**LEGISLATIVE AGENDA:** A whole child approach to education can best prepare students to be college, career, and citizenship ready. Such an approach requires Congress and the Obama administration to provide comprehensive opportunities in all academic subjects, including the arts; promote social and emotional learning; offer in-school mental health and counseling services; encourage meaningful student and parental engagement; and make available high-quality early childhood education and affordable postsecondary learning options.

**KEY POINTS**

**PROVIDE** access to and ensure proficiency in all academic subjects.

- College, career, and citizenship readiness requires students to be proficient in subjects beyond math and English language arts and should encompass all disciplines and the comprehensive knowledge and skills required of students after high school graduation.
- A whole child approach to educating our students is the best way to meet the needs of today’s employers, who are seeking skilled communicators, creative thinkers, and technologically trained candidates.

**ENSURE** access to in-school social and emotional learning and supports to increase students’ capacity to achieve.

- Integrated, school-based behavioral and mental health services as well as bullying- and harassment-prevention programs can provide a foundation for students’ physical and psychological health and safety and lead to better student outcomes.
- Character traits such as perseverance and tenacity are essential components of a whole child approach to education.

**SUPPORT** meaningful parental, youth, and community engagement.

- Schools that partner with parent and community groups provide a strong environment for increased student well-being, engagement, and academic success.

**PROVIDE** quality early childhood education.

- Research confirms that high-quality early education prepares children for school, increases self-esteem and motivation, and can significantly reduce socioeconomic disparities.

**ENSURE** access to affordable postsecondary education opportunities for all students.

- Sixty percent of today’s jobs require candidates who have a college education, and this percentage is expected to grow in the coming years.
- The unemployment rate for individuals with a bachelor’s degree is roughly half that of high school graduates.