposes federal sanctions or school evaluation models that are determined by performance on a single assessment or without consideration of individual student growth.





Closing the Achievement Gap

Effective Interventions to Support Students

ASCD supports research-based interventions to increase student learning. Effective interventions should be proven through data, made readily available, and have appropriate supports for success, including professional development, and program support for the ongoing development of new and improved interventions.

ASCD supports greater flexibility in the selection, implementation, and use of available funding streams to meet locally identified needs of students. Local districts are best positioned to determine appropriate interventions and the unique needs of their students. ASCD supports the inclusion of business and community entities provided that the local education agency oversees the decision-making process. Any support system or program should measure results against the development of the whole child.

ASCD calls upon the U.S. Congress to increase flexibility for approved interventions in schools. Restrictive language in current federal law creates barriers to implementing effective intervention programs and does not recognize the unique nature of school districts in designing and seeking new school improvement and intervention efforts.

ASCD opposes support for supplemental service providers that do not comply with the federal requirements of accountability and highly qualified instructors.





Closing the Achievement Gap

Preparation and Professional Development to Ensure Effective Educators

ASCD supports high-quality professional development for the continuous achievement of all educators. High-quality professional development and preparation is flexible, data-driven, contextual, and learner-centered within research-based practices that support the development of the whole child.

Students are better served when a highly qualified, effective educator is in the classroom. High-quality, effective leaders are needed at all levels to build capacity for school improvement and success.

ASCD calls upon the U.S. Congress to support flexible professional development of educators that builds capacity for successful school leadership and effective instructional practice. Student success requires that teachers and school leaders are supported in gaining and sustaining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to address the evolving needs of students. In addition resources must be provided for recruitment, retention, and recognition of effective educators.

ASCD opposes any limited focus on content knowledge that ignores research-based instructional and leadership strategies. ASCD also opposes any mandated initiatives that are not funded.





School Readiness and Early Development of the Whole Child

ASCD supports high-quality pre-kindergarten education programs for all children, with the highest priority given to those that serve the students who are most at risk. Early intervention is the most cost-effective approach to closing the achievement gap. Although one focus of such programs is kindergarten readiness, ASCD advocates attention to and development of, the whole child.

The current educational climate often emphasizes academic achievement and excludes a more holistic approach to educating the whole child. Early childhood initiatives must recognize the relationship between health and learning. We encourage the creation of programs that provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities and that emphasize emotional and physical well-being, motivation and engagement, and experience in the arts.

ASCD calls for

- **Early Childhood Education** to provide resources and support for developmentally appropriate learning opportunities emphasizing emotional and physical well being that are aligned with local school districts.
- **Professional Development Opportunities** to ensure that early childhood specialists are effective educators.
- **School Readiness Programs** that involve parents, communities, schools, businesses and policymakers; all of whom have a stake in the development of the whole child.

School readiness requires highly qualified and effective teachers and leaders. In addition, the involvement of family, community, business partners, and policymakers, plays an important role in successful programs. ASCD advocates that early childhood initiatives include support for appropriate professional development and incentives for stakeholder participation.

ASCD calls upon the U.S. Congress to support high-quality pre-kindergarten education for all children and to increase funding for Head Start and other successful early childhood programs. ASCD calls for flexibility in alignment of federal programs with state and local school readiness initiatives. Further, funding priorities must be provided to those activities that are aligned with school district curricula using diverse measures of assessment.

ASCD opposes the use of a single measure assessment of individual students to determine the effectiveness of local school readiness programs.

