Work Session

Tuesday, September 22, 2020 5:30 PM
NES Commons /Zoom, 1057 E 5th Ave, Nome, Alaska 99762

A. **Call to Order**
B. **Items for Discussion**
1. New Suggested AASB Resolutions
2. Suggested Revisions to Current AASB Resolutions
C. **Upcoming Events:**
   - **Tuesday, September 29, Regular Meeting, 5:30 pm, NES Commons/Zoom**
   - **Tuesday, October 13, Regular Meeting, 5:30 pm, NES Commons/Zoom**
   - **Tuesday, October 27, Work Session, 5:30 pm, NES Commons/Zoom**
D. **Adjournment**



association of
ALASKA
school boards

Where We Stand 2021

The resolutions and belief statements of the Association of Alaska School Boards

Summer 2020 BOD Review

Adopted by the Membership

November 10, 2019

[Note: Sunsetting resolutions are highlighted in yellow]

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AASB Mission Statement

The mission of AASB is to advocate for children and youth by assisting school boards in providing quality public education, focused on student achievement, through effective local governance.

Belief Statements

Belief Statements are brief philosophical statements about issues the AASB membership believes to be true. They are distinguished from Resolutions in that they are longstanding, universally accepted statements that require no specific action yet underpin the beliefs of the association.

GOVERNANCE

B.1 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Public education is the responsibility of the states and of the local school boards created by those states. This system of local school board governance is one of the purest examples of democracy in action today in that school boards, as locally elected representatives, are held accountable for public education by the public they serve as locally elected representatives. The mission of the Association of Alaska School Boards is to advocate for children and youth by assisting school boards in providing students with quality public education, focused on student achievement through effective local governance. *Amended 2003, 2007, 2009*

B.2 BINDING ARBITRATION

Binding arbitration removes decision making from locally elected school boards and puts it in the hands of an outside entity, and allows a third party to determine the salaries, benefits and working conditions of school district employees who bargain collectively. It is the elected school board's responsibility to weigh the consequences of decisions concerning management of school resources. The Association of Alaska School Boards opposes any legislation that provides for binding arbitration as the final step in collective bargaining.

B.3 ADVISORY BOARD TRAINING

State law requires the establishment of advisory school boards in REAA's and allows them in city and borough school districts. School boards have delegated authority and responsibility to those advisory school boards, and are encouraged to provide in-service opportunities and training to local advisory boards to help them become effective contributors to excellence in education in their communities.

B.4 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER TRAINING

School board members are elected by their local school district citizens based on minimum statewide requirements of eligibility to vote and residency. They are responsible to the public for policy issues and budgets of millions of dollars and are coming under increasing public scrutiny. The Association of Alaska School Boards strongly encourages all school board members to avail themselves of training opportunities to increase their understanding of the issues confronting their district, to improve their ability to make the decisions required of them and to demonstrate their accountability to the public.

B.5 CLASS SIZE

AASB opposes any legislative mandating of class size or making class size a negotiable item of bargaining. The Alaska Supreme Court has held that class size is not a mandatory subject of collective bargaining. While school boards recognize the advantage of small class size, they must be able to use discretion when weighing the cost of reduced class sizes with other financial obligations and educational needs of a district. Making class size a mandatory subject of collective bargaining might make class size subject to grievance binding arbitration or otherwise diminish board control over staffing levels. Legislative mandates similarly infringe on the discretion of local decision-makers. *Amended 2009*

B.6 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance is an important civics lesson, recited every day across the nation by school children. Each school district shall incorporate the Pledge of Allegiance to our nation’s flag in a manner that it sees fit as a regular part of the district’s activities, in compliance with AS 14.03.130. Every effort should be made to inform students of the true meaning of this pledge to

deepen their interest and understanding of citizenship and civic responsibility in a democratic society. Additionally, in accordance with AS 14.03.130 school districts shall inform all affected persons at the school of their right not to participate in the pledge. *Adopted 2013 Amended 2015, 2018*

FUNDING

B.7 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND FUNDING AS TOP PRIORITY

Article VII, Sec. 1 of the Alaska State Constitution states that the Legislature shall establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all school age children. Public education is fundamental to democracy and economic advancement of the state and tribes**.** AASB calls upon the Governor and the Alaska Legislature to make early, sustainable, adequate and equitable funding a top priority for the exemplary education of our youth. *Amended 2003, 2005, 2006*, 2008, 2017, 2018

B.8 UNFUNDED MANDATES

Schools have been inundated with statutes, regulations and court decisions that require additional services without accompanying appropriations. With limited and decreasing resources due to significant revenue shortfalls, increasing costs, and expectations for services; unfunded mandates result in an overwhelming financial burden for school districts throughout our state. These mandates are invasive to the educational process, limiting local school boards in their flexibility and autonomy to appropriate funds within their district, thus negatively impacting their ability to govern local schools. AASB encourages all policy makers to consider the impact of their mandates and to take responsibility by fully funding or repealing them. *Amended 1999, 2015, 2016*

B.9 MEETING SCHOOL FACILITY NEEDS FOR ALASKA STUDENTS

AASB believes that the Alaska State Legislature and the Governor must adequately fund the constitutionally mandated need for educationally appropriate school facilities and major school maintenance. *Amended 1998, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2014, 2015, 2016*

CHILD ADVOCACY

Preamble

As community leaders committed to education and the equal opportunity for each child to achieve their potential, we act on behalf of all children for the good of the community; and we act on behalf of each child. We accept our responsibility and its challenge of finding viable and relevant solutions to the myriad of problems facing children today. We believe that while parents bear primary responsibility for the education of their children, it takes a whole community to educate a child. We encourage parents and guardians, the legislature, tribal governments, agencies, municipalities, organizations, businesses, communities, congregations, and extended families to willfully commit to the development of each child. Together we will identify and clearly articulate the needs of our children, and together we will implement effective solutions and achieve measurable results. Together, we will share in the rewards that an emotionally healthy, educated, and vital citizenry will contribute to the future of Alaska. To fulfill our role in the shared responsibility of educating children, we are resolved to pursue the following resolutions. *Amended 2002, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2019*

B.10 CHILD ADVOCACY MISSION STATEMENT

The advocacy role of school board members is to promote parental, public and social service commitment to the shared responsibility of educating all children and youth in public education while creating an environment that supports children to thrive. *Amended 1998*, 2019

B.11 LANGUAGE, CULTURAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Alaska is a vast state and is populated by persons of diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Our schools must promote an environment that respects **and reflects** the ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity of the student populations. AASB honors and celebrates those languages and cultures indigenous to Alaska, and supports those efforts that integrate indigenous languages and cultural knowledge into the delivery of academic programs. *Amended 1998, 2007, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2018*

B.12 INCREASE IN FAMILY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS & EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

AASB believes, and research supports the belief, that one of the most important factors in student achievement is parental, family and guardian involvement in the educational process, both at home and in the schools. AASB feels that family involvement in the education of children is the highest priority and strongly encourages school districts to be proactive and engage families in a culturally responsive way. *Amended 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2012*

B.13 SUPPORTING SOBRIETY AND SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION

AASB encourages our Board Members, school staff, students, parents and community members to help in overcoming our communities' affliction with alcohol and drugs. AASB supports efforts of schools and communities to become and remain free of alcohol and drug use through activities that: encourage the formation of sobriety groups in every Alaska community; encourage the practice of healthy lifestyles, values and activities; support existing groups working to promote sobriety; educate students on the consequences of their actions; and encourage and support sober role models. *Amended 2007, 2010, 2013, 2019*

B.14 PREVENTION/EARLY INTERVENTION

AASB believes in the prevention aspects of health and social service programs. Prevention is cost effective, both in dollars and in reducing human suffering. Many of the social and health problems we are experiencing now will only continue to grow if effective prevention/intervention programs are not in place. AASB supports early identification of and intervention for children at risk and inclusion of parents and guardians and community partners in prevention and intervention services in a culturally relevant way. *Amended 2002, 2006, 2008, 2019*

B.15 PROHIBITING PERSONS CONVICTED OF SEXUAL ABUSE FROM SERVING ON SCHOOL BOARDS

School board members should serve as role models for students and staff. AASB believes that persons convicted of sexual abuse should be legally prohibited from serving on school boards, REAA boards, and advisory school boards. *Amended 1998, 2007, 2008, 2013*

B.16 DECLARING CHILDREN THE TOP PRIORITY OF ALASKA

AASB believes children are the top priority of our state. This declaration extends to the safety, health, education and future of our children. *Adopted 2005, Amended 2006, 2008*

B.17 EQUITY IN EDUCATION

All children must have access to an educational program that meets their individual physical, academic, social and emotional needs. The Association of Alaska School Boards believes that the allocation of educational resources must provide equity for every student regardless of their economic status, geographic location or the economies of scale*. Adopted 2016*

PERSONNEL

B.18 ALASKA NATIVE TEACHER HIRE & RETENTION

Studies have shown that Native teachers have had a very positive effect on Native students. The hiring and retention of qualified Alaska Native teachers has long been supported by educational and Native organizations. AASB strongly urges school districts to recruit qualified Native teachers and administrators. Colleges and universities within the state are encouraged to more actively recruit Native students and to develop Indigenous certification programs designed to build on the strengths

of indigenous pedagogies. Local school districts, with the help of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, are encouraged to provide leadership in developing programs to encourage Native students to choose education as a field of study, and to make every effort to foster the hiring and retention of Native teacher aides and teachers. *Amended 2010, 2011*

B. 18(a) QUALITY STAFF IMPROVES STUDENT LEARNING
High-quality, highly motivated, culturally responsive and innovative teachers, administrators and other staff are essential for successful student learning. *Amended 2015*

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

B.19 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
All children should have rich learning opportunities during the formative early childhood years. The Association of Alaska School Boards therefore supports and encourages districts and/or communities to develop early childhood programs, which include parent and family involvement. *Amended 1998, 2007, 2012, 2015*

B.20 EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT
AASB believes the elements of a quality educational improvement effort should address the following key areas:

- Parental Involvement: Should encourage a high degree of parental involvement in all aspects of their child's education; collaboration on societal issues outside schools that impact children's learning (schools and various agencies must collaboratively plan to provide services to children to effectively meet their needs); and accountability to the public to ensure the desired results: a "world class" education.

- Community engagement: Should involve many different sectors of the community in the schools to broaden the experience afforded students and promote the shared responsibility of adults in our communities in supporting Alaska's youth to achieve academic success, engage in positive, thriving behaviors, ~~and~~ reduce unhealthy behaviors and foster the growth of children who are grounded in their cultural identity.

- Student Standards: Should include the development of educational programs to meet high standards and identified competencies (they should be delivered by a variety of means that meet the diverse educational and cultural needs of students and prepare them to be contributing and productive citizens in a rapidly changing world).

- Professional Standards: Should include the highest standards of professionalism **that exemplifies high ~~moral and~~ ethical standards** by school employees throughout the district.

- Learning Environment: Should include adequate and appropriate space, furnishings, equipment, supplies and technology, and be reflective of the cultures of the community. *Amended 1998, 2010, 2011, 2015, 2016*

B.21 CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY
The strength of our democracy rests in large part on the success of our public schools in educating all students and creating a deep understanding of our democracy from the local to the national level. This understanding includes a working knowledge of evolving governmental principles and structure through the international level, and the importance of citizenship and civic responsibility, including meaningful student government experiences. These lessons should begin in preschool and continue through all the school years. Lessons should, in total, provide strong grounding for fully informed and involved citizenship. It is the duty of each generation to teach the next how democracy works. *Adopted 2008, Amended 2010, 2012, 2016*

GOVERNANCE

1.1 OPPOSING MANDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OR LOCAL SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION

AASB is opposed to mandated school district or local school consolidation because it would greatly reduce local control for a significant number of school districts in Alaska.

Rationale. In 2004 the Alaska Local Boundary Commission (LBC) and Department of Education & Early Development (EED) completed a report, which suggests only marginal savings by consolidation of school districts. AASB continues to seek and engage in cooperative and shared service opportunities, thereby creating a significant savings of state tax dollars for all involved.

The concept of cooperation and shared services, as an alternative to mandated consolidation, ensures local autonomy and decision-making is preserved. AS.14.14.115 provides a grant program that encourages the sharing of services to recognize cost economies. Some communities and school districts have considered it viable to consolidate, and have done so through their own volition as a local decision. Others currently participate in shared administrative services, including purchasing and other business functions, and should be applauded and encouraged in their efforts to achieve efficiencies.

No evidence has been provided to support the proposition that significant savings or improved student learning would result from the indiscriminate combining of school districts or schools. Studies on school consolidation imply an imperceptible savings. Public perception may be different. School boards are encouraged to involve the public more thoroughly in efforts to explain their budget and to seek input throughout the budgeting process. *Adopted 1997, 2017 Amended 1999 & 2003, 2015 (Sunset 2022)*

1.2 OPPOSITION TO MANDATED BOROUGH FORMATION
AASB continues to oppose mandatory formation of boroughs. A mandatory borough act reduces the current level of local responsibility and control by encouraging the elimination of small REAA districts and small city districts, creating an extra level of government with the associated costs.

Rationale. Local communities may differ in their values and the priorities associated with the delivery of educational services.

A mandatory borough act ignores the economic reality of the lack of an adequate tax base in some rural areas of the State. If the state wishes to require local communities to contribute financially, the legislature already has the statutory authority to implement a tax in the unorganized borough. Creating an additional level of local government may not produce the desired effect. *Adopted 1998 Amended 2001, 2003, 2016 (Sunset 2023)*

1.3 MAINTAINING LOCAL CONTROL IN CHARTER SCHOOL FORMATION

AASB recognizes charter schools as a locally developed alternative to the standard education program. AASB urges the Department of Education & Early Development to work in partnership with local school districts in the formation of new charter schools. AASB supports charter schools as long as the local school board:

a) Retains the sole authority to initiate the approval or rejection of the charter,

b) Retains options to terminate the charter of any school that fails to meet criteria set forth in the charter or as otherwise specified by the local school board

c) Maintains authority to require and enforce accountability, including determining the criteria, standards, or outcomes that will be used in establishing the charter;

d) Ensures that a charter does not foster racial, social, religious or economic segregation or segregation of children with disabilities.

Rationale. Section 14.12.020 in Title 14 of the Alaska Education Laws states that a school district shall be operated under the management and control of a school board. HB 278, adopted in 2014, interjected the Department of Education & Early Development as an authorizing agency of charter schools whose formation was rejected at the local level. *Adopted 1997, 2017 Amended 1998, 1999, 2003, 2011, 2014 (Sunset 2022)*

1.4 OPPOSE SCHOOL VOUCHERS

AASB is opposed to using public funds to finance private schools, parochial schools, or private home school/correspondence programs, whether through vouchers, tax credits, or individual K-12 savings accounts, or any other funding that would divert funds from public education.

Rationale. Public schools educate every child, regardless of race, ability, religion, economic circumstance, or special needs. Public schools, through their elected school boards, are directly accountable to the citizens of the community for the expenditure of public funds. Taxpayer-funded vouchers for private, parochial, or home school tuition and fees drain scarce resources from public classrooms and diminish revenues available for public schools. Vouchers may raise local taxes if state appropriation is insufficient.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June 2002 that a voucher program in Ohio did not violate the U.S. Constitution. Referenda in other states have turned down vouchers. The Alaska Supreme Court has held that the following provision of the Alaska Constitution, a restriction independent of the U.S. Constitution, bars disbursement of public funds for the purchase of private or parochial education:

"The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions. Schools and institutions so established shall be free from sectarian control. No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution."

(Alaska Constitution, Section 1. Public Education.)

In addition, voucher funding tied to students could not fully ensure students or taxpayers the benefits of accountability measures, like state mandated content and student performance standards, and could not satisfy other state and federal mandates under which public schools are required to operate, without invading the religious and other constitutional freedoms of private and parochial schools. *Adopted 2012, 2017 Amended 2013, 2014, 2015 (Sunset 2022)*

1.5 CENTRALIZED TREASURY: DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOCATED FUNDS FOR SCHOOLS AND INTEREST EARNED

AASB urges the Legislature and local governing bodies to assure that all designated funds directed to school districts, including interest earning related thereto, must go to school districts without penalty, and that all interest on school district funds must accrue to the school district.

Rationale. Educational funds appropriated by State and local governments are appropriated for the purpose of public education. The efforts of local school districts should be to provide sound planning for future educational needs. Certain municipalities under centralized treasuries have retained state funds allocated to school districts. Some municipalities retain fund balances on school budget monies, and interest accrued on school funds are sometimes held by the municipalities. As it is unclear how interest on school funds are to be distributed, this action will make certain all moneys allocated and earned for schools are used to benefit children. Currently, with a municipal centralized treasury it is possible for school money to be used for things other than education. “Use it or lose it” is a disincentive to utilize educational funds in the most efficient and effective manner. *Adopted 1998. Amended 2002, 2004, 2008 (Sunset 2023)*

1.6 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
AASB supports the goals of the Every Student Succeeds Act and implementation of the state plan approved on May 16, 2018, in particular AASB supports the emphasis on reaffirming local school board authority over public education and limiting federal and state overreach. AASB urges Congress to fully fund the law and the state legislature to provide sufficient funds to implement and support the plan.
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Rationale. State plans must have a statewide accountability system and support and improvement strategies. While the measure of Adequate Yearly Progress in the former law is no longer in effect, accountability systems within each state must cover all students and subgroups of students and include measures of interim academic progress. The accountability system should retain as much local control as possible. *Adopted 2006 Amended 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018 (Sunset 2021)*

1.7 ACCOUNTABILITY AND ADVOCACY FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

AASB urges the Legislature to give State Department of Education and Early Development the authority and funding to register and track the achievement and academic growth of all school-age children throughout the state who are not enrolled in public schools or private schools that perform assessment substantially equivalent to that performed by the state. Parents of such students should be required to provide information regarding instruction of and progress of their children, to provide accountability that essential skills are being taught and learned. Public schools students are already accountable through statewide assessments.

Rationale. The goal is to ensure every child receives a quality education. Children receiving an education outside the public school system at home are not required to register or be accountable throughout their education. The State of Alaska has no compulsory law requiring some form of educational plan be filed with the state. Whether by not enrolling or by leaving the school systems of the state, no “safety nets” for students are in place to assure that all students are receiving the benefit and right of an education. No independent or objective testing is required for these students.

Though home schooling can be very effective for some, public schools often receive students who have fallen behind due to failed home schooling or the lack of schooling. Entry of these students into public education puts the receiving districts in a position of providing substantial remedial assistance, while subjecting the students to the same testing and evaluation standards as other students. *Adopted 2000, Amended 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2015, 2016 (Sunset 2020)*

1.8 COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AGE

Current state law requires compulsory school attendance from age 7-16. AASB supports changing the mandatory age for school attendance to be age 6 to the earlier of either age 18 years old, or high school graduation.

Rationale. State and local performance standards set high expectations in mathematics, reading and writing for children age 5 through 7. Furthermore, research indicates that earlier education is beneficial. In fact, most children in Alaska are enrolled by the age of 6.

Most 7-year-old kids are in first or second grade. With the renewed emphasis on reading, writing, and mathematics skills in the first few years, skills on which the child will be assessed, children starting school late are at a big disadvantage.

Sixteen-year-olds are not ready to make the enormous decision to give up a high school education. Increasing the mandatory age to 18 helps ensure that students who have not yet graduated from high school and are too young to make the life-changing decision to forego basic education will stay in school and have more opportunities to meet performance standards. Mandatory attendance laws must be enforced, but the best way to keep students in school is to fund and provide education programs that engage students. *Adopted 2001 Amended 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2014, 2015 (Sunset 2021)*

1.11 RECOGNITION OF CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY IN THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

AASB urges the Alaska Legislature, and the Department of Education and Early Development to support districts in recognizing and developing public awareness and meaningful solutions designed to deter chronic absenteeism and truancy in meeting the state's compulsory attendance laws and improving educational services in Alaska.

Rationale: It is no longer enough simply to count how many students show up on average for school every day or to concentrate on truancy (unexcused absences). State policy and action can ensure that districts and schools use chronic absence data to trigger a timely response and collaborate with families and community partners to prevent children from missing so much school that they fall behind in their education. Where truancy only addresses unexcused absences, chronic absenteeism, by definition, flags any students who are missing more than 10% of school for any reason. A school district can have an average attendance rate of 90% with up to 30% of their students being chronically absent. When it comes to lost instructional time, an absence is an absence.

AS 14.30.030*. Prevention and Reduction of Truancy*. The governing body of a school district, including a regional educational attendance area, shall establish procedures to prevent and reduce truancy. *Adopted 2017* (*Sunset 2022)*

1.12 SUPPORTING LOCAL CONTROL FOR DETERMINING SCHOOL BOARD TERM LIMITS AND SECTIONAL REPRESENTATION

AASB supports the fundamental right of local control in determining the maximum length of service a school board member may serve (i.e., term limit). AASB supports and believes in the principal of local, self-determination in regard to length of service and school board member sectional representation within the boundaries of any school district.

Rationale: While the basic structure for school boards is well defined in Alaska statute (AS 14.08.041 and AS 14.12.030) the number of terms an elected school board member may serve is not prescribed by state law. In addition, Alaska statute defers decisions for sectional representation by school board members to local voters within either a Regional Education Attendance Area (REAA)(AS 14.08.051), borough, or city school district. The basic tenet of local, democratically elected control of governance for school districts has long been championed and advocated for by the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB). Thus AASB will continue to protect such principles and practices and resist any efforts to create statewide mandates that supersede local control. *Adopted 2019* (*Sunset 2024)*

FUNDING

2.1 SUSTAINED, RELIABLE AND ADEQUATE STATE FISCAL PLAN AND EDUCATIONAL FUNDING FOR ALASKA'S STUDENTS THROUGH A NON-VOLATILE FUNDING SOURCE
The sustainability, reliability and adequacy of Alaska's funding for public education are of highest concern to the Association of Alaska School Boards. AASB urges the Legislature to develop a state fiscal plan. This fiscal plan would provide a long-term approach to funding the costs of public education and other services upon which Alaska's students and their families depend. The plan should be strategic, sustainable and realistic, providing a framework for balancing budgets while adequately funding public education.

Rationale. The State of Alaska provides a wide range of services to a diverse population spread over a logistically complex area. A long-term plan that ensures reliability of funding for education and other state services that impact the delivery of education, regardless of variation in volatile resource markets, is needed to provide a stable business climate and to ensure the citizens of necessary services. *Adopted 2002 Renewed 2017 Amended 2004, 2015 (Sunset 2022)*

2.2 URGING EARLY, ADEQUATE, EQUITABLE, AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

AASB urges the State of Alaska to provide early, adequate, equitable, and predictable funding of public education. AASB believes that adequate funding should include the following:

- State funding of the TRS-PERS retirement liability;
  An increase to the Base Student Allocation to account for both inflation and adequate pre-K through 12th grade education;
- Recognition of the need to keep pupil-teacher ratios to a level in line with research-based best practices;
- Career and technical education.
- An early adoption timeline that allows school boards and district administration to effectively plan instruction and staffing for the upcoming school year.
- Alaska Native languages.

AASB urges that in the years when the Alaska Legislature has not approved an education budget by April 1, the budget from the previous year shall be the legal minimum funding for the next fiscal year.

AASB urges the Legislature to review and recommend appropriate adjustments to AS.14.17.460, District Cost Factors, to ensure equity in school funding.

AASB urges the Legislature to provide stable forward funding that addresses inflation, including the use of an education endowment, to ensure funding predictability. *Adopted 2014 Amended 2017 Renewed 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

2.3 SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS
AASB urges permanent reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act (SRSCA) by the U.S. Congress as a key component of federal financial assistance to local governments and school districts in Alaska. This law recognizes the need for sustained funding to school districts that have non-taxable national forest lands within their boundaries.

Rationale. The Secure Rural Schools Act is critically important to 24 of Alaska's 54 school districts (44% of all districts), which have relied heavily on Secure Rural School funds to supplement local funding for education. Without positive action, 24 Alaska school districts and the communities encompassing these districts will lose $18 million in revenue, resulting in significant community and district job loss, education program reductions, and major overall economic upheaval. In at least one single site school district, 25% or more of the district's revenue would be lost.

In 1908 Congress passed a law, which formed a compact with counties, boroughs and parishes in rural America where the National Forests are located. That compact stipulated that the Forest Service would share 25 percent of its revenues with local governments to support roads and schools. The program impacts our school districts and the welfare of our students in more than 600 rural counties as federal payments-in-lieu-of-taxes to jurisdictions with forestlands and reserves.

The uncertainty of whether the program will be continued from year-to-year is impacting local budget allocations for education funding. (In 2000, Congress passed the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act to address the negative effects of declining federal receipts on local governments. Since 1908, the federal government has shared a portion of the revenues generated on public forestlands with local governments

It is imperative that this act is permanently reauthorized for the many national forested counties, boroughs and school districts that have little ability to generate local tax revenue to support schools and roads*. Adopted 2011 Amended 2012, 2014 Renewed 2016 (Sunset 2021)*

2.4 ENCOURAGING THE LEGISLATURE TO FUND A GRANT PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

AASB encourages the Alaska Legislature to provide grant funding for improvement of school performance as originally designed in AS 14.03.125, under the mechanism already detailed to support 14.03.125 in Alaska Administrative Code 33.200 through 4 AAC 33.290.

Rationale. The grant funding could be targeted on strategies that address low academic student performance, such as grants for early learning and pre-literacy programs, research-based targeted intervention programs, systemic initiatives, teacher retention programs and graduation rate improvement strategies.

A fund for the improvement of school performance, AS 14.03.125, was created by the Legislature in 1990, for grants by the Commissioner of Education & Early Development to school districts. It has never been funded by the Legislature. The settlement of 3AN-04-9756 CI, Kristine Moore et al. V. State of Alaska, established a fund for improving the performance of 40 schools in the state. The Legislature funded that agreement and a grant system for school improvement strategies.
Adopted 2012 Renewed 2017 (Sunset 2022)

2.5 AASB ADVOCACY ON INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)
Following passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, AASB will monitor and advocate the following:

1. Increase in funding to fully fund the federal mandate.
2. Resolution of differential treatment and discipline for special education students.
3. Provision for adequate staffing/teacher preparation.
4. Establishment of post-secondary educational programs to train additional individuals as certified special education teachers and related services providers (i.e. school psychologists, physical therapists, and speech therapists).
5. Decrease in current high staff turnover.
6. Provision for teacher liability/legal protections for advocates.
7. Placement of students and delivery of services.
8. Mediation between school districts and parents when disagreements develop over student placements.
9. Reduction of massive required paperwork.

Rationale. AASB joins with the National School Boards Association in urging Congress to fairly and fully fund this federal mandate. IDEA was enacted in 1975 when the federal government committed to paying for each child with disabilities an amount equal to 40 percent of the national average cost of educating students with disabilities. According to the National School Boards Association, federal funding accounts for approximately 18% of the necessary funding. The remainder comes directly from the regular instructional program of local school districts. The total under-funding of IDEA was estimated at $8.3 billion in fiscal year 2008.

Local school officials must be empowered to preserve a productive and safe learning environment free of undue disruption or violence. Consistent discipline requirements and procedures are the keys to a safe environment. Issues such as discipline and excessive paperwork are having a negative impact on educators; as a result fewer certified personnel are willing to teach in special education programs. *Adopted 2000 Amended 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2005, 2009, 2012 Renewed 2015 (Sunset 2020)*

2.6 FUNDING FOR EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS IN ALASKA
AASB supports legislation to add additional funding for the planning and programming of voluntary early learning and family support programs, including online programs, for all children from birth to school age as an important long-term investment in Alaska's future workforce and citizenry.

Rationale. State and local performance standards set high expectations in mathematics, reading and writing for children age 5 through 7. Research indicates that earlier education is critical for many children to successfully reach those expectations. Even in communities that have Head Start programs, the program is usually unable to accommodate all children who qualify. Strict Headstart income requirements deprive many pre-schoolers who could benefit from the program. Appropriately housed early learning programs should be an integral part of district curriculum. Inclusion of early learning in a school has an impact on facilities planning and would be a wise use of state funds.

The state offers only very limited pilot funding for early-learning education. Many communities do not meet the qualifications for federal Head Start or early-learning funding and sources of present federal funding are uncertain. Most existing early-learning programs cannot afford certificated early-learning teachers. Programs such as Parents as Teachers and Best Beginnings can reap huge educational benefits for very little money. *Adopted 1998 Amended 2001, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2015 Renewed 2018 (Sunset 2023)*

2.7 FUNDING FOR INTENSIVE NEEDS PRE-SCHOOL AND OTHER INTENSIVE NEEDS STUDENTS ENROLLING POST-COUNT DATE OR LEAVING A DISTRICT IN A SINGLE YEAR
AASB supports prorated funding for preschool students with intensive needs who turn three years old after the October count date, thereby becoming eligible for enrollment and enrolling in public school after state funding has become fixed. In addition, pro-rated funds must also be provided for all other intensive needs students enrolling after the count date. AASB also urges the Alaska Legislature to pass legislation that holds districts harmless when losing a large percentage of intensive needs students in a single count period.

Rationale. IDEA '97 requires that public schools enroll students with disabilities at age three. These students typically require not only special education services but also extensive related services (speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy). Preschool students with disabilities whose third birthday falls after the October count date incur costs to the district that are not typical of other students enrolling after the count date. The district is required to provide all services identified by the IEP team. Currently, districts receive no funding for these costly services for those intensive-needs children who turn three years old after the state's October count date.

Other intensive-need students who move to a district after the October count date pose a similar financial challenge. The cost to provide federally mandated services to a single intensive needs child is many times the cost of services to a non-special needs child. Districts cannot be expected to absorb the costs of services for intensive needs children who first enroll after the count date under a budget that provides no funding to satisfy this federal requirement. Supplemental funding for post-count date intensive needs students is critical. At the same time, districts that have lost intensive needs students through transfers have already entered into binding contracts with staff and cannot easily avoid that continued cost. *Adopted 2003 Amended 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2014 Renewed 2018 (Sunset 2023)*

2.8 FOLLOWING THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PRIORITY LISTS FOR NON BONDED PROJECTS

AASB supports following the priority lists for non-bonded projects as presented by the Department of Education and Early Development and providing funding with no adjustments, deletions, or additions that would not otherwise be of an emergency basis. AASB strongly encourages the legislature and administration to make significant progress on eliminating the statewide capital project and major maintenance backlog.

Rationale. The Capital Improvement Projects list goes through a very comprehensive prioritization process developed and implemented, based on need, by the Department of Education and Early Development. AASB encourages the Legislature to follow the prioritized lists and recognize that fluctuations in enrollment cause many districts to face varying economies of scale when maintaining educational facilities. *Adopted 2000, Amended 2001, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2017 Renewed 2015 (Sunset Nov. 2020*)

2.9 LOCAL CONTRIBUTION IN THE SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA
AASB supports retaining in the school funding formula the local option of establishing a local contribution based on 45 percent of basic need for borough and municipal school districts.

Rationale. The current education funding formula was developed with statewide support for all school age children. It allows for a minimum local contribution of the lesser of 2.65 mills or 45% of basic need. *Adopted 2001 Amended 2004, 2005, 2012 Renewed 2016 (Sunset 2021)*

2.10 EDUCATION ENDOWMENT
AASB lends its full support to the establishment of an adequately funded and well-managed educational endowment to help secure stable and full funding for education to be used for public elementary and secondary education.

Rationale. The funding of public K-12 education in our state is an annual appropriation from the General Fund and is subject to the shifting funding priorities of administrations and legislatures, and the variable level of state revenues. Budgetary cycles have increasingly failed to provide a stable and secure funding source for Alaskan students. An educational endowment will provide a proven, relatively secure, and dedicated fiscal resource to support future public education funding for our state, and allow long-range education planning with confidence in the availability of that resource. *Adopted 1997 Amended 1998, 1999, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2016 Renewed 2017 (Sunset 2022)*

2.11 EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Because of the global economy of which our youth are a part, AASB urges the state and federal governments:

a) To strongly encourage state leadership by virtue of student rights to equitable educational opportunity to ensure all classrooms are provided affordable, adequate and equitable broadband access (low-latency terrestrial broadband Internet access) to the national and international information infrastructure.

b) To implement appropriations or matching grants for instructional technology that would address hardware and software purchases, communication, infrastructure, curriculum expansion and training needs of students and staff,

c) To fund continuation and expansion of Digital 1:1 efforts for districts and AASB's Consortium for Digital Learning.

d) To join us in urging Congress to fully fund either the provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (E-rate program) or a robust educational technology substitute that protects the Universal Service Fund to help provide affordable telecommunications to rural areas.

e) To assist schools in improving Internet connectivity by using new E-Rate subsidies for construction of low latency terrestrial broadband Internet delivery systems.

Rationale. Alaskan students are growing up in a digital age that is allowing access to all global markets. If our students are to thrive in this ever-increasing global economy, K-12 schools must have the tools and trained staff to provide the appropriate education. Currently, a number of schools have seen many of their technology purchases become obsolete, outdated, and inoperable. Teachers are unable to effectively integrate technology in the classrooms due to lack or inadequacy of equipment and/or training. Current school district budgets cannot provide adequate funds to meet existing or future instructional technology needs.

Equality in educational opportunity has always been a goal of the Association of Alaska School Boards. Future economic viability will not depend as much on physical presence, but rather the ability to import, transmit or convey ideas and information electronically. Today's globally competitive economy requires that all schools have access to modern technologies–Internet access, computers, distance learning–that can open new doors of educational opportunity for our school children. Appropriations by the Alaska Legislature in 2006 and 2008 have enabled about half of the state's school districts to pilot intensive digital learning for some of their students as members of the AASB Consortium for Digital Learning. *Adopted 1997 Amended 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015 Renewed 2017(Sunset 2022)*

2.12 SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION DEBT RETIREMENT FOR BONDED INDEBTEDNESS
AASB urges the Legislature and the administration to fully honor the statutory commitments for previously incurred and future bonded indebtedness reimbursement by appropriating all funds necessary to satisfy that commitment.

Rationale. Article 7, Sec. 1 of the Alaska State Constitution states that the Legislature shall establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children. Under AS 14.11.100 the State of Alaska commits to repay school districts at set percentage rates for school construction bonded indebtedness in past years. Extending that program into the future helps meet school construction needs in areas of the state that are able to bond. Over the past years many regions of the State have bonded for school construction with the expectation that the State would honor its obligation. *Adopted 1997 Amended 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016 Renewed 2017(Sunset 2022)*

2.13 REVENUE SHARING
Municipalities play a large part in financing education and providing community services necessary to student learning. The Association of Alaska School Boards supports restored and increased funding for Municipal Revenue Sharing & Assistance. An increase in community support cannot substitute for necessary increases in direct education funding by the state.

Rationale. Support for this program is essential. Without revenue sharing, which was vetoed in 2003, communities were forced to raise taxes to meet the cost of state mandates. Passage of SB 72 in 2008 restored the program with $60 million in general funds for distribution to communities annually over the next three years. As the level of state revenue collected under AS 43.55.011(g) fluctuates, payments to local governments may go up or down. Revenue sharing as a proportion of the state budget is near its historic low point. Statehood was premised on the notion that state-owned resources would generate tax or other revenue and that this money would be shared with local government because local government could not survive without it. *Adopted 1999 Amended 2000, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012 Renewed 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

2.14 PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

AASB urges the State of Alaska to adequately fund pupil transportation by increasing the transportation allocation to accurately reflect true costs, to avoid the use of operating fund dollars, and to provide funding for districts with increased transportation needs due to state legislated labor costs, special circumstances and/or student growth. Getting students safely to and from school is a vital part of public education.

Rationale. Passage of SB 182 in 2012 requires the Department of Education & Early Development to establish statewide standards for pupil transportation contracts and to enforce compliance with those standards in 2016. Passage of SB57 in 2013 increases pupil transportation funding at the rate of the Anchorage Consumer Price Index through November 2015, at which time the automatic increase is repealed. *Adopted 2000 Amended 2001, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016 (Sunset 2020)*

2.15 FUNDING FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT-OPERATED REGIONAL BOARDING HOME PROGRAMS

AASB supports providing adequate funding for locally controlled and operated, regional boarding high schools throughout the state.

Rationale. The number of students requesting enrollment at Mt. Edgecumbe School exceeds the space available. Legislation enacted in recent years has increased the state stipend paid for students at district operated boarding schools and expanded the authority for their operation statewide. Districts were also allowed to enter into contracts with Alaska Native corporations for operation of dormitory facilities. *Adopted 1996 Amended 1997, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2013, 2014 Renewed 2016 (Sunset 2021)*

2.16 FUNDING FOR TRANSIENT STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS
The Association of Alaska School Boards supports development of a funding mechanism for compensating schools for students entering after the October count date without harming a school that loses a student for which it has already incurred costs.

Rationale. Each year, students throughout Alaska enroll in boarding and other schools around the state. Often, students leave schools immediately following the October count. These students generally return to their home districts. Other districts face large influx of military-dependent and resource development project students. The untimely arrival of students after the count date puts the receiving school districts at a financial disadvantage. Districts receiving students after the October count must bear the financial responsibility for educating these students without corresponding funds. Districts losing students after the count date have already committed themselves to legally binding contracts and cannot easily adjust spending levels to account for the loss of those students. *Adopted 2002 Amended 2003, 2008, 2009 Renewed 2017(Sunset 2022)*

2.17 INSURANCE COSTS
AASB strongly urges the Alaska State Legislature to thoroughly investigate**,** evaluate, and report on pooling arrangements or other funding as a way to mitigate increases in insurance costs for school districts. Districts must be permitted to individually decide to participate in pooling arrangements and other funding options favorable to their local situation. Districts should be enabled, but not required, to secure larger collaborative group medical service and group medical coverage, as well as value-based payment and procurement methods among public and private sector employees.

Rationale. Insurance costs are draining badly needed resources for the classrooms and will continue to do so unless steps are taken to mitigate these uncontrolled increases, which only add to the administrative overhead of all districts. The cost of health and liability coverage, in particular, has added to escalation of fixed costs faced by districts. *Adopted 2002 Amended 2003, 2006, 2007, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

2.18 STATUTORY GROUNDS FOR REDUCTION IN FORCE
Every Alaska school board must be able to make responsible decisions about how to allocate district resources to provide a high-quality education program that meets the needs of students. The Association of Alaska School Boards supports clarification of the language in the law explicitly to allow the use of projections of enrollment, costs and revenues as valid bases upon which to develop a plan for reduction in force under AS 14.20.177. The Association also supports clarification of the law to recognize that school boards, acting in good faith, have discretion to decide when a reduction in force is necessary for the following year.

Rationale. Under the current wording of AS 14.20.177, NEA-Alaska has argued and at least one Superior Court judge has ruled that reductions in enrollment or revenue must have already taken place in order to reduce staff. In addition, NEA-Alaska has argued and a Superior Court judge has ruled that a school board's judgment regarding the necessity of a reduction in force is not its to make; instead, a school district must prove that a reduction in force is necessary.

A school district's ability to respond quickly to a drop in enrollment or negative change in its financial picture is already significantly limited by the fact that mid-year layoffs of teaching staff are not permitted under AS 14.20.177. Neither is an increase in costs a basis for mid-year layoffs. However, school boards should be able to respond to both actual and projected declines in enrollment or funding by developing plans to reduce staff for the following year. School boards should also have the ability to reduce staff in the following year in response to costs increases that are not offset by increases in funding.

A school board's judgment that a reduction in force is necessary is the kind of policy decision that the public elects school boards to make. *Adopted 2003 Amended 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2016 Renewed 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

2.19 LEGISLATIVE FINANCIAL RELIEF FOR ONGOING TRS AND PERS EMPLOYER RATE INCREASES

The Association of Alaska School Boards supports the cost-share formula requiring the state to pay 87.44 percent of employer costs under the Teachers' Retirement System and 78 percent of the costs under the Public Employees Retirement System. AASB endorses the use of state revenue or other state-managed funding sources to retire the unfunded liability of the public employee retirement systems without supplanting funds needed for the classroom.

AASB categorically rejects the State of Alaska Department of Law's recent determination that the State of Alaska does not have a legal obligation to assume the portion of the liabilities of the State managed Teacher's Retirement System and the Public Employees Retirement System. AASB expects the State of Alaska to 100% fund to constitutional obligation both TRS and PERS.

Rationale. The State of Alaska Division of Retirement & Benefits notified PERS and TRS employers on September 3, 2015 that the State of Alaska does not believe it has an obligation to assume the liabilities of the State managed Teacher's Retirement System and Public Employees Retirement system in connection with the implementation of Generally Accepted Accounting Standard (GASB) #68 – Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions.

The Association of Alaska School Boards believes that the State of Alaska has a long-standing obligation to continue to provide substantial and sustainable financial support of the TRS and PERS retirement systems to ensure that Alaska's school children will be well served by high quality teachers and support staff who know that the State of Alaska remains steadfast and unwavering its support of its teachers, support staff, and their pensions.

Districts simply do not have the capacity to handle the massive unfunded liability of the state's retirement programs. Financially healthy pension funds are an incentive to attracting and retaining high quality employees in the public sector. *Adopted 2003 Amended 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

2.20 ENERGY COST RELIEF
AASB urges the Alaska State Legislature to take action to mitigate energy costs facing all school districts. The relief should be based on actual energy costs and be part of an overall program to address conservation of energy, development of alternative energy programs and deferred maintenance of public facilities and buildings.

Rationale. School districts incur energy costs for heating, electricity and transportation. In most districts off the road system, those costs can eat up 30 to 40 percent of operating budgets, diverting dollars from instruction. Even when the cost of fuel declines in urban areas, those savings seldom catch up to consumers in rural communities due to lack of a competitive energy market.

Possible relief measures should include initiating an Energy Cost Increase Factor in the foundation formula and/or providing supplemental funding in the year the cost is incurred, thereby putting funding back in the classroom. *Adopted 2005 Amended 2008, 2010, 2015 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

2.21 RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT SERVICE BY THE ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM
AASB urges the State of Alaska to provide or subsidize frequent, reliable, equitable and efficient ferry service to all Southeast, Southwest, and Southcentral communities served by the Alaska Marine Highway System and alternatives such as the Inter-Island Ferry Authority.

Rationale. School districts in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska depend on ferry access to provide transportation to and from other communities for numerous academic and athletic activities. The lack of frequent and dependable scheduled ferry service often makes it difficult or impossible to utilize the AMHS in school-sponsored trips. The only alternative for many of the communities served by the AMHS is to arrange travel by air, which markedly increases transportation costs and in some cases causes trips to be canceled entirely. *Adopted 2006 Amended 2007, 2008, 2012, 2013 Renewed 2016 (Sunset 2021)*

2.22 SUPPORTING BYPASS MAIL IN ALASKA
AASB recognizes that the Bypass Mail program provides the only timely and economical way to move essential materials to rural Alaska and is critical to the health of the Alaskan economy. Bypass mail allows Alaska to receive the same universal service at universal rates enjoyed by the rest of the country. AASB strongly urges the US Congress to find ways to continue funding the bypass mail program in Alaska.

Rational: Federal law establishes mail as a basic and fundamental service and requires the Postal Service to “provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and . . . render Postal Services to all communities." Legislation proposed by Congress would unfairly single out Alaska, eliminating funding for bypass mail. Bypass mail represents a lifeline to Alaska communities, transporting food, essential medical supplies, educational materials and items critical to the life and safety of Alaskan residents. *Adopted 2011 Renewed 2016 (Sunset 2021)*

2.23 FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS BY ESTABLISHING THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION IN ADVANCE

AASB supports funding for schools in advance. At a minimum, the Base Student Allocation (BSA) should be established at least one, and preferably three, years ahead to provide sufficient time for school districts to prepare and submit their budgets in a timely manner without spending unnecessary time and resources revising budgets based on legislative action after the local budget process has begun. The Education Fund, AS 14.17.300, must also be maintained and increased for this purpose.

Rationale. When state oil revenues are low the amount spent on education might decline, but local school districts would have a full fiscal year to prepare for the reduction in revenue if education funding is established at least a year in advance. Forward funding will provide fiscal stability for districts so they can make long-term decisions, reduce administrative cost and enable school districts to focus on student instruction rather than constant budget revisions.

While early funding of the education budget – i.e., a signed education funding bill within the first 30 days of the session – would also reduce the administrative burden on school districts, the legislature does not receive its revenue projections in time to accomplish that goal. Advance funding – establishing both the BSA and setting aside sufficient funds to cover it a full year in advance – would eliminate the pressure for passage of the education appropriation early in the legislative session. *Adopted 2006 Amended 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 201, 2015 Renewed 2016 (Sunset 2021)*

2.24 RECONSTITUTION AND ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL LAND TRUST AND PERMANENT FUND

AASB supports additional research into reconstitution of the Alaska Public School Land Trust, active management of the trust and working with Alaska Parent Teacher Associations and other educational stakeholders to establish a management board with broad stakeholder representation to that end.

Rationale. A promise was made to Alaska public school children on March 4, 1915, when "An Act to reserve lands to the Territory of Alaska for educational uses, and for other purposes," (38 Stat. 1214, Public Law 63-330/Chapter 181, 63 Congress, Session 3) was approved by Congress and signed by President Woodrow Wilson. PL 63-330 requires when federal lands are surveyed, Sections 16 and 36 in each township shall be and were reserved for the support of common schools in Alaska. *Adopted 2007 Amended 2010, 2014 Renewed 2017 (Sunset 2022)*

2.25 SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ARTS, AND MATH INSTRUCTION

AASB recognizes and supports national efforts to increase the nation's scientific and engineering talent pool in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM/STEM) fields. AASB urges the Governor and the Alaska State Legislature to establish a fund or provide grants to invest strategically in STEAM/STEM education, focusing on professional development, materials and equipment needed for active, hands-on learning for K-12 students in classrooms across the state.

Rationale. The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development has added science standards and testing requirements, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act added this requirement in 2010. There is growing recognition that the U.S. must increase its commitment to science and math to retain its competitive advantage in the world. Students learn science best by actively engaging in the practice of science, and they develop cognitive skills needed to excel in science and math through the arts, especially music. Teachers need professional development and science resources to offer students outstanding hands-on, active learning opportunities in the sciences. Science classroom equipment and consumable supplies are unique and expensive. Skyrocketing energy costs and increasing operating costs consume school budgets, limiting the ability of districts to address long-deferred expenses such as science curriculum and equipment. Excellence in STEM fields is vital to Alaska's and the nation's long-term economic prospects.
Adopted 2008 Amended 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015 Renewed 2018 (Sunset 2023)

2.26 RECOMMENDING REVISIONS TO THE STEP-DOWN HOLD-HARMLESS CLAUSE FOR REDUCTIONS IN ADM AND NEW HOLD-HARMLESS CLAUSE TO ENCOURAGE SCHOOL SIZE EFFICIENCY

AASB recommends that the Alaska Legislature revise from 5 percent to 2.5 percent the hold-harmless threshold (AS14.17.450) for reductions in average daily membership. AASB also recommends that the Alaska Legislature adopt a new additional three-year hold-harmless provision for school districts who would otherwise lose state funding due to the consolidation of existing school facilities to increase efficiency.

Rationale. Passage of HB 273 by the 25th Alaska Legislature included a provision that if a school district's ADM adjusted for school size decreases by 5 percent or more from one fiscal year to the next, the school district may use the last fiscal year before the decrease as a base fiscal year to offset the decrease. The provision includes a step-down clause holding districts harmless for a portion of the ADM decrease during the next three fiscal years, if the 5 percent enrollment decline continues and none of the decline is attributable to a loss of students caused by a boundary change under AS 29.

Under AS14.17.250, school districts that experience enrollment declines of anywhere between 2 and 5 percent would be impacted severely because they would not qualify for the step-down provision. *Adopted 2008 Amended 2015, 2017 Renewed 2018 (Sunset 2023)*

2.28 URGING THE STATE TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF UNUSED OR UNDERUTILIZED FACILITY SPACE IN DISTRICTS

AASB urges the State of Alaska and work to relieve the financial impacts on school districts when reduced enrollment or budget constraints result in unused or underutilized school facilities. AASB urges mitigation of the burden posed by the underutilization or closure of facilities that still have operational costs associated with them.

Rationale. School districts report instances of excess facility infrastructure that were built before advent of state guidelines for construction or because of declining enrollment or both. In some cases, schools have been closed because ADM fell below 10. Excess space must be insured, operated and maintained regardless of whether the funds generated under the foundation formula are sufficient. Closed schools must be insured and should incur some operation and maintenance expenses to ensure that they will be usable if ADM should later warrant reopening them. *Adopted 2008 Amended 2014, 2016,2018 (Sunset 2023)*

2.29 URGING THE STATE TO CONDUCT AND FUND FACILITY CONDITION SURVEYS FOR DISTRICTS TO SUPPORT CIP REQUESTS FOR MAJOR MAINTENANCE AND FACILITY REPLACEMENT PROJECTS

AASB urges DEED to conduct facility conditions surveys for all districts in order to establish a uniform assessment of building conditions throughout the State. The Department of Education should conduct facility condition surveys every five years, on a rotating basis. The State administered facility conditions surveys should be accepted as complete and valid, including recommendations for the purposes of CIP requests by districts for major maintenance and facility replacement projects. Nothing shall preclude a district obtaining an independent evaluation of its facilities.

Rationale. The CIP process is a complex process that can be challenging for smaller districts who cannot afford dedicated experienced staff with the unique skillsets required to master the process. REAAs are reliant completely on the State for educational funding. This unique relationship with the State means that in order for REAAs to procure a facility conditions survey from a private entity (which is a requirement to increase their CIP ratings) they are literally using State funds to request State funds. Additionally, they are choosing to reallocate funds that could be used for instructional programs towards a State application process for facility upgrades and improvements. It makes sense for the State to provide resources to conduct facilities condition surveys for districts. This would enable the State to acquire a baseline survey of facilities and to establish a uniform listing of facility conditions. Having the State assume responsibility for this effort would provide the most efficient use of State funds. *Adopted 2008 Amended 2009, 2014, 2015, 2016 Renewed 2018 (Sunset 2023)*

2.30 URGING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FUNDING POOL TO HELP FUND TRAVEL FOR STUDENTS TO ATTEND STATE-LEVEL COMPETITIONS

AASB recognizes that a comprehensive public education includes extracurricular activities such as sports and the arts. Involvement in interscholastic activities has been shown to increase academic achievement. As such, the opportunity for students to participate at state-level tournaments, festivals and competitions is an important component of a well-rounded education. Due to the ever increasing costs associated with travel and lodging for school districts to attend state-level competitions, AASB urges the Alaska School Activities Association, the Alaska Legislature and the Governor to work together to establish a funding pool to help school districts fund travel for students to attend state-level tournaments, festivals or competitions.

Rationale. Travel expenses to state-level tournaments and competitions are not normally budgeted by school districts. The preponderance of the burden to fund travel for extracurricular activities has fallen to parents and rural communities that are facing more difficult economic issues and fewer available dollars to support these opportunities. The ASAA and the state should help by establishing a funding mechanism to help students to attend state-level competitions.

In addition, the cost of student activities is significantly more expensive for school districts whose students live off the road system and even more for those schools not on the ferry system and distant from air transportation hubs. The state's appropriate funding to assure student access to the benefits of interscholastic activities should include funding to address access from remote rural schools. *Adopted 2009 Amended 2014, 2015 Renewed 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

2.31 URGING THE CONTINUATION OF FUNDING FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL (VOCATIONAL) EDUCATION

AASB supports increased funding of Career and Technical (Vocational) Education through the foundation formula in AS 14.17.420 and funding for Alaska Construction Academies and regional training centers.

Rationale. Vocational, career tech, and trades offerings help engage students and provide an effective alternate platform for academic education. These courses along with the necessary equipment help middle and high school students learn about and focus on potential career paths to prepare them for post-secondary education and careers in our state. *Adopted 2009 Amended 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018 Renewed 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

2.32 SUPPORTING STATE FUNDING FOR SCHOOL MEALS

AASB supports an adequate financial appropriation from the State and Federal Government to strengthen and expand the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program in Alaska and other local programs to be sure that school breakfast programs and a sustainable lunch may be available to all children at all schools throughout the state. Such funding must be accomplished without diverting funds that belong in the educational foundation formula.

Rationale. No child should go without breakfast or lunch. The lack of adequate nutrition affects the cognitive and behavioral development of children. Food insecurity, meaning a lack of access at all times to enough food for a healthy, active life, was reported among 15 percent of Alaska children, compared with 11 percent of Alaska adults, in a 2006 study (the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey). The problem is more acute in rural Alaska, where nearly one child in four experienced food insecurity.

The National School Breakfast Program decreases food insecurity in children by providing five healthy meals a week. In Alaska schools, 40 percent of students qualify for free/reduced school meals; of these 45,000 students, 15 percent, or about 7,000 children, do not attend schools that offer a breakfast program. In all, more than 100 public schools in Alaska did not sponsor or offer the federal School Breakfast Program in the 2008-09 school year, due primarily to a lack of funding. *Adopted 2010 Amended 2015, 2018 Renewed 2015 (Sunset 2020)*

2.33 SUPPORTING PARTIAL FOUNDATION FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS WITH SEVEN TO NINE STUDENTS FOR UP TO TWO YEARS

AASB urges the Alaska Legislature to provide funding for those schools that fall below the minimum number of students for up to two years before a district is not funded for that school. AASB supports a revision to AS 14.17.450 providing partial foundation funding for small, rural Alaskan schools with seven (7) to nine (9) students. These schools would be funded for up to two (2) years at the following percentage of the amount that would be funded if the school had ten (10) students:

Seven (7) students	= 70% funding
Eight (8) students	= 80% funding
Nine (9) students	= 90% funding

Rationale. The school is often the community center and heart of village life. Education is a constitutional right of all students in Alaska. The Education Clause of Alaska's Constitution (Article VII, Section 1) provides, in relevant part that the "legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State." In small communities, school enrollment often hovers around 10 students. Due to fluctuations in population, the number of students in these schools may drop below 10 one year, then increase above 10 the following year. While it is inefficient to have a school for a small number of students, it is equitable to each child to be schooled in the village of their home.

Unfortunately, with the current funding requirements of AS 14.17.450, schools receive no funding when the enrollment drops below 10 students, which most often results in the closure of the school. When school enrollment hovers around 10 students, no one can predict whether these schools will have ten children enrolled through the entire count period until the last day of that period.

Most of these students cannot commute to a neighboring school. Even considering closing a school creates an exodus of some families and discourages families considering moving to the community. Often, the school is a major community employer and a closure damages the community and any hope of economic viability. This proposal will allow small schools to operate with a partial budget for up to two years, allowing the school and community time to rebound from population fluctuations, rather than closing prematurely and leaving students without a school or teacher. *Adopted 2010 Amended 2014, 2018 Renewed 2015 (Sunset 2020)*

2.34 FOCUS ON GRADE-LEVEL PROFICIENCY FOR KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE THREE STUDENTS

AASB supports and encourages additional legislative funding opportunities for intervention for K-3 students needing to make improvement to reach grade-level proficiency.

Rationale. The April 2011 report of the Alaska Advisory Task Force on Higher Education & Career Readiness stated in part: "Children who receive quality early education arrive at school ready to learn and perform better in school. They are less likely to need expensive special education interventions, and they are more likely to graduate from high school and to successfully enter the workforce. Research is clear that when students enter kindergarten, 40% of them on average are one to three years behind grade level, and too many of them stay behind throughout their school careers. Alaska can invest a relatively small amount in early childhood and innovative K-12 programs, or a vastly greater amount at the college level. Today's third-grader can't wait for, and our public treasury cannot afford, a remediation response that doesn't begin until the 13th grade." *Adopted 2011 Amended 2014, 2018 Renewed 2016 (Sunset 2021)*

2.35 ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR REMEDIATION
AASB supports the goal of helping students complete high school with measurable and/or identifiable skills to enter the workforce or study at a postsecondary institution, without the need for remedial coursework.

AASB supports additional legislative funding opportunities for intervention for K-12 students needing to make improvement to reach grade-level proficiency.

Rationale. AASB believes that the keys to long-term student success include early childhood development and improved reading, writing, and math skills in K-3 students. Good data show that students who succeed in school become more productive citizens, enhancing their own lives and placing fewer demands on public services, from welfare to prisons. Interventions at every grade level are essential to achieving proficiency and creating a well-trained workforce. *Adopted 2011 Amended 2012, 2015, 2018 Renewed 2016 (Sunset 2021)*

2.36 COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ENERGY PLAN
AASB urges the Alaska State Legislature to work with the State Congressional Delegation and stakeholders to develop, fund and implement a comprehensive statewide energy plan that includes current energy sources, conservation of energy and development of alternative energy. The plan should address and fund development of energy efficiency in public facilities and buildings.

Rationale. The State of Alaska currently has no comprehensive statewide energy plan in effect. A comprehensive statewide energy plan would reduce costs to all, directly benefitting school districts and ultimately benefitting all citizens. High consumer energy prices deplete funding for other needs, especially in school districts, which are one of the state's largest consumers of energy. The legislature and administration have been generous with energy cost relief in recent years, which school districts appreciate. However, the relief is not addressing the problem of energy, only the symptom—high costs. *Adopted 2012 Amended 2015, 2018 Renewed 2017 (Sunset 2022)*

2.37 DISTRICT COST FACTOR

AASB urges the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development comply with state statute AS 14.17.460 that requires regular review of District Cost Factors and development of recommendations for appropriate adjustments, to ensure equity in school funding since the current data being used to determine the District Cost Factors are over 10 years old. Elements in establishing District Cost Factors should include not only the true cost of goods and services but also the mix of goods required in all communities.

AASB further urges the Alaska Legislature provide funding for the required District Cost Factor review and update the cost factors, based upon the resulting DEED recommendations. In addition, AASB urges the Legislature to establish an appeals process related to the DEED recommendations and to include a one-year hold harmless and a phased step-down in the event a school district loses funds due to revisions in the Foundation Formula cost factors. Regular revision of the District Cost Factors is critical to equitable distribution of funding and to address ongoing disparities between districts.

Rationale. The Foundation Formula for K12 education recognizes the different costs of providing public education around the state. Changes to AS 14.17.460 enacted in 2008 established a five-year schedule of changes to the cost factors that were phased in completely in 2013. AS 14.17.460 (b) requires the department to monitor cost factors and to prepare recommendations for the Legislature to consider every other fiscal year. *Adopted 2013 Amended 2014, 2015 Renewed 2018 (Sunset 2023)*

2.38 URGING THE STATE OF ALASKA TO FUND ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION FOR ALL DISTRICTS

AASB urges the Alaska Legislature to amend the pupil transportation statute (AS14.09.010) to provide equitable funding of transportation for all school districts.

Rationale. In school districts with diverse transportation needs due to the absence of a road system, student travel costs are varied and can be significantly high. State regulations at 4 AAC.27.990 (5) describe vehicles that can be used when a school bus cannot transport students. However, four school districts, Aleutians Region, Chugach, Hydaburg and Pribilof, are not currently eligible for pupil transportation funding because they were not receiving funding in 2003, when AS14.09.010 was amended. *Adopted 2013 Amended 2015 Renewed 2018 (Sunset* 2023*)*

2.39 URGING A TRANSPARENT PROCESS WITH STAKEHOLDER INPUT AND PRIORITIZATION OF EQUITY CONCERNS IN STATE STUDIES

AASB urges the responsible agencies to conduct education studies in a transparent process with multiple opportunities for stakeholder input. The studies should use relevant Alaska data from all parts of our diverse state, promote educational best practices, benefit all students in an equitable manner providing an adequate education for all.

Rationale. HB 278 authorized four studies: a salary and benefits schedule for school districts, teacher tenure reform, statewide prototype school design and construction public education funding. The studies were completed in 2016 in the midst of a severe budget deficit and laid fallow. Stakeholder input was inconsistent and limited. Transparency of study designs and practices was not as forthright as many stakeholders and districts had hoped. Such studies, if used for the basis of statutory or budget changes, need to reflect the variety of unique needs and costs for each school as many rural districts have varying costs in hub or out-lying villages. Best practice is not always the cheapest practice to fund. *Adopted 2014 Amended 2016 Renewed 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

2.40 SUPPORTING THE USE OF FEDERAL IMPACT AID BY AFFECTED DISTRICTS
AASB supports allowing affected districts to utilize all of the Federal Impact Aid which ~~each~~ districts are eligible for without any deduction made by the State in calculations of state funding pursuant to AS 14.17. The State currently deducts up to 90 percent of the eligible funds for affected districts. The purpose of such Impact Aid funds is to assist school districts with the reduced revenue availability and increased expenditures that arise from qualifying federal activities and enrollment of qualified federally connected children.

Rationale. It is important that the Federal Impact Aid that affected districts are entitled to can be used for its intended purpose without further impacting the education of students. Federal impact aid is intended to flow to the district within which the aid is generated. The purpose of Impact Aid is, in general, to provide assistance to local school districts with qualifying numbers of children residing on Indian lands, at military bases, low-rent housing properties, or other Federal properties, and children who have parents in the uniformed services or employed on eligible Federal properties who do not live on Federal property. The intent of the aid is not only to provide funding for lands that might otherwise be taxable but also to provide revenue to the receiving district for the additional costs associated with the education of the students. For example, the cost of educating students on military land (public schools on military bases) results in uncontrollable utility costs with rates that are significantly higher than those schools that operate off of a military base. Also, military bases most often bring in an influx of students from various cultures and languages. The addition of these ELL students, and the transiency of military connected students, adds to the need for additional services from the local school district. This increase in utility costs and costs associated with servicing ELL students are not offset by the remaining 10 percent of the Federal Impact Aid that an affected district is allowed to use.

The State is not required by the Impact Aid laws to take into account Impact Aid in determining state aid for education. The federal law only allows a limited exception for a State to take into consideration Impact Aid in determining State Aid if it passes an equalization test (or disparity test). The State should not exercise this limited exception and, instead, should allow affected districts to receive the Impact Aid for which they qualify. In a similar manner, even though organized areas (city and borough school districts with a municipal tax base) are technically allowed to maintain up to 90 percent of their Federal Impact Aid, they are then penalized by the required local contribution as a substitute for part of the foundation funds allocated to each district. *Adopted 2014 Renewed 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

2.41 FUNDING FOR INTERNET SERVICES
AASB urges the Alaska Legislature to enact and fully fund Internet services for rural schools as provided for in Senate bill 74 of the 31st legislature and to extend those benefits to urban school districts as well. Digital literacy is a fundamental skill in the 21st century**.** Equitable Internet access will allow all students to develop this skill.

Rationale. The lack of broadband Internet for rural schools continues to exacerbate program inequities for rural schools. AASB thanks the Legislature for including a provision in HB 278 for rural school districts to receive speeds up to 10 megabits. The Legislature did not provide the funding that would allow all eligible schools to have 10 megabits and did not include urban schools as eligible for the state-provided Internet benefits. HB 179 and SB 82, as proposed, would have also benefited urban districts. The Legislature should include the provisions for urban districts and fully fund the program. *Adopted 2014, Amended 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

2.42 FUNDING FOR STUDENTS WHO RETURN TO SCHOOL TO GET A DIPLOMA
AASB urges the Alaska Legislature to provide funding to school districts through the foundation formula for "overage" students to return to school to get credits to earn their diploma. Funding should include students through 21 years old**.**

Rationale. Students without a diploma are denied access to post secondary and employment opportunities including the military. Some students who did not pass the HSGQE lost hope of ever earning a diploma so dropped out of school. All students can now receive a diploma, whether they passed the former HSGQE or not. Districts are encouraged to recruit all students to return to school to earn credits and to receive a diploma if they so desire. *Adopted 2014 Amended 2015, 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

2.44 URGING THE STATE OF ALASKA TO MAINTAIN THE 10 STUDENT MINIMUM ADM FOR SCHOOL FUNDING

AASB urges the Alaska Legislature to maintain the present minimum student count of ten (10) students as the minimum school size and base level of funding for a school building in the Public School Funding Program formula.

Rationale: Schools are the center of communities or neighborhoods. They provide a fundamental service to the public in the area that they serve. School boards and community members value their local schools and the educational opportunities provided to their children and youth. Small schools help to maintain the local cultural identities and historical perspectives of each community within the state of Alaska.

During the 2014-2015 school year, there were 65 schools identified with student counts between 10 and 24 students. If the minimum count were raised to 25, all of these schools would not be funded at the minimum level.

Under Article VII, Section 1 of the Alaska Constitution, the state has a duty to establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children in the state. A legal opinion for the Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children notes that closing small schools would result in disparate treatment of children in two ways: "First, the overall amount of funding available and the educational resources available to provide these children with an adequate education will be reduced. Second, there will be dramatic disparities in the educational opportunities available to these students who will be deprived of the educational resources of the school environment, classroom supports, and a classroom teacher. The evidence-based scientific research supports the need for students to be educated with their peers in a classroom with a qualified teacher. The State will be unable to point to any scientific, research-based alternative as a substitute for educating children in a school with a qualified teacher and administrative support. Without such an alternative, the proposed legislation will violate the State Constitution." *Adopted 2015 (Sunsets 2020)*

2.45 URGING THE LEGISLATURE TO ADDRESS INEQUITIES IN SCHOOL FUNDING

AASB urges the Alaska Legislature to address and fund inequities in school funding identified in a July 2015 report to the Legislative Budget & Audit Committee.

Rationale. A report for K-12 funding by Augenblick, Palaich & Associates, entitled "Review of Alaska's School Funding Program," recommends that the K-12 foundation formula program (AS 14) provide more opportunities for limited-income children and English language learners to ensure their academic progress. The consequences of an ever-growing gap between rich and poor can be improved with higher educational outcomes. More support to address achievement for Alaska Native students is critical to overcoming the challenges of the effects of oppression and restoring knowledge and culture of the first people of Alaska. *Adopted 2015, Amended 2018 (Sunset 2020)*

2.46 RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE ALASKA SAFE CHILDREN'S ACT
AASB urges the Legislature to provide resources to effectively implement the mandates of the Alaska Safe Children's Act (AS 14.30).

Rationale. School Board members recognize the importance of training to staff in protecting children and in educating children on healthy relationships and preventing child sexual abuse. With the passage of the Alaska Safe Children's Act many unfunded mandates were legislated. Just the mandated training for all certificated and classified staff in "restraint and seclusion" will take two days per staff. The cost will be thousands of dollars and a loss of academic instructional time with their students. A plan to examine all the costs of unfunded mandates and provide resources and time to make up for loss of instruction for children's learning is needed. *Adopted 2015 (Sunsets 2020)*

2.47 LOCAL CONTROL OF SCHOOL FUNDING

AASB urges the Legislature to amend AS 14.03.260 (a) to specify that state pass-through mandates for funding of charter schools do not apply to municipal funding for education so that the required local contribution may be allocated by school boards as they see best in their districts.

Rationale. Each school district is unique in student enrollment, choices available to students in program and course offerings, and in operational costs. Locally elected school boards are best equipped to decide revenue allocations for their districts. *Adopted 2015 (Sunset 2020)*

2.48 INCREASING THE FUND BALANCE CAP FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

AASB urges the Legislature to amend AS 14.17.505 (a) to increase to 15 percent or higher the cap on fund balances.

Rationale. The 10 percent cap on carryover budget balances has restricted school districts since 1998. Extra funds in excess of the 10 percent cap that are gained from realized efficiencies and effective budget management must be transferred back to the state. This can discourage conservative spending. In addition, school funding fluctuates unexpectedly with student count and government funding, creating potential cash flow problems. *Adopted 2015 (Sunset 2020)*

2.50 INFLATION-PROOFED BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION (BSA) INVESTMENTS
AASB urges the State of Alaska to make inflation-proofed incremental investments to the BSA to make up for flat funding since FY 2011.

Rationale. School Districts have been essentially flat funded since FY 2011. Flat funding means cuts as costs do not stay flat. The state has been in a recession due to the declining cost of oil. At the same time children and youth need to be prepared to meet the needs of the growing work force and to be prepared to be engaged citizens. Education is a changing field. Strategic investments in science, career technology, and social-emotional learning are imperative. A modest increase to the Base Student Allocation, including a glide path to make catch up investment to the flat funding during Alaska's recession, is needed to be set for the next three years. *Adopted 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

2.51 FULLY FUNDING THE REAA RURAL CONSTRUCTION FUND AND BOND DEBT REIMBURSEMENT

AASB supports fully funding the REAA Rural Construction Fund and Bond Debt Reimbursement.

Rational: The State of Alaska is responsible for providing an adequate education for all Alaska children and thus is responsible to fully fund the REAA Rural Construction and Bond Debt Reimbursement Fund in order to provide safe facilities to educate all Alaska students. A proactive approach to funding capital project applications will save result in future major maintenance costs in the future of facilities and infrastructure that has passed its design life.
Adopted 2019 (Sunset 2024)

2.52 SUPPORT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SYSTEM

AASB supports increased and adequate funding of the University of Alaska.

Rationale: The rationale for this resolution is to support adequate funding for the University of Alaska system. The University of Alaska system works corroboratively with K-12 education systems to offer dual credit opportunities; develops partnerships such as ANSEP; and prepares the future work force of Alaska. The University of Alaska system also supports and conducts research on issues important to Alaskans. *Adopted 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

2.53 URGING THE STATE TO FUND AS 14.14.115, THE COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT GRANT PROGRAM TO EMPOWER DISTRICTS TO FIND GREATER EFFICIENCIES
AASB urges the state to recognize, encourage, and empower districts to do the necessary work to combine efforts and share resources for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Rationale. There are great models of collaborative work between districts across the state. These efforts require extensive work and cooperation between school boards and district personnel. There is already a statute in place for this purpose but it has not been funded, and requests for support under 14.14.115 have been denied. A proper appropriation of funds for this purpose will encourage and increase these efforts between districts. *Adopted 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

CHILD ADVOCACY

3.1 DECLARING CHILDREN OF ALASKA OUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE AND THEIR HEALTH, SAFETY, WELFARE, AND EDUCATION IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE
AASB understands that the children are our most valuable resource and encourages the Alaska Legislature and the Governor to declare that our children are our most valuable resource and to further declare that their mental and physical health, safety, welfare, and highest standard of education is of paramount importance.

Rationale. A declaration of this kind by the state would lend support to prevention and protective services, for all education needs and for a long-range fiscal plan for state government services. One way to draw attention to the importance of children as our most valuable resource would be to support and promote designation of a National Kids Day on August 3 of each year. *Adopted 2004 Amended 2011, 2016, 2018, Renew 2019* (*Sunset 2024)*

3.2 PROMOTING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

AASB encourages each neighborhood, faith community, civic organization, community, school district, tribal entity and state agency to review the research in order to advocate, create and sustain programs of social and emotional learning and other initiatives that build assets in Alaska's children and teens, provide positive adult role models and support, and incorporate culturally responsive awareness.

Rationale. Research shows that effective schools, families, faith communities, and all adults in our communities can contribute to the positive development of youth. The difference between troubled teens and those leading healthy, productive, and positive lives, is strongly affected by the presence of what is labeled "developmental assets®." These assets are additive, meaning that the more a young person has, the better. Forty of these assets were identified – 20 exist in the student's environment and 20 belong in the head and heart of every child. These developmental assets serve as building blocks for human development in a young person's life and are developed through positive relationships with adults.

Research shows that the more assets students have the less likely they are to use drugs and alcohol, the less likely they are to be sexually active, to be depressed or have suicidal thoughts, to fail in school, and to exhibit antisocial or violent behavior. The more assets children have the more likely they are to succeed in school, to be involved in their community and to exhibit empathic and caring behaviors.

Research also shows that promoting social and emotional learning leads to reduced violence and aggression among children, higher academic achievement and an improved ability to function both in school and in the workplace. Schools that create socially and emotionally sound learning and working environments and that help students and staff develop greater social and emotional competence, in turn help ensure positive short- and long-term academic and personal outcomes for students and higher levels of teaching and work satisfaction for staff. *Adopted 1997 Amended 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 Renewed 2017 (Sunset 2022)*

3.3 FETAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG EXPOSED STUDENTS

AASB recognizes the impact of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and strongly recommends efforts to raise awareness of the need for prevention and appropriate intervention. AASB requests that the Alaska Legislature provide and improve effective programs and services aimed at the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of children with FASD within our state, and to allocate adequate funding to the appropriate agencies necessary to provide parent and guardian training, school staff training, paraprofessional and specialized educational services, including transportation necessary to serve children with FASD and/or who have suffered from prenatal exposure to illicit drugs. Further, AASB urges all Alaska post-secondary institutions to include FASD intervention education in their teacher preparation and paraprofessional programs.

Rationale. Prevention is the best long-term approach. The public must be educated that the use of alcohol/drugs during pregnancy may severely affect and damage children. The child who has been prenatally exposed to drugs and/or alcohol is at risk for developmental, behavioral, psychosocial and learning problems. Alaska's public schools must provide educational services to all children regardless of developmental impairment. Although Alaska has one of the highest incidence rates of children born with FASD, not all communities have the ability to diagnose this disease. Not all children with FASD meet the criteria for Special Education Programs. It is estimated that for every child born with true fetal alcohol syndrome, 10 are born with developmental delay in the context of prenatal alcohol exposure and are difficult to identify.

Children with FASD often require special instructional strategies and materials. The educational identification and service of children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is extremely expensive. Funding support for education of children with disabilities is already barely sufficient to meet the needs of those children currently identified. *Adopted 1997 Amended 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2018 Renewed 2017 (Sunset 2022)*

3.4 PREVENTING ACCESS TO PORNOGRAPHY ON THE INTERNET

AASB supports efforts to prevent children's access to pornography on the Internet. AASB supports efforts to provide parents with the necessary information about the influence of the Internet in order to assist them in their decisions concerning all Internet access for their child. AASB also supports self-regulation in the industry encouraging providers of pornography to post rating labels and "black-out" pages requiring adult verification before access is granted.

Rationale. Pornography is highly prevalent on the Internet. The Internet allows access to material all over the world with very little regulation. Innocent searches for class or personal information can occasionally lead into pornography. With rating systems in place that would post a rating scale upon a search using an Internet search engine and voluntary "black-out" with adult verification; children's access to inappropriate material will be limited. *Adopted 1997, Amended 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009 Renewed 2017 (Sunset 2022)*

3.5 VIOLENCE IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

AASB supports efforts encouraging and challenging the media, entertainment and advertising industries to develop more positive content for both children and adults that demonstrate nonviolent solutions to problems and respect for human life. AASB supports efforts to provide parents with the necessary information about the influence of media in order to assist them in their decisions concerning all of its influences upon their children. AASB also supports self-regulation within the industry by asking them to post rating labels on all videos and video games rented or sold by video merchants or loaned by public libraries, and prohibiting children under age of 17 from renting R-or X-rated videos, M-rated video games or attending R-or X-rated movies without parental permission.

Rationale. It is estimated that children who regularly watch television are exposed through news and entertainment programming to tens of thousands of violent assaults and deaths by the time they reach adulthood.

Analysis of multiple victim school shootings (Anchorage Daily News, June 21, 1998) indicates a commonality of these four factors: obsession with violent pop culture, a child who felt inferior or picked on (probably suicidal), easy access to guns, and ample warning signs. Reducing the violence will not eliminate the threat, but will work in conjunction with efforts directed at addressing the other three factors. *Adopted 1997, 2017 Amended 1998, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007 Renewed 2017 (Sunset 2022)*

3.6 OPIATES, INHALANTS, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, E-CIGARETTES/ELECTRONIC DELIVERY SYSTEMS, METHAMPHETAMINES, MARIJUANA, DESIGNER DRUGS AND ANY ILLICIT SUBSTANCE USE

AASB calls upon the Legislature of the State of Alaska to support local communities, parents and students in their strength-based education, prevention and treatment efforts to combat opiates, inhalants, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes/electronic delivery systems, methamphetamines, marijuana, designer drugs and other illicit substances and to provide effective law enforcement to ensure laws pertaining to controlled substances are enforced. AASB also requests the State of Alaska make adequate funds available for community-based and residential efforts to address effective substance use and abuse treatment programs for children, young people and their families.

Additionally, AASB supports regulations or modifications to the marijuana statute to counter potential negative impacts on Alaska youth that develops a clear and simple process for a community to implement local option laws. AASB also recommends allocating appropriately the tax revenue from marijuana sales, production and businesses to support education, prevention, and treatment programs regarding substance use and abuse, which are relevant and aligned to local community and cultural values.

Rationale: Drug-related problems, including opiate use, inhalants, alcohol, tobacco, methamphetamines and other drug abuse, are a major debilitating influence on the lives of the youth of Alaska. The abuse and prevalence of opioids has created a statewide emergency declared by Governor Walker in 2017. These addictions have been proven to be the primary contributing factor in the alarming number of dropouts, fatal overdoses and youth suicides in the State of Alaska. Community-based prevention and intervention efforts are proving effective in combating drug-related problems. The treatment of children and young people is very different from the treatment of adults for substance abuse. Communities need adequate funds for effective substance abuse prevention and treatment programs.

The current requirement by the state that substance abuse treatment programs by “evidenced-based” is often challenging for indigenous populations, as the content is often not relevant or culturally appropriate. Numerous studies have shown that culturally relevant programs are more effective and have more positive outcomes for participants.

Adopted 1997, 2017 Amended 1998, 1999, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2013, 2014, 2018, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)

3.7 COOPERATION AMONG SERVICE PROVIDERS SERVING CHILDREN

AASB supports information sharing within Federal Rights to Privacy requirements (FERPA, HIPAA, 42CFR) to ensure that children are able to come to school each day ready to learn, and to enable agencies to develop a cooperative treatment plan that involves appropriate school personnel.

Rationale. Children who receive services from social service agencies are already experiencing disruption in their lives. This disruption frequently makes it difficult for them to concentrate on their schoolwork. These students need to have educational skills to succeed in the world. Yet decisions are frequently made about the life of these children that do not take into account their educational needs.

When children are receiving services from multiple agencies, one agency will frequently have information that may be crucial to the service delivery of another agency and/or the child is receiving duplicating and sometime conflicting services from more than one agency. Addressing the needs of the whole child requires an improved delivery system, which is comprehensive, collaborative, child and family centered, and focused on prevention. *Adopted 2000 Amended 2001, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2017 (Sunset 2020)*

3.8 SUICIDE PREVENTION, EDUCATION AND TREATMENT EFFORTS

AASB requests the State of Alaska to provide funding for statewide suicide prevention, education, and treatment efforts coordinated among various entities including peer helper programs, mental health centers, and local and state agencies. Initiatives should include a statewide program to bring professional mental health counselors on-site to visit schools as well as support school-based counseling programs.

Further, AASB urges school districts, tribal entities, and appropriate agencies and communities to engage in responding to this serious and ongoing challenge, through the implementation of protective factors, ensuring culturally relevant strategies.

Rationale. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people 15 -19 years of age, (following unintentional injuries). The rate of teenage suicide in Alaska is much greater than the national average.

Suicide is often precipitated by depression, substance abuse, harassment and intimidation and separation from a significant other. Coordinated efforts among all agencies will be better able to present programs, which address mental health, coping skills in response to stress, substance abuse, employment, and healthy relationships.

The number one protective factor in preventing youth suicide in Alaska natives is to ensure that the person has a strong sense of who they are and that their identity is reflected in the systems with which they interact. A focus on ensuring that each child's school is a place where their cultural identity is affirmed and celebrated is an important step in lowering the suicide rate in Alaska Native youth.

Currently, many Alaskan communities participate in the Community-Based Suicide Prevention Program which allows each community to determine and implement the kind of project it believes is most likely to reduce self-destructive behavior. *Adopted 1997, 2017 Amended 1998, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2015, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

3.9 SAFE, CARING AND CONNECTED SCHOOLS

AASB recognizes the importance of positive school climate, building positive relationships**,** and student connectedness to school as powerful influences on student academic success and on reducing youth risk behaviors and urges the Legislature and state agencies to join AASB in supporting school district efforts to improve school climate and increase student connectedness to school. AASB supports efforts to provide a school environment that is free from weapons, harassment and intimidation, violence, drugs (including alcohol and tobacco), and other factors that threaten the safety of students and staff.

Rationale. It is common sense that when students feel safe and welcome in school where their identity is honored and are encouraged to learn, their attendance increases as well as their academic achievement. Research shows the clear association of school climate and student connectedness with positive academic outcomes and with reduced risk behavior and increased safety. AASB's School Climate and Connectedness Survey has provided a tool for districts to measure climate and connectedness factors. The survey also has provided Alaska data that aligns with national research. *Adopted 1997, 2017 Amended 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2008, 2009, 2014, 2015, 2018 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

3.10 SUPPORT OF STATE FUNDING FOR STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES IN ALASKA
AASB strongly urges the Administration and the Legislature to provide funding for school-based student health services.

Rationale. School nurses and other student health services are vitally important supports for student well-being and academic success. *Adopted 1998, Amended 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2011 Renewed 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

3.11 HIV/AIDS AND OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STI) EDUCATION
AASB supports providing effective HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) education programs for students and parents, and training for certified and classified school staff. AASB supports an effective and comprehensive education effort that focuses on reducing risk by emphasizing abstinence, healthy decision making and refusal skills. Such instruction should also include the use of barrier methods. An effective way to do this is to bring together a broad consensus of the community in order to develop and implement the district's HIV/AIDS curriculum on preventing HIV/AIDS and other STIs.

Rationale. The impact of all Sexually Transmitted Infections s can be devastating. For instance, the dormancy of the HIV virus can be as long as 10 years and the statistics indicate that many young people are contracting the virus while in their teens. Health education should emphasize the consequences of contracting STIs, many of which are life-long. The instructions should not lull teens into careless and risky behavior. *Adopted 1997, 2017 Amended 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2018 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

3.12 EDUCATION OF STUDENTS IN RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIORS RELATING TO HUMAN SEXUALITY

AASB encourages responsible behaviors relating to human sexuality by supporting programs that promote abstinence, develop healthy decision-making skills, teach refusal skills and promote prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Rationale. The Youth Risk Behavior Study of 2017 indicates a steady percentage of the number of students who reported that they had sexual intercourse at least once, approximately 37%. Since 2011 about 37 percent of high school students reported having had sexual intercourse. Overall, there has not been a continued decrease in early sexual activity nor the use of condoms to prevent sexually transmitted infections or pregnancies. This suggests a lack of effective education pertaining to responsible sexual behaviors.

Research presented by the Search Institute and their "Building Assets in Youth" model has determined that a teen's belief "in the importance of abstaining from sexual activity and his/her willingness to postpone sexual activity" is significant to their personal and academic development.
Adopted 1997 Amended 1998, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)

3.13 IN SUPPORT OF THE ALASKA CHILDREN'S TRUST

AASB fully supports the work of the Alaska Children's Trust and urges all member school boards to promote the Trust and its efforts to address the tragic consequences of abuse, neglect, violence, and crime experienced by too many of Alaska's children. AASB urges the Legislature to support and increase the Children's Trust Endowment.

Rationale. The Alaska Children's Trust was established by the Legislature in 1988 with the mandate to promote initiatives that strengthen families and serve dependent children. The Trust has since been transferred to a private, non-profit organization, and the Alaska Community Foundation manages its funds.

The goal of the Children's Trust is to promote and provide opportunities so that Alaska's children can grow to responsible and productive adulthood. The Children's Trust will fund local programs that meet the needs and challenges of Alaska's families and children with innovative, efficient and effective services. *Adopted 1996 Amended 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2015, Renewed 2016 (Sunsets 2021)*

3.14 INCREASED SUPPORT OF ALASKA HEAD START PROGRAMS
Alaska Head Start programs and services are a partnership between federal, state and community-level entities. The Association of Alaska School Boards supports and urges the Congress of the United States, the President, the Alaska Legislature, and the Governor to provide sufficient and consistent funding to make Head Start, Early Infant Learning available to all eligible young Alaskans, regardless of the number of children in the program.

Rationale. Project Head Start has had a beneficial impact on the academic, physical, social, and emotional development of impoverished pre-school students and their families throughout Alaska and the United States since its inception in the 1960's.

Children at-risk who have benefited from a quality early childhood program spend 1.3 years less in some form of special education placement. They have been shown to score higher on such school readiness measures as verbal achievement, perceptual reasoning and social competence than other low-income children attending either another preschool or no preschool.

Head Start has immediate positive effects on children's socio-emotional development, including self-esteem, achievement, motivation and social behavior. Parents involved in Head Start have been shown to participate more in activities, including transition, than non-Head Start parents.

Within Alaska, 16 Head Start grantee agencies serve approximately 3,000 children and their families in 100 communities. A large number of eligible Alaskan children (estimated to be nearly 76%) remain unserved, due to lack of sufficient funding. *Adopted 1997, 2017 Amended 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2010 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

3.15 SUPPORTING THE SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT
AASB urges the U.S. Congress to continue funding for the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act at levels adequate to support effective education, counseling and prevention efforts. The Association recommends that such valuable new initiatives as preventing violence in the schools be funded through separate appropriation.

Rationale. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act authorized federal appropriations to state and local education agencies to devise programming to provide drug use education, counseling, and abuse prevention services for America's young people. Programs funded through the Act are currently providing valuable services and will be needed for the foreseeable future.

Although violence in the schools is a serious issue and developing programs to combat it is an appropriate federal responsibility, any diversion of resources from the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act would cripple important drug education, counseling and abuse prevention programs that are only taking root and becoming effective. *Adopted 1997, 2017 Amended 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2008, 2009, Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

3.16 REVISE PARENTAL PERMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS ADMINISTERED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

AASB supports modifying the requirements for parental or legal guardian permission for a student to participate in a questionnaire or survey administered in a public school to make it easier for school districts to obtain the necessary permission.

Rationale. The passage of HB 44 in 2015 included an amendment requiring affirmative parental permission for most any questionnaire or survey of students by school districts. This prohibition makes it very difficult for school administrators to gather information crucial to identifying and addressing problems affecting students, from drug and alcohol use to bullying and other intimidation. *Adopted 2001, Amended 2007, 2009, 2015 Renewed 2016 (Sunsets 2021)*

3.17 STUDENT WELLNESS

Good physical and mental health of children is essential if they are to take full advantage of the educational services offered by their school. AASB urges students, parents, educators, guardians, community groups, tribal entities and state and local agencies to collaborate on collective ways to ensure all children are prepared to learn through healthy eating habits, physical activity, social emotional learning awareness and access to adequate housing and health care. Due to the federally mandated Child Nutrition Act, funding to school districts should be increased to support adequate school services and programs to address those mandates. Specific school-based measures to reduce child obesity issues should include increased funding for school districts.

Rationale. AASB recognizes child wellness is also determined by circumstances outside the school, from the availability of good nutrition and physical activity to the ability of each family to provide housing and health care for their members. Obesity is a growing health threat to all generations of Alaskans; it increases the risks of chronic diseases and conditions such as heart disease, liver failure, diabetes, stroke, hypertension, some cancers and premature death. Therefore, community-based collaboration is essential for long-term success. *Adopted 2005*, *Amended 2006, 2008, 2009, 2015, 2018, Renewed 2015* (*Sunsets 2020)*

3.18 PROMOTING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

AASB encourages legislative recognition that brain development in 0-3 year-old children critically impacts educational success. Inadequate brain development in the very early years is impossible to overcome and poses a huge and costly challenge for school districts. AASB supports efforts to inform parents and families about promoting healthy brain development in their very young children and to provide related resources that support early brain development efforts. AASB further urges legislators to fund early learning programs.

Rationale. Success in education is largely dependent on the degree of brain development achieved from birth to age 3. Age appropriate, culturally relevant and native language supported resources need to be made available for families to stimulate proper brain development in order to increase children's learning potential. Various public and private agencies, including school districts, should encourage collaborative efforts to provide information and effective, research-based resources to parents and guardians of very young children. The benefits of wise investment in young children will be substantial, and the consequences of poor investments costly. *Adopted 2005, Amended 2011, 2013, 2015 (Sunsets 2020)*

3.19 SCHOOL ACTIVITY AND STATEWIDE TESTING SCHEDULES IN RELATION TO MAJOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

In advocating for the respect of cultural differences and in recognition of increasing diversity, AASB encourages the State of Alaska, school districts and the Alaska School Activities Association to schedule major school-sanctioned activities and statewide testing on days that do not conflict with major religious holidays and cultural activities.

Rationale. As of this time, Christmas and Easter do not have major sporting events or other activities for students scheduled for these holidays. In its advocacy role, AASB can influence ASAA, individual school boards and the Department of Education & Early Development to refrain from scheduling student activities, sporting events and statewide testing the Jewish High Holy Days (Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah), holidays associated with Islam (Eid, the end of Ramadan), Russian Orthodox Christmas and Easter and other major holidays of our communities' faith organizations. *Adopted 2007, 2017 Amended 2009, 2011 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

3.20 INTERVENTIONS AND SANCTIONS THAT REDUCE LOSS OF CREDIT

AASB supports amending AS 14.30.171 to allow school district personnel to reduce or mitigate suspensions or expulsions based on attendance and participation in appropriate interventions.

Rationale. SB 48, an act relating to recommending or refusing psychotropic drugs or certain types of evaluations or treatments for children, was adopted by the legislature in 2006. It does not currently allow school district administration to reduce the number of days for suspensions or expulsions, if there is a program or evaluation in place. The loss of credit and loss of intervention programs negatively impact communities. *Adopted 2007, 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

3.21 SUPPORTING EXPANSION OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE TO SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

AASB endorses the expansion of health insurance coverage to school-age Alaska children and their families. The provision of medical benefits to these children and their families ensures more students will be able to remain healthy, focus on school and grow into productive adults.

Rationale. The federal Affordable Care Act authorized states to expand Medicaid to target lower-income families with the promise of federal funding to underwrite much of the extra expense. The State of Alaska joined many other states in taking advantage of this expanded program in 2016.
Adopted 2010, Amended 2011, 2016, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)

3.22 STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES
AASB urges the Alaska School Activities Association, the Department of Education & Early Development and the Alaska Legislature to provide clear rules and appropriate funding to assure that all students participating in interscholastic activities adhere to the standards set forth by the state and local school districts.

Rationale. AASB believes it is in the interest of all students to adhere to consistent rules regarding transfers, academic requirements for participation, state testing, accreditation, and funding mechanisms. *Adopted 2012, Amended 2014 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

3.23 SUPPORT OF FULL STATE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH REQUIREMENTS
AASB strongly urges the Administration and the Legislature to continue to sufficiently fund the Public Health Nurse Program, community health aides/practitioners and other immunization programs so that necessary and required immunizations and health screenings can be provided free of charge for all disadvantaged children and youth.

Rationale. Children are not allowed to attend school without all mandatory immunizations. Charging for these immunizations can create an insurmountable barrier for disadvantaged youth and children, as well as creating an increased severity of social and health problems caused by the rise of preventable infections and missed education opportunities due to missed immunizations. In addition, early health screenings performed by public health nurses identify health, developmental and/or other factors that may interfere with a child's learning, growth and development.

“Public Health Nurses serve populations that are marginalized by society and address differences in health status that are unnecessary, avoidable, and unjust.” – Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing, “Report on a Public Health Nurse to Population Ratio” October 2008

“As science and medicine continue to evolve, so does our ability -- and public health responsibility -- to prevent disease. The results of some of these advancements are new vaccines. The current U.S. vaccination schedule for children between birth and six years old recommends immunizations for at least 15 different diseases that may cause significant health problems and even death. Although this number may seem like a lot, it's important to know each and every disease has the potential to quickly reappear if vaccination rates drop.” – New York Department of Health website www.health.ny.gov/prevention *Adopted 2012, Amended 2013, Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

3.24 TOBACCO FREE SCHOOLS

AASB supports and advocates for a comprehensive tobacco-free school policy in all districts around the state that promotes general health and welfare for students and all individuals in the school environment. This includes all school properties and contractors in the schools, which protects future generations from tobacco use and exposure and reinforces tobacco-free norms and attitudes.

Rationale. The 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Study data showed the following about tobacco and nicotine products:

- 11 percent of Alaska high school students are current smokers (smoked at least once in the past 30 days);
- 21 percent of high school students say they currently use either combustible tobacco products, including cigarettes and cigars, or smokeless tobacco;
- About 18 percent of teens report current use of e-cigarettes.

Schools are often a vital and central gathering place for the entire community, hosting sporting events, dances, funerals, potlucks, health fairs, concerts, community lunches, etc. The image of older youth and adults using tobacco influences younger children to try and start using, or older youth can serve as positive role models. Communication is necessary to enforce a comprehensive tobacco-free policy.

Tobacco use is an addictive disease and not merely a discipline matter. Teens should be provided options for treatment; and yet a 2012 survey by the State of Alaska found only a dozen Alaska school districts with progressive consequences regarding tobacco violations. A comprehensive tobacco free policy (see AASB BP 3513.3 and 5131.62) includes all students, staff, visitors and the general public. *Adopted 2012, Amended 2013, 2015 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

3.25 SUPPORTING SEX ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION EDUCATION
AASB supports the expansion and funding of age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education in grades K through 12. Passage of the Alaska Safe Children's Act of 2015 offers momentum towards this goal. The law requires schools to offer education to make children and youth aware of sexual abuse and assault, as well as dating violence and healthy relationships.

AASB also supports the prohibition of students being exempted from this education by parents/guardians, except under exceptional circumstances.

Rationale. Child abuse in Alaska is a chronic problem that spans generations. In 2013, the Office of Children's Services received nearly 2,300 allegations of child sexual abuse involving more than 1,800 unique victims. More than 800 of these cases resulted in criminal charges. While the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault offers programs that provide outreach and education presentations in schools, upon request, resources are not sufficient to address the problem. If granted support for curriculum development and materials, schools could supplement the awareness and prevention effort. *Adopted 2014 Amended 2015, 2018 Renewed 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

3.26 SUPPORTING THE ADOPTION OF TRAUMA-INFORMED AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT PRACTICES

AASB urges its member districts to implement and educate families and the greater community on trauma-informed and culturally relevant practices, disciplinary policies, interactions and environments. The Association of Alaska School Boards understands the importance of meeting the needs of students who have experienced childhood trauma to improve student achievement and reduce behavioral deficits for all Alaskan students.

Rationale: Research shows that six of ten Alaskan students have experienced at least one traumatic childhood event before graduating. These students require a supportive environment to heal and achieve academic and social success – supports that several other states and Alaskan districts have successfully implemented. These childhood traumas, if not properly addressed, can lead to heart disease, obesity, liver and kidney disease, depression, substance abuse, suicidality, early death and numerous other serious health concerns. When students are punished or shamed for behaviors that result from their exposure to trauma, this can lead to increased risk of dropping out of school and worse job prospects. Our schools have an opportunity to help students heal and grow after traumatic experiences, but only with modifications to the current school climates, practices, and policies. Additionally, actions and activities that may be necessary to help traumatized students will benefit all students socially, emotionally, and academically.

The Association of Alaska School Boards understands the importance of meeting the needs of students who have experienced childhood trauma. As Alaskans experience adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) at rates higher than the national average, and as there are racial disparities in ACEs and the negative outcomes of ACEs in Alaska, AASB urges its member districts to implement trauma-informed and culturally relevant practices, disciplinary policies, interactions and environments. *Adopted 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

3.27 SUPPORT FOR THE TREATMENT OF ABUSE OF OPIATES

AASB advocates for appropriate legislative funding for opiate abuse treatment. AASB strongly supports both increasing resources for medication-assisted treatment within primary care as well as access to developmentally appropriate substance use disorder counseling in community settings, which may include schools.

Rationale: According to the most recent data from the Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2017) 15 percent of students in a traditional high school setting had used prescription opiates in a way not prescribed by their doctor with 7 percent reporting that they had done so in the last 30 days. The numbers from non-traditional high school are much higher, with 37.4 percent of students admitting use of prescription opiates in a way not prescribed by their doctor and 19.8 percent in the past 30 days (2015).

On February 14, 2017, Governor Bill Walker declared the opioid overdose epidemic a public health disaster emergency. In that declaration he cited statistics showing that in 2012 Alaska's prescription opioid overdose death rate was more than double the rate in the rest of the United States and the rate of heroin-associated overdose death rate was 50 percent higher than the national rate. The declaration also states that from 2009 to 2015 the number of heroin-associated deaths in the state more than quadrupled. The Alaska Legislature has extended the public health disaster declaration to February 14, 2018.

The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that the rate of nonmedical use of opioid medication by adolescents (aged 12-17) more than doubled between 1991-2012, and the rates of opioid use disorders, including heroin addiction, and fatal opioid overdoses increased in parallel.

Nationally, drug overdoses kill an estimated 142 Americans a day, more than the number of gun homicides and car crashes combined, with 2/3 of those overdoses linked to opioids, according to the Center for Disease Control.

AASB recognizes the rapid increase of opioid abuse among the student population in Alaska, following a trend in the general population in the state, constitutes a public health epidemic.

AASB also recognizes the positive steps the Alaska Legislature has taken to combat opioid overdoses and regulate the dispensing of opioid medication prescriptions. AASB advocates for legislative funding for opiate treatment options for 1) Students experiencing addiction and 2) Students who are being impacted by those who have an addiction. In many Alaska communities, treatment options are limited by professional expertise and the expense of treatment. The American Academy of Pediatrics advocates for increasing resources to improve access to medication-assisted treatment of opioid-addicted adolescents and young adults. This recommendation includes both increasing resources for medication-assisted treatment within primary care and access to developmentally appropriate substance use disorder counseling in community settings.

AASB calls on member districts to take into account the highly addictive nature of these drugs in implementing discipline and intervention programs and to recognize the need for a collaborative, multiagency approach to get a student in crisis the help they need. *Adopted 2017 Amended 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

3.28 EDUCATION ON THE DANGERS OF TOBACCO, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS, MARIJUANA USE AND SECONDHAND SMOKE

AASB encourages the Alaska Legislature to provide education awareness funding for publications and educational awareness opportunities on the danger of secondhand smoke in regards to tobacco, electronic nicotine delivery systems, and marijuana use.

Rationale: In a recent study performed by the University of California San Francisco, the conclusion was drawn that one minute of exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS) from marijuana diminishes blood vessel function to the same extent as tobacco, but the harmful cardiovascular effects last three times longer.

The researchers (July 27, 2016, issue of the *Journal of the American Heart Association,)* found that rats exposed to marijuana SHS experienced a more than 50 percent reduction in FMD (flow-mediated dilation,) similar to the reduction in artery function seen in both rats and humans exposed to tobacco smoke in previous studies. As with tobacco, the reduction occurred after just one minute of exposure to SHS from marijuana. However, while rats exposed for one minute to tobacco SHS recover within 30 minutes – an observation that was reproduced in the new study – one minute of exposure to marijuana SHS (Secondhand Smoke) still significantly affected FMD 90 minutes after the initial exposure.

Studies have also demonstrated that exposure to tobacco smoke in childhood is associated with negative health consequences in childhood (including an increased risk for viral infection, asthma, cognitive deficits, and behavioral issues) and also with an increased risk of disease in adulthood.
Adopted 2017 Amended 2018, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)

Research Links:

https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2016/07/403721/one-minute-second-hand-marijuana-smoke-impairs-cardiovascular-function

https://drugabuse.com/lets-clear-the-air-about-secondhand-marijuana-smoke/

http://jaha.ahajournals.org/content/5/8/e004004

3.29 PROMOTING STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROGRAMS

AASB recognizes that our children are "Alaska's Most Valuable Resource." Accidental and preventable deaths caused by unsafe transportation practices have been plaguing the state, especially in rural school districts. AASB urges local school districts to adopt Student Transportation Safety Standards such as, but not limited to:

- Helmet use on ATV or snowmachines
- Lifejacket use on boats
- Weather appropriate clothing for all modes of transportation
- Student choice to travel, or not, depending on weather circumstances

School districts should also consider safe travel practices and the adoption of standards for students traveling by any mode of transportation, to or from school activities.

Rationale: AASB's core resolutions currently address tobacco use, drug use, FAS, online porn and violence, HIV, sexual abuse, and suicide prevention. Addressing helmet and life jacket use, along with ground and air travel safety measures, would seem to coincide with these topics above, taking it one step further in protecting our students. *Adopted 2017, Amended 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

PERSONNEL

4.1 SUPPORTS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT
AASB supports funded opportunities and sufficient resources for quality and relevant staff preparation and demonstrably effective continuing development in both urban and rural settings for those educating Alaska's public school students. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Professional development for teachers to implement the Alaska State Standards;
- Pre-service: State training programs through postsecondary and other institutions;
- Expanding Department of Education & Early Development packaged training programs for all school districts to use in providing consistent mandated training to employees and in meeting the requirements of the **(**Every Student Succeeds Act 2015) Elementary and Secondary Education Act;
- Developing resources to allow the sharing and implementation of best educational practices;
- Quality in-service programs at the local district level;
- Necessary training for paraprofessionals and special needs educators.
- Promote local mentors to foster the enculturation of teachers/administrators.
- Cultural orientation and ongoing training in local language, culture and history.

Rationale. The greatest factor affecting the ability of the state's students to master Alaska's student performance standards is the quality of the teacher who delivers instruction to the student. Compounding this critical concern is the shortage of qualified teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals. Issues such as teacher, administrator and paraprofessional recruitment, distribution, preparation, and in-service continue to impact the supply and retention of qualified staff. In addition, teachers who work with indigenous students too often lack knowledge about the nuances of living in Alaska, particularly rural Alaska. While the state has recently increased efforts to attract teachers and staff from both conventional and non-traditional sources and to more effectively prepare teachers, the promise of these efforts has yet to reach most school districts.

Explicitly listing the need for both orientation and continued professional development in the areas of culture, language, and history will help districts focus on this key need for success. Teachers who understand the culture of the area in which they serve feel more connected to their students and community, provide more appropriate and culturally responsive instruction, and tend to remain in their teaching assignments longer.

Adopted 2002 Amended 2004, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)

4.3 ALASKA STATEWIDE EDUCATOR MENTORING

AASB applauds the willingness of veteran educators to serve as mentors to Alaska's teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals. AASB urges the Alaska Legislature to provide adequate and permanent funding to continue professional staff mentoring.

Rationale. Surveys have shown that far too many teachers and principals leave the profession within their first five years out of frustration or lack of success. Mentors who serve to provide advice and support during these critical early years are a proven remedy to this dropout phenomenon. Alaska should invest money in mentoring programs to ensure that they exist into the future, when federal funds may not be available. *Adopted 2005, Amended 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

4.4 SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES TRAINING

The Association of Alaska School Boards promotes the establishment and expansion of post-secondary educational programs to train additional individuals as certified special education teachers and the initiation of programs to train related services providers (e.g. school psychologists, physical therapists, and speech therapists) within our state university system.

Academic programs to train some special education-related service providers are not currently available within Alaska. Therefore, AASB endorses providing financial support to Alaska residents who must attend professional certification programs outside the state. This support should be limited to those professionals committed to providing services to children in Alaska public schools. In addition, AASB supports the continuation of using alternative ways towards special education certification.

Rationale. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA-97) mandates appropriate educational services be provided to all certified special education students; the Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities (34 C.F.R. Part 300), Section 300.381 identifies the role of "the State (to) undertake (activities) to ensure an adequate supply of qualified personnel including special education and related services personnel...necessary to carry out the purposes of this part;" and, the Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities (34 C.F.R. Part 300), Section 300.382 identifies the role of "Each State plan (to) include a description of the procedures and activities the State will under take to ensure that all personnel necessary to carry out this part are appropriately and adequately trained...to include a system for continuing education of regular and special education and related service personnel to meet the needs of children with disabilities."

School districts throughout the State of Alaska are having difficulty meeting the educational requirements of our special needs students due to a significant shortage of certified special education personnel. Furthermore, the University of Alaska has limited special education and related services professional preparation program opportunities available to individuals aspiring to become certified special education or related service professionals. *Adopted 1998 Amended 1999, 2000, 2010, 2011 Renewed 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

4.5 ADDRESSING THE TEACHER, SPECIALIST AND ADMINISTRATOR SHORTAGE

The Association of Alaska School Boards urges the Alaska State Legislature, Alaska State Board of Education, and Teacher Education Programs in Alaska's universities to address the severe shortage of teachers, specialists, and administrators in the State of Alaska. Suggested strategies may include:

- Incentives (salary bonuses, loan forgiveness, loan assumption, competitive retirement benefits, interest rate reduction, etc.);
- State supported marketing and licensure assistance to recruit teachers;
- Flexibility in certification requirements and reciprocity;
- Alternative routes to teacher certification;
- Improved access to technology including bandwidth and knowledgeable staff;
- Increasing availability and/or quality of teacher housing**,** including state subsidized teacher housing
- Mentoring programs for new teachers and administrators**;**
- Streamline the rehire of retired teachers and administrators;
- Professional support/development.
- Eliminate redundant or unnecessary paperwork.
- Increasing awareness about the lives and communities of Alaska's children.
- A defined benefit retirement system
- Utilize research on system supports that promote teacher retention.
- Train more Alaska students as educators

Rationale. It has been painfully demonstrated that a severe shortage of teachers, specialists, and administrators is being experienced in the school districts in every region of Alaska. Attracting and retaining quality teachers has become a critical issue facing school districts as they work to improve education in Alaska's public schools.

A teacher's job satisfaction is gauged by a number of factors, including a sense of accomplishment, professional support, decent living conditions, and adequate compensation/benefits. The degree to which Alaska meets these needs is a statement of the value we place on our educators. *Adopted 1999 Amended 2000, 2001, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

4.6 REPEAL THE SOCIAL SECURITY GOVERNMENT PENSION OFFSET AND WINDFALL ELIMINATION PROVISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATORS

AASB supports the elimination of two little known amendments to the Social Security Act that unfairly penalize certain public employees by reducing earned retirement benefits. They are the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

Rationale. The Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision unfairly reduce the Social Security rights of at least one-third of America's education workforce, including Alaskans enrolled in either the Teacher's Retirement System or the Public Employees Retirement System.

In 1977, Congress began treating government pensions, such as those earned by educators, as Social Security benefits. The Government Pension Offset (GPO) reduces an individual's Social Security survivor benefits (available to a person whose deceased spouse had earned Social Security benefits) by an amount equal to two-thirds of his/her public pension.

In 1983, Congress enacted the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). It changes the formula used to figure benefit amounts – reducing an individual's own Social Security benefits (earned while working in a job covered by Social Security). For example, a teacher taught 17 years in one state, then moved to a different state and taught another 14 years. According to the Social Security Administration, she earned monthly benefits of $540 per month for her contributions paid into the Social Security system while she worked in the first state. Because public employees in the second state do not participate in the Social Security system, her actual monthly benefits will be cut $196 due to the (WEP). She will receive $344 per month from Social Security instead of the $540 she earned.

Congress further tightened the law in 2004 through passage of PL 108-203, which eliminated the "last day covered employment exemption" to the government offset provision. The law requires that the last 60 months of a person's government employment be covered by Social Security and the pension system in order to avoid reduction under the GPO.

The impact of the penalty is exacerbated with the change in TRS and PRS from defined benefit to defined contribution. *Adopted 2002, 2017 Amended 2007, 2013, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

4.7 RELATING TO DEFINED BENEFIT RETIREMENT

AASB supports establishment of a defined benefit retirement program that improves the hiring and retention of highly qualified and effective staff.

Rationale. Secure retirement benefits are important for recruiting the best personnel to Alaska schools. Without competitive work benefits, it has become increasingly difficult to retain and recruit teachers, administrators and support staff. Districts are investing significant dollars to train staff to deliver world-class instruction and want to retain this knowledge in state to the advantage of our students. *Adopted 2005 Amended 2008, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

4.8 RELATING TO HEALTH CARE COSTS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

The effects of federal health care legislation on school districts are not yet fully understood. AASB calls upon the Governor, the Legislature and Congress to eliminate any unintended consequences harmful to school districts and to continue to look for ways to address the cost of health care ~~i~~n Alaska that are not detrimental to districts while providing district options.

Rationale. In Alaska more approximately 96,000 residents have no medical insurance, and the price of treatment is increasing. In the U.S. 44 million people have no health insurance. The uninsured drive costs up for everyone. For school districts in Alaska health care costs for current and retired employees is a growing problem. In many districts these costs add up to more than 10 percent of the budget. This growing budget category mitigates a districts' ability to directly impact student achievement through classroom focused expenditures. *Adopted 2005 Amended 2010, 201, 2013, 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

4.11 ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO CERTIFY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

AASB encourages the Department of Education & Early Development to develop alternative pathways for certifying teachers (a) to qualify vocational/career technology teachers to provide core academic credit; and (b) to recognize an indigenous teacher certification track that will use Native/indigenous knowledge systems and pedagogy as a base for training teachers able to more effectively teach Native students. The alternative pathways should be created with participation from both urban and rural districts.

Rationale: With the passing and implementation of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the requirement for "highly qualified" teachers has been eliminated but the need for "highly effective" teachers remains. Rural school staffing patterns cannot support one teacher for each subject, let alone for each area within a discipline. In schools where one or two teachers must handle the entire secondary program, it is critically important that districts and school systems be able to utilize effective instructors that may have come through alternative pathways of certification. Alaska faces a severe shortage of Native teachers and a dearth of culturally appropriate pathways to teacher certification for teachers of any ethnicity. Research shows that Native teachers have a positive effect on and a better record of engaging Native students. The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and Alaska colleges and universities should develop programs to support Native/indigenous teachers to become certified. *Adopted 2008 Amended 2010, 2011, 2013, 2017, 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

4.12 TEACHER ENDORSEMENTS CHANGE NOTIFICATION

AASB urges the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development to require adequate notice to school districts before teachers change their endorsements.

Rationale. Teachers assigned in April or May to teach a specific class, e.g. special education, in the fall may now drop that endorsement to their licenses before classes begin in August. Written notice to districts is required but may not be verified. The lack of adequate notice to school districts can leave schools and students without essential instructional resources. The restrictions of tenure add an additional consequence since a teacher may no longer be certified for an available position. *Adopted 2010, Amended 2011 Renewed 2015 (Sunsets 2020)*

4.13 CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPERINTENDENTS AND SUPERINTENDENT/PRINCIPALS

AASB urges the University of Alaska to continue to strengthen its curriculum and program for the education of school superintendents and superintendent/principals in order to produce more applicants who are qualified in all aspects of district administration. The curriculum and training should include:

- Extensive focus on school finance, budget development and administration; school facilities planning, design, construction and financing;
- Curriculum and instruction;
- School law;
- School board relations and policy development;
- Strategies for improving student achievement;
- Public relations, including the judicious use of technology and social media;
- Human resources, including the recruitment, orientation, professional development and evaluation of school personnel;
- Labor relations, including collective bargaining and the administration of collective bargaining agreements.
- Cultural awareness, knowledge, and understanding of Alaska Native cultures
- Awareness, knowledge, and understanding of other cultures

Rationale. School districts are complex public institutions that require highly qualified leadership. There is a limited pool of these individuals that needs to be expanded. *Adopted 2013 Amended 2018, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

4.15 URGING THE STATE OF ALASKA TO REMOVE A SUBSTANTIAL ROADBLOCK TO HIRING TEMPORARY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

AASB urges the Alaska Division of Retirement and Benefits to promulgate a rule, regulation, policy, directive or other binding determination to allow school districts to hire superintendents on a defined temporary basis without forfeiting their retirement status and without becoming active members of the Teachers Retirement System (TRS). AASB believes such relief to be in the best interest of the State of Alaska, individual school districts and parents, staff and students in affected districts. AASB believes that an adequate definition of "temporary" would include the remainder of the school year in which the superintendent is hired and up to one full school year following.

Rationale. Current state law in Alaska Statute 14.25.220 (19) and (29) specifies that "temporary" superintendents are not eligible to be active members of TRS. Yet, there is no regulation, policy, directive or other binding determination by TRS as to the terms and duration of a "temporary" superintendent.

The recruitment and selection of a superintendent by a school board is one of its most important duties and requires a thoughtful, deliberate, fair and public process. When an unanticipated vacancy occurs mid-year, the pool of potential replacements is often very limited. While school districts and the State of Alaska work on strategies to increase the pool of qualified superintendent candidates, the best immediate solution is to define the terms and duration of a temporary superintendent so that retired superintendents can re-enter the workforce to assist school districts when needed without being required to forfeit their retirement for the period of their new employment. *Adopted 2014 Renewed 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

4.16 SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE, CULTURALLY–INTEGRATED PEDAGOGY IN ALASKA
AASB urges the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) to support and provide regionally implemented immersive cultural training and programs through: a) Alaska Studies and Cross Cultural Communication professional development courses, and b) the development of local mentor programs for teacher enculturation. Furthermore, AASB urges DEED to provide for the development of regionally and locally relevant elementary and secondary curriculum, which includes Alaska's history from the Alaska Native perspective. AASB also urges the University of Alaska College of Education (COE) to support local teacher preparation programs that grow our own teachers as well as supporting regional campuses in offering regionally-relevant Alaska Studies and Cross Cultural Communication courses.

Rationale: The Alaska Association of Schools Boards recognizes the fact that Alaska's public schools need to provide an equitable and relevant education to all students that prioritizes social justice and advocacy. AASB recognizes the predictability of disparity in achievement based on race or ethnicity.
The first long-range goal (2015-2018) of AASB is to:

> "….empower boards to increase the academic success of Alaska Native students and increase graduation rates of Alaska Native students who are grounded in their cultural identity with the ability to successfully pursue their goals".

AASB strives to deliberately act to eliminate such gaps, policies, practices and structures that perpetuate inequities based on race and support the elimination of the factors that predict disparity. AASB recognizes that systemic changes in formal schooling need to occur in order for achievement to increase and recognizes the need for equitable delivery of education revolving around giving every student what he or she needs to achieve success (Bylaws Article 2, Section 6 and Policy 100).

AASB supports and encourages the creation of culturally responsive learning environments that support high expectations and academic achievement for learners from all racial groups. AASB supports funded opportunities and sufficient resources for quality and relevant staff including administrators (AASB 2017 Resolutions 4.1, 4.13). AASB currently collaborates with initiatives such as the Alaska Education Challenge, the newly-structured University of Alaska College of Education; the First Alaskans Institute Education Council, the Educators Rising Standards, and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference on Education in accomplishing equitable and relevant education in Alaska. *Adopted July 2017 Amended 2018 (Sunsets 2022).*

4.17 ADDRESSING THE PARAPROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE

In light of the statewide shortage of paraprofessionals, the Association of Alaska School Boards encourages and urges the Alaska State Legislature and Board of Education to enact legislation and programs to fully fund the recruitment, retention, training, and development of paraprofessionals. Suggested strategies may include:

-Marketing programs aimed at recruiting and retaining paraprofessional talent;
-Development/Mentoring programs;
-Increased allocation for paraprofessionals in the funding model;
-Incentives and assistance to encourage paraprofessionals to become teachers.

Rationale. Paraprofessionals, including education support staff, bring immeasurable value to the classroom. Students with disabilities and those who need additional instruction require extra attention in order to help them understand the lesson. Paraprofessionals help teachers save valuable class time by working with these students and helping them keep pace with their peers. Without the added help, these students will fall behind. Paraprofessionals also help teachers with other classroom tasks, as well as additional tasks throughout schools such as before/after school, recess, and lunch supervision.

A shortage of paraprofessionals is being experienced in every region of Alaska, but especially in rural and remote rural districts. Recruiting and retaining quality paraprofessionals is a critical issue facing school districts as they work to improve education in Alaska's public schools. Retaining paraprofessionals will depend on a number of factors, including a sense of importance, professional support, development opportunities, and adequate compensation/benefits. The degree to which Alaska meets these factors is a statement of the value we place on our paraprofessionals. *Adopted 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

5.1 CAREER-EXPLORATION PROGRAMS
The Association of Alaska School Boards strongly supports adequate and equitable funding for career and technical education, career technical student organizations, and, starting at the preschool and elementary level, career-exploration activities, while ensuring resources to satisfy needs and requirements of all academic programs.

Rationale. Both the U.S. Department of Education and the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development have endorsed and encouraged districts to implement career-exploration programs starting at the elementary level.

The implementation of career-exploration programs inevitably results in additional expenses that are not part of the standard budget schedules of school districts. Increased costs include, but are not limited to: purchase of equipment and materials related to occupations, transportation for students between schools and workplaces, training for staff members, release time for staff members, new staff positions career-exploration coordinator, transition specialist, job coach), insurance and workman's compensation costs.

There are a large number of students in rural villages that do not complete high school or job training programs. There is a need to provide programs like the Rural Student Vocational Program (RSVP), which was eliminated in 1998, or innovative regional residency centers to enhance opportunities for these students. At the same time, career-exploration programs must integrate and ensure basic academic achievement. *Adopted 1998 Amended 1999, 2002, 2008, 2010, 2012 Renewed 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

5.2 CURRICULUM EXPANSION VIA DISTANCE DELIVERY

AASB urges the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) and other entities to support, coordinate and encourage **Alaska sourced** distance delivered education programs for students and teachers in partnership with local districts using existing facilities whenever possible, and supports funding for the purchase and installation of distance delivery equipment. AASB strongly supports the increased development of the state's Internet infrastructure to support distance delivery, thus providing equitable educational opportunity for all students.

Rationale. All school districts need to have the capability to offer a variety of courses for all students, including the remedial student, vocational student, the student who left school without graduating, and the college bound student.

In order to take classes otherwise not available, students who attend small high schools must leave their community or take correspondence classes. There are examples in the state of success in delivering such courses utilizing technology. Many districts in the state are exploring the use of current technology in the form of distance delivery. Programs that are currently being offered in local districts could be utilized by other districts in state, or substituted for purchased programs now in use, with funding and support provided by EED.

Expanding distance delivery could also help meet the needs of providing effective and experienced teachers and paraprofessionals. *Adopted 2000 Amended 2001, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2017 Renewed 2015 (Sunsets 2020)*

5.3 ALASKA NATIVE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
AASB supports state funding for staff training, program development and materials preparation to promote Alaska Native Indigenous language instruction for those districts that desire Alaska Native Indigenous language programs. AASB also urges Congress to clarify the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to bring it into compliance with the Native American Languages Act and to support opportunities for American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students to retain and use Native American languages, including adequate funding for programs that can support Alaska Native Indigenous language instruction.

Rationale. The heritage languages of the Indigenous Peoples of the United States have become endangered. The extinction of languages would further erode the rich heritage of the Indigenous Peoples of the United States. The technology exists to provide satellite language instruction in the Native tongues to communities throughout the United States. If we as a nation do not respond to this need to preserve this rich linguistic heritage, these languages will become extinct. Financial support from the government for the preservation of Native languages would enable the use of a technology that has helped speed the loss of indigenous languages to reverse that trend. In today's modern world technology and global issues make it necessary for our children to become proficient in English. Learning English, however, should not be at the expense of indigenous language programs. *Adopted 1997 Amended 1998, 1999, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2018 Renewed 2017 (Sunset 2022)*

5.4 COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAMS
AASB recommends that a new Community Schools Act be enacted and the state explore independent funding status for Alaska's Community School programs.

Rationale. AASB recognizes that *Community School Programs* extend the concept of public education beyond the traditional K-12 program of "schooling" and views everyone in the community as both teacher and learner. Tight budgets and state demands for strict accountability have placed community schools programs in competition with district academic priorities.
Adopted 2000 Amended 2001, 2004, 2008,2009, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)

5.5 INCREASING STUDENT CONTACT TIME

The Association of Alaska School Boards supports allowing school districts to expand the school day or to expand the school year, with adequate state funding, to account for state mandated student testing, professional development, collaboration/planning, and/or increased instructional contact time, according to local district needs.

Rationale. The lack of time is identified as one of the top challenges facing schools when it comes to effective schooling and raising student achievement. Education Summit of 2000 participants identified the need for more time to align curriculum, more student contact time (day/week/year), more teacher preparation time, more time for professional development, reducing the loss of instructional time. This would allow more time for remediation efforts, time to communicate test results, work with public expectations and collaborate with appropriate entities.

In addition, policymakers have decreased student contact time through state mandates that require additional testing days and related professional development requirements that potentially impact student achievement. The most important challenge is an inadequate amount of time on task by students. Educators need time to make sure that each student has a solid foundation before moving him/her to the next level. *Adopted 2000 Amended 2001, 2002, 2003, 2008 Renewed 2015 (Sunsets 2020)*

5.6 ENCOURAGING CIVIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

AASB encourages member districts to develop well-articulated curriculum for civic education (in all contexts, including municipal, tribal, state, federal and global) for students and provide effective teaching strategies for civic instruction, including meaningful student government opportunities at all levels.

Rationale. In HCR 6, the 25th Alaska Legislature noted that residents place a high priority on meaningful civic learning in our schools, and "it is the responsibility of each generation of Americans to teach the next generation how democracy works." Again in the 29th Alaska Legislature, this same topic was the focus of a legislative task force. Both Legislative committee reports and recommendation note the critical significance of civics education as a basis for sustaining our democracy.

While some schools in Alaska have developed excellent civics education curriculum, the legislature declared "there has been a steady decline in the attention paid to advancing civic learning opportunities, locally, statewide and nationally." AASB believes that civics content can be integrated into reading, writing and math instruction without diminishing attention to tested subjects. AASB believes civics education should be a matter for local districts, rather than a statewide mandate. *Adopted 2007 Amended 2008, 2009, 2010, 2016 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

5.7 REQUESTING THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENTS IN ALASKA NATIVE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

AASB requests the state to provide standardized assessments in the Alaska Native indigenous languages, as requested by the individual districts.

Rationale. Students who have a strong first language in their ethnic group perform better academically. Students who learn English as a second language with a strong first language do better academically on standardized tests. Culturally responsive curriculum that uses the local language and cultural knowledge provides the foundation for the rest of the curriculum and implements the goals of the State of Alaska's Cultural Standards, as well as the State of Alaska Content and Performance Standards. *Adopted 2007 Amended 2015 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

5.8 SUPPORTING REGIONAL CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION CENTERS
AASB supports funding regional career and technical education centers, both new and pre-existing, to support the goals of public education. Centers could establish partnerships with the private sector to help fund training programs leading to employment of students in a broad range of careers. This funding should also include monies for student housing.

Rationale. The existing system of funding vocational education has failed to provide appropriate vocational training opportunities in schools across the state. *Adopted 2008 Amended 2009, 2012 Renewed 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

5.9 URGING FLEXIBILITY IN TESTING TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

AASB urges the Alaska Legislature to join with school districts in opposing those aspects of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that are detrimental to rural, largely Alaska Native school districts, including testing programs that inaccurately assess Alaska Native and rural Alaska students. In addition, AASB urges the state to reexamine its own testing programs with regard to these issues.

Rationale. The current ESEA reauthorization process is an opportunity to improve the existing law. Since 2001, ESEA has lacked the flexibility needed to support English Language Learners in indigenous communities. ELL programs disadvantage indigenous communities that wish to perpetuate their values, culture and traditions in their public schools through their language. ELL mandates inaccurately assess Alaska Native students and inadvertently affect language programs negatively. *Adopted 2008 Amended 2010, 2014, 2015 Renewed 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

5.10 SUPPORTING UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ALASKA'S 3- AND 4-YEAR-OLD LEARNERS

AASB strongly supports full implementation and funding of a voluntary education program for every 3- and 4-year-old child in Alaska.

Rationale. The foundation of cognition is established early in childhood, and research clearly demonstrates the efficacy of educational programming for 3- and 4-year-olds. Access to these programs is important for every child in Alaska. *Adopted 2008 Amended 2010, 2012 Renewed 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

5.11 ENCOURAGING DISTRICTS TO ADOPT STANDARDS FOR PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

AASB encourages the Alaska Legislature to provide funding for district efforts to develop, implement and regularly evaluate their parent involvement programs using, as models, the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools and the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs.

Rationale. The National Standards are supported by the National School Boards Association and more than 40 other national education, health and parent involvement groups and developed by National PTA in cooperation with education and parent involvement professionals.

AASB has affirmed the importance of parent involvement in Belief Statements B.11, B.17 and B.18. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also recognizes the significance of and requires effective parent involvement programs that incorporate the six National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, including communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision-making and advocacy and collaborating with the community to engage parents, provide parents with clearly and timely information about ESEA and develop effective advocates. *Adopted 2008 Amended 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014 Renewed 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

5.12 URGING CONTINUATION OF THE ALASKA NATIVE EDUCATION ACT

AASB urges Congress and the President to support continuation of the Alaska Native Educational Equity, Support and Assistance Act as a critical way of engaging families and communities to more effectively support student success and align school and community efforts to create safe, healthy, culturally responsive and opportunity-rich environments.

Rationale. Since its adoption in 2002 as Title 7 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NCLB), the Alaska Native Education Act has provided supplemental benefits to Alaska school districts and Alaska Native students. Congress recognized then that too many Alaska Native children enter and leave the school system with serious educational handicaps, including low test scores and high dropout rates. The Alaska Native Education Act was enacted and funded to address these problems through improved curricula, better teaching practices, family literacy programs, cultural exchanges, community engagement programs and career preparation activities.

The Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement is a statewide initiative that effectively enlists families, school boards, districts, schools, educators, Alaska native organizations, businesses, community organizations, artists and arts organizations, faith communities, and young people themselves in improving the academic and social outcomes for youth. The success of this investment in Alaska Native students is evident in a 2009 report by the American Institutes for Research. The report on the impact of the Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement (Alaska ICE), which is funded through the Alaska Native Education Act, shows positive changes, especially for Native students, in schools and communities supported by Alaska ICE, including an increased level of expectations of Native students, improvements in school climate, increased levels of adult support for youth in the community, significantly reduced risk behaviors (including vandalism, fights, alcohol and drug use) and higher proficiency rates on statewide academic assessments. *Adopted 2009 Amended 2010, 2015, 2016 Renewed 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

5.13 RELATING TO POSTSECONDARY CLASSES FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS
AASB believes that students, who are enrolled in state-funded institutions offering dual credit college post secondary CTE classes, should have the cost funded by the state.

Rationale. State law encourages students to take college credits or vocational school credits at the expense of their school districts. It is in the interest of the state to help students maintain interest in school and advance toward a college degree or vocational education certificate. Some high school students want to take college or vocational courses prior to high school graduation. Reasons vary, but oftentimes students may be ready for a greater challenge than what is currently being offered at their high school, or may wish to "try out" classes that increase college readiness before committing to a degree program. Some students seek more advanced career and technical training than what may be offered in their district. A limiting factor for many students is cost. The cost for this post-secondary education should not *be required to* be borne by school districts. Therefore, it is reasonable to ask the state to fund these courses.

Adopted 2009 Amended 2010, 2014 Renewed 2019 (Sunsets 2024)

5.14 URGING THE LEGISLATURE TO RECOGNIZE THE TRUE AND IMPROVING RATE OF ALASKA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

AASB encourages the Alaska Legislature to recognize that the graduation rate for Alaska high school students has steadily improved since 2005.

Rationale. The Department of Education & Early Development calculates that 76 percent of students in the class of 2016 graduated within four years, and nearly 81 percent within five years.
Adopted 2011 Amended 2012, 2014, 2016 (Sunsets 2021)

5.15 SUPPORTING ASSESSMENTS TO MEASURE PROGRESS

AASB supports state funding to provide the full cost of equipment, technicians, and network upgrades and the broadband connectivity necessary to meet current and future mandated assessments and life-cycle replacement of hardware, software, and related technology.

Rationale. MAP and other assessments are used to adjust and monitor instruction and provide a data point on how a district or child performs. AASB recognizes the fact that assessments are only a snap shot of an individual at a point in time and may not be an accurate reflection of progress in learning. Students need more than one type of assessment to be reflective of academic progress. Some students are affected by text anxiety, others by cultural factors, and some test better in performance evaluations instead of pen and paper. The current network capabilities of school districts should be considered in the implementation of assessments. State funding should be provided to cover the full cost of equipment, computer technicians and network upgrades to meet any mandated assessments as well as life-cycle replacement. *Adopted 2015 Amended 2016 (Sunsets 2020)*

5.16 SUPPORT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM
AASB strongly supports the Public School Library Development Grant Program and the State Board of Education and Early Development adopted regulations pertaining to Alaska State Statute 14.56.360-375, providing for annual funding for strong broadly based school library collections in support of school curriculum offerings.

Rationale. Research indicates that reading for enjoyment is important for children's education success (OECD 202); schools with new collections in their libraries have higher test scores (Illinois 2005); and student achievement is higher in schools that house larger collections of traditional print resources as well as online resources (Pennsylvania 2000). *Adopted 2012 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

5.17 URGING THE LEGISLATURE TO CHANGE ALASKA STATE STATUTE 14.07.030 TO ALLOW FOR ELEMENTARY AGE STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN DISPLACED DUE TO A SCHOOL CLOSING TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE STATE BOARDING HOME PROGRAM.
AASB urges the Alaska Legislature to change the language of state statute AS 14.07.030 by removing the specific "secondary" student eligibility criteria to allow elementary age students who have been displaced from a community when a local school has been closed due to enrollment below 10 students to be eligible for state funding through the State Boarding Home Program. A change to this Statute will allow the Department of Education and Early Development to make necessary changes to regulation to address the needs of these displaced elementary age students.

Rationale. Many small schools in rural Alaska have been forced to close due to student enrollments falling below the state-funding minimum of 10 students. Students who remain in these villages are required to seek out and secure other educational opportunities including moving to another community in the region that continues to have a school.

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development's boarding home program allows school districts to receive reimbursement for the stipend paid to boarding home parents of students that qualify for the program. The state has clear definitions about the eligibility of students that qualify for the boarding home program in 4 ACC 09.050.

Currently to meet the state's eligibility requirements, a student must "be a secondary student who does not have daily access to a high school by being transported a reasonable distance."

The boarding home program currently provides a stipend to host parents to assist with the costs related to the education and housing of a boarding home student. The boarding home program also provides or reimburses the cost of transportation for one-round trip airfare from the student's home village to the in-district village in which they are attending high school.

With the closure of rural small schools, needs have arisen for parents of elementary age students to seek out alternative educational placements for their children. Presently, students from closed elementary schools whose families have remained in their home community have enrolled students in another community's elementary school, but those students do not qualify for the State Boarding Home Program. This causes an added financial burden on both the parent(s) and the host family to meet the student's travel, food and lodging needs. *Adopted 2012 Renewed 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

~~5.18 MANDATED STATE TESTING~~

~~AASB urges the Department of Education & Early Development to provide consistency and predictability in state mandated testing requirements, and to continue the implementation of the Performance Evaluation for Alaska Schools (PEAKS). AASB requests that the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development engage in a thorough analysis of the efficacy and authenticity of the testing instrument for the benefit of all Alaska students and to involve districts and educators in the continuous improvement of mandated state testing.~~

~~Rationale~~~~. In the spring of 2017, the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) implemented and administered its new summative assessment; the Performance Evaluation for Alaska Schools (PEAKS). This summative assessment is intended to provide annual evaluation of how Alaska's students are performing in relation to the Alaska state standards for English language arts, mathematics and science. Its sole purpose is to inform the state, local districts and all concerned stakeholders about the level of proficiency of students in relation to the state standards and to meet the requirements of the new federal education law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). PEAKS is not an assessment designed to directly inform instruction in a formative model.~~

~~AASB believes that a consistent, effective summative assessment, that is as culturally responsive as possible and least intrusive to instructional time is a critical and necessary element for adequately determining Alaska's progress in educating its students. AASB knows that continual involvement of districts and educators in refining and developing an effective summative assessment is in all of our best interest.~~ ~~*Adopted 2015, Amended 2017, 2018 (Sunsets 2020)*~~

5.19 SUPPORTING AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS

AASB strongly supports district that are undertaking efforts to develop and implement authentic assessments and asks that the state recognize these as legitimate alternative ways of accurately assessing student learning.

Rationale. An authentic assessment is defined as “an assessment composed of performance tasks and activities designed to simulate or replicate important real-world challenges” wherein students are asked “to use knowledge in real-word ways, with genuine purposes, audiences, and situational variables.” (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). State and federally mandated assessments do not take into account the “distinctive social organizations, linguistic patterns, cognitive styles, motivations and values of the local community.” (Demmert, et al, 2006) severely limiting the ways in which Native students in particular demonstrate learning. The creation of district level authentic assessments directly tied to pedagogy compatible with Native epistemological philosophies provides for a wider repertoire of assessments by which students validate learning. By supporting the efforts to districts to develop authentic assessments, AASB can facilitate the empowerment of boards to increase the academic success and increase the graduation rates of all students, including Alaska Native students who are grounded in their cultural identity, with the ability to successfully pursue their goals. *Adopted 2015 (Sunsets 2020)*

5.20 SUPPORTING EASIER ACCESS TO CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

AASB urges the Legislature to authorize a change in statute regarding the charter school(s) lottery process, to allow use of either a random lottery or weighted lottery for low academically performing and/or low-income students, when approved by the local school board and/or Alaska Board of Education.

Rationale. Current law allows charter school applicants and districts to target low academically performing students in their enrollment outreach. However, when implementing the lottery, state statute requires a random lottery. This can be in conflict with the goal of serving a larger percentage of low academic performing students or a larger percentage of low socio-economic students. This statute change may allow districts to implement a weighted lottery for low academically performing or low-income students to serve students they feel will most benefit in a charter school(s). Typically students of higher socio-economic families apply to charter schools, so a random lottery will be highly unlikely to reach the target group of students desired. *Adopted 2016 (Sunsets 2021)*

5.21 SUPPORTING THE ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP (APS)
AASB urges support for the Alaska Performance Scholarship for our high school students.

Rationale. APS has been successful in that more of our high school students are taking a rigorous course load in order to be eligible for the scholarship and after entering college take fewer remedial, or developmental, coursework, according to statistics compiled by the Alaska Postsecondary Commission. The recipients of APS also accumulated credits at a faster pace than non-recipients and were nearly twice as likely to continue their college attendance, the commission reported in 2016. *Adopted 2016 (Sunsets 2021)*

5.22 SUPPORTING CTE CREDITS FOR THE ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP
AASB urges support to allow students to substitute up to two units of Career Technical Education (CTE) classes to count as requirements towards the two to four year college awards levels for the Alaska Performance Scholarship.

Rationale. Career technical education classes are often not selected due to the fact that they do not count toward the APS award if planning to go to two to four year colleges in our State. CTE classes only count towards our technical schools. CTE classes are desired by many students in exploring careers and options and are relevant and engaging in keeping students in high school. *Adopted 2016 (Sunsets 2021)*

5.23 SUPPORTING INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL ALASKAN STUDENTS

AASB urges stakeholders to be innovative in their thinking and to support efforts to collaboratively change practices and address barriers to implement new ways of teaching and learning in culturally responsive ways.

Rationale: The current education system in Alaska does not serve all students equitably and many of our youth do not reach their full potential. Only through collaboration, partnership, and the willingness to be innovative can we hope to transform education to serve all students. Innovation and transformative change will take effort and participation by all stakeholders, such as in the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development's "Alaska Education Challenge". It will require all levels of policymakers and stakeholders (*State Legislature, Governor, Municipalities, Tribal entities, School Board members, Superintendent Association, NEA, education groups, families, and others*) working towards a clear, well articulated goal of providing an excellent education for every child every day, to truly fulfill the expectations of our constitutionally mandated education system. *Adopted 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

5.24 RECOGNIZING THE VALUABLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THE ANNUAL ELDERS & YOUTH CONFERENCE AND AFN CONVENTION PROVIDES STUDENTS

The Association of Alaska School Board supports school boards recognizing the annual Elders & Youth Conference and the Alaska Federation of Native (AFN) Convention as valuable and educational opportunities for Alaska's youth, and students should be encouraged and supported to participate in these events.

Rationale: The First Alaskans Institute Elders & Youth Conference is the largest statewide convening of Alaska Native Elders and Youth, representing all Alaska Native culture and language groups. The purpose of the conference is to connect Elders and youth for cultural learning and knowledge transmission, to bring people together to form and nurture statewide relationships, empower the voice of participants as leaders, and put forward solutions to challenges faced by the participants and their home communities in order to enhance, strengthen, and perpetuate the unique spirits and identities of Alaska Native peoples. When school districts penalize youth who attend the annual Elders & Youth conference and AFN Convention by counting their participation against the student's maximum allowable absences, it hinders students abilities to participate in these important conversations. Students should be encouraged, rather than discouraged, to participate in the Elders and Youth Conference and AFN Convention.
Adopted 2017, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)

5.25 EDUCATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

AASB supports strong gifted and talented programs in the state's elementary and secondary schools. AASB recognizes that gifted and talented students comprise a subset of learners who need additional challenges and strategies for involvement in the classroom or risk underachievement. While the Department of Education and Early Development requires a district education program for gifted children to be in place for Alaska school districts, there is a limited accountability and no funding allocated to ensure the success of the program. This constitutes an unfunded mandate on school districts.

Rationale: Alaska Administrative Code 4 AAC 52.800 mandates that each school district will administer an appropriate educational program for gifted children enrolled in its schools. The program must have a process to develop a student-learning plan for each identified gifted student. The student-learning plan is to incorporate the participation of teachers, parents and the student. These plans will by their nature require additional resources or time for their creation and execution. However, no consideration for the additional time, training or resources is calculated into district funding. This de-emphasis of the importance identifying and engaging gifted and talented students can mean that these programs are given a minimum amount of consideration and students who fall into this category continue to be at risk of classroom underachievement and dropout. *Adopted 201, 2019 (Sunsets 2024)*

5.26 REQUEST FOR AN ALASKA DEED GRADUATION SUCCESS PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS 19-21

AASB strongly urges legislative action for Alaska Department of Education to take a systematic approach to dropout recovery by expanding the funding for one additional year to school districts serving eligible students.

Rationale: It is the responsibility of the State of Alaska to provide for the education of its students in a manner that enables them to be college and career-ready upon graduation and the State of Alaska has one of the highest student dropout rates in the country. Alaska's high school dropouts face fewer prospects for employment, significantly lower earning potential, higher rates of incarceration, and are far more likely to rely on public assistance than high school graduates. Failure to fully educate the next generation of workers and leaders has substantial long-term consequences for our shared economic well-being. The State of Alaska needs a systemic approach to address dropout recovery and to re-engage students who have already left school. The State of Alaska needs to implement active dropout recovery efforts to include identification, outreach, support, and alternative pathways to graduation**.** Re-enrolling in a traditional high school is always an option, the majority of returning students now request alternative education high schools or programs allowing for individualization and flexible scheduling. *Adopted 2017 (Sunsets 2022)*

5.27 IN SUPPORT OF ARTS EDUCATION

AASB supports a systemic and rigorous arts education for all students, and urges member districts and education agencies to prioritize artistic literacy, and implement sequential, standards-based arts curriculum, employ arts specialists whenever possible, and provide professional development in arts disciplines and arts integration for educators AASB encourages member districts and education agencies to leverage the expertise and resources of community partners in order to improve access, equity, and quality of arts education for all students.

Rationale. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) recognizes the arts in the definition a "well-rounded and comprehensive education that all American students deserve," including arts disciplines as subject areas eligible for Title I funds and other federal resources administered by state and local education agencies. A robust arts education teaches youth the skills necessary to succeed in life including problem-solving, creative thinking, self-discipline, and public speaking. The US Department of Education's ten-year review of Arts in Education-funded programs finds that "students in arts programming had better attendance, fewer disciplinary issues, and improved on-task behavior relative to comparison students,"(1) and data from the College Board showed that in 2015, students who took four years of arts and music classes while in high school scored an average of 92 points higher on their SATs than students who took only one-half year or less (2).

The Alaska State Board of Education adopted the Alaska Arts Standards in 2016, which were followed by grade-level performance standards developed by Alaskan educators in Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Theatre, and Media Arts. Importantly, school districts around Alaska are pioneering creative and collaborative approaches to arts integration as a teaching strategy, culturally relevant arts teaching practices, and arts learning for educators. Arts teaching and learning strategies that integrate local and regional artistic traditions and Alaska Native cultural practices can positively impact student achievement. These state initiatives for arts education development and implementation are critical to efforts to better meet the needs of Alaska students. *Adopted 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

1) U.S. Department of Education. (2012). Progress and Promise: Ten Years of the Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination Program. (p. 13)
2) The College Board. 2015 College-Bound Seniors: Total Group Profile Report.

5.28 SUPPORTING THE PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF ALASKA NATIVE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

As stated in Belief Statement B.11, AASB honors and celebrates the rich cultural, ethnic and linguistic heritage of Alaska Native people and supports the preservation and restoration of indigenous languages across the state. In recognition of the linguistic emergency for the twenty-one surviving Alaska Native Indigenous languages declared on September 23, 2018 in Administrative Order No. 300, AASB urges support from the Alaska Legislature, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and all accredited higher education systems.

AASB urges the Alaska Legislature to support local school districts in their efforts to integrate Alaska Native Indigenous languages across all age levels through additional, targeted funding allocations. This funding will support the development of curriculum, as well as the training, certification and hiring of qualified, fluent Alaska Native Indigenous language educators.

AASB urges the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to review its policies regarding requirements to provide support and encouragement to Alaska Indigenous Natives to seek Type M Certificates, and form community partnerships in the developmental process for Type M Portable certification in Alaska Native Indigenous languages.

AASB encourages all accredited higher education systems to reinvigorate and expand its programs in all Alaska Native Indigenous languages. These programs are instrumental in the preservation of our state's indigenous languages.

Rationale: Alaska Native Indigenous languages have been lost over many years of English-only instruction in our schools. It is incumbent upon our school systems to help restore this loss. The addition of targeted funding for schools in response to this emergency is critical in restoring and stopping the loss of Alaska Native Indigenous languages.

In many regions of the state, the most qualified instructor candidates for Alaska Native Indigenous languages are often elders and are barred from full teacher certification due to a lack of instruction in areas such as upper level mathematics and English, areas that are irrelevant to the subject matter. When the speakers of a language possessing the greatest knowledge of its vocabulary and most understanding of its nuances are barred from becoming instructors by regulations created for instruction in another language, it is appropriate to review and update those regulations.

University programs, such as the Alaska Native Language Center, are critical in the preparation of language instructors and supporting the development of curriculum and program. *Adopted 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

5.29 URGING A STATEWIDE ANNUAL ALASKA INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE CONFERENCE

AASB urges the Governor of Alaska, the State Legislature and the State Board of Education to provide an annual Alaska Indigenous Language Conference that will benefit the indigenous Alaskan languages.

Rationale: The State of Alaska signed House Bill 216, October 23, 2014, twenty Alaska Native languages as official languages for the State of Alaska. The Governor of Alaska, September 23, 2018 declared an emergency for Alaska Native languages. Alaska Indigenous Language instructional staff do not have a venue where they can interact and collaborate with fellow language and cultural Instructors from across the State. An Alaska Indigenous Language Statewide Conference would provide that opportunity. *Adopted 2018 (Sunsets 2023)*

5.30 REQUESTING A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF THE STATEWIDE TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

AASB calls upon the State of Alaska to undertake a thorough analysis of the statewide testing and accountability system, for results and relevant factors to ensure an accurate and authentic assessment of student learning.

Rationale: While assessments are a critical component of the teaching and learning process both to inform instruction and to ascertain student levels of skill and knowledge, it is imperative the information be accurate, authentic, and relevant. Given the statewide assessment scores are used to label students and rank schools, and are referenced in budget discussions, it is critical the information be correct and not misinterpreted. The community is an important voice in advocating for sound accountability. *Adopted 2019 (Sunset 2024)*

5.31 (New) ALASKA STANDARDS FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOLS

AASB supports the implementation of the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools.

Cultural standards serve as a complement to content standards. Content standards stipulate what students should know and be able to do, cultural standards provide guidance on how to engage students in learning through the local culture. We recognize all forms of knowledge, ways of knowing, and world views as equally valid, adaptable, and complementary to one another in mutually beneficial ways. These cultural standards are not intended to be inclusive, exclusive, or conclusive, and should be reviewed and adapted to fit local needs. (https://education.alaska.gov/standards/cultural)

Rationale: The State of Alaska Board of Education adopted the ASCRS in 1998.

A firm grounding in the culture indigenous to a particular place is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of culturally-healthy students and communities associated with that place, and thus is an essential ingredient for identifying the appropriate qualities and practices associated with culturally responsive educators, curriculum and schools. (p2, ASCRS)

Submitted by: AASB BOD, 8-1-20