

Legislative Priorities for NABSE

Priority 1

Fair & Adequate Funding for Pre-K-12 students throughout the country.

A. Establish Equitable and Adequate Funding Formulas for Public Education

- Require states to adopt student-centered funding formulas that account for poverty, race, disability, language status, and other factors that impact learning.
- Ensure funding levels are sufficient to provide high-quality instruction, comprehensive student supports, and modern learning environments.
- Eliminate reliance on local property wealth as the primary driver of educational opportunity.

B. Strengthen Federal Investment and Oversight

- Increase federal investment in Title I, IDEA, and early childhood education programs to fully meet their intended funding commitments.
- Enforce federal civil rights protections to ensure that state and local funding sySTEMs do not perpetuate racial and economic inequities.
- Require transparency and accountability for how federal education dollars are allocated and spent.

C. Expand Access to High-Quality Early Childhood Education

- Provide sustainable, universal funding for high-quality Pre-K programs, particularly in historically underserved communities.
- Align early childhood funding with K–12 sySTEMs to ensure seamless transitions and long-term academic success.
- Support compensation parity for early childhood educators to strengthen program quality and workforce stability.

D. Invest in Educators, Support Staff, and Student Services

- Fund competitive salaries, benefits, and professional development to recruit and retain highly effective educators and school leaders.
- Provide resources for wraparound services that address academic, social-emotional, and mental health needs.

E. Modernize School Facilities and Learning Infrastructure

- Invest in safe, healthy, and modern school facilities, including technology, broadband access, and STEAM learning spaces.
- Address long-standing disparities in school infrastructure through targeted capital funding and facilities grants.
- Ensure all students learn in environments that are conducive to safety, dignity, and academic excellence

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Priority 2

Sustained Investment in high quality Early Literacy & STEAM Education

A. Ensure Universal Access to Evidence-Based Early Literacy Instruction

- Require and fund evidence-based literacy instruction beginning in pre-kindergarten through grade three.
- Invest in high-quality instructional materials and diagnostic assessments that support early identification and intervention for struggling readers. Mandate early literacy screening and targeted supports without using assessments for punitive purposes.

B. Strengthen the Early Childhood and Elementary Educator Workforce

- Fund robust teacher preparation, certification, and ongoing professional development in early literacy and foundational mathematics.
- Incentivize the recruitment and retention of highly effective and diverse educators, in early grades and STEAM fields.
- Provide salary supplements, loan forgiveness, and career pathways for educators serving in high-need schools and communities.

C. Expand High-Quality STEAM Learning Opportunities

- Increase funding for STEAM instruction beginning in elementary school, with a focus on inquiry-based, hands-on, and problem-solving approaches.
- Ensure equitable access to advanced mathematics, computer science, engineering, and laboratory-based science courses in all schools.
- Support the integration of STEAM with literacy to strengthen comprehension, critical thinking, and real-world application.

D. Invest in Experiential and Culturally Responsive STEAM Education

- Fund after-school, summer, and enrichment programs that expose underrepresented populations to STEAM careers, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- Support partnerships with HBCUs, community colleges, research institutions, and industry leaders to provide mentoring, internships, and early exposure to STEAM professions.
- Promote culturally responsive curricula that affirm identity, relevance, and belonging in STEAM learning environments.

E. Strengthen Accountability and Data Transparency

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- Require states to disaggregate and publicly report early literacy and STEAM achievement data by race, income, and geography.
- Align accountability sySTEMs to focus on growth, proficiency, and long-term outcomes, rather than single-point assessments.
- Fund research and continuous improvement efforts to identify and scale effective practices in early literacy and STEAM education.

Priority 3

Expand Access to High Quality Pathways

A. Expand Equitable Access to High-Quality Pathways

- Fund and scale career and technical education (CTE), dual enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and early college high school programs in schools serving underrepresented populations.
- Require states to address disparities in access to rigorous coursework as part of accountability and school improvement systems.

B. Support Industry-Aligned Credentials and Work-Based Learning

- Invest in **industry-recognized credentials**, paid internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities aligned to regional labor market needs.
- Incentivize partnerships among K–12 sySTEMs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), community colleges, labor unions, and employer

C. Ensure Alignment Between K–12, Postsecondary, and Workforce Systems

- Promote seamless credit transfer, credential portability, and alignment of high school standards with postsecondary and workforce expectations.
- Support data-sharing systems that track postsecondary enrollment, persistence, credential attainment, and employment outcomes by subgroup.

D. Eliminate Financial Barriers to Postsecondary Access and Success

- Expand access to need-based financial aid, last-dollar scholarship programs, and supports that reduce student debt and remediation costs.
- Fund transition programs that support first-generation and historically underserved students in the first year of postsecondary education.

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Priority 4

Recruit, Develop, and Retain Black Educators & Leaders

A. Strengthen Recruitment Pipelines into the Education Profession

- Invest in grow-your-own programs, teacher residencies, and educator preparation partnerships with HBCUs and Minority-Serving Institutions.
- Expand high school and college pathways that encourage Black students to pursue careers in teaching, counseling, and school leadership. Remove unnecessary financial and structural barriers to licensure, including excessive testing costs and duplicative certification requirements.

B. Improve Compensation and Working Conditions

- Fund competitive salaries, benefits, and loan forgiveness programs to attract and retain Black educators and leaders.
- Support safe, inclusive, and well-resourced school environments that reduce burnout and turnover.
- Ensure equitable access to instructional resources, mentoring, and professional support.

C. Support Retention Through Mentoring and Professional Development

- Fund comprehensive induction and mentoring programs for early-career educators, with a focus on culturally responsive support sySTEMs.
- Provide ongoing, high-quality professional learning aligned to instructional excellence, leadership development, and career advancement.
- Support affinity-based professional networks that foster belonging, resilience, and professional growth.

D. Expand Leadership Development and Advancement Opportunities

- Invest in leadership preparation programs that intentionally identify, develop, and support Black educators aspiring to school and district leadership roles.
- Address biased evaluation, promotion, and hiring practices that limit advancement opportunities for Black leaders.
- Support succession planning and executive coaching to strengthen leadership pipelines at all levels of education.

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Priority 5

Invest in Whole-Child Supports that address students' academic, social-emotional, mental health, and physical well being.

A. Expand Access to Comprehensive Whole Child Supports

- Increase funding for school counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses, and mental health professionals, with ratios aligned to national best practices.
- Invest in school-based mental health services, trauma-informed care, and social-emotional learning supports.
- Support integrated student services models that address academic, behavioral, and non-academic barriers to learning.

B. Promote Safe, Inclusive, and Culturally Responsive School Climates

- Require states and districts to implement evidence-based strategies that foster positive school climate, student engagement, and family partnership.
- Ensure culturally responsive practices are embedded in curriculum, instruction, discipline, and student supports.
- Fund professional development that equips educators to build inclusive, affirming learning environments for all students.

C. Advance Restorative Practices and Reduce Exclusionary Discipline

- Support the implementation of Restorative Practices, including restorative circles, conferencing, mediation, and relationship-centered behavior supports.
- Limit the use of exclusionary discipline practices such as suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement, particularly for nonviolent offenses.
- Require discipline policies that emphasize accountability, repair of harm, and reintegration rather than punishment.

D. Ensure Equity in Discipline and Student Support SySTEMs

- Mandate the collection and public reporting of discipline data disaggregated by race, disability, gender, and grade level.
- Use data to identify and address disparities in discipline practices and access to student supports.
- Hold sySTEMs accountable for reducing disproportionality and improving student outcomes.

E. Invest in Educator Capacity and School Leadership

- Fund sustained professional learning in restorative practices, trauma-informed instruction, and culturally responsive leadership.

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- Support school leaders in developing positive climate strategies and aligning discipline policies with whole child approaches.
- Provide time, resources, and staffing to implement restorative and preventive practices with fidelity.

F. Strengthen Family and Community Partnerships

- Support partnerships with families, community organizations, and culturally responsive service providers.
- Invest in community-based supports that extend beyond the school day and address student and family needs holistically.
- Ensure families have a meaningful voice in shaping school climate and discipline policies.

Priority 6

Ensure curricula are Culturally Responsive, Accurate, and honors the full contribution and history of marginalized populations

A. Ensure Access to Inclusive and Historically Accurate Curriculum

- Require states and districts to adopt curriculum standards and instructional materials that reflect accurate, inclusive, and comprehensive representations of history, culture, and contemporary society.
- Ensure curriculum includes the contributions, struggles, and achievements of Black people and other historically underrepresented groups across content areas, not limited to a single month or course.
- Protect the teaching of factual, evidence-based history and social studies from political censorship or distortion.

B. Support Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning

- Fund professional development that equips educators to implement culturally responsive and sustaining instructional practices with fidelity.
- Support instructional approaches that connect curriculum to students' lived experiences, communities, and cultural assets.
- Ensure educators have the academic freedom and professional support necessary to teach inclusive curriculum effectively and responsibly.

C. Invest in High-Quality Instructional Materials and Resources

- Provide funding for the development, adoption, and continuous improvement of culturally responsive instructional materials across all grade levels and subject areas.

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- Support partnerships with scholars, cultural institutions, museums, and community organizations to ensure accuracy and relevance.
- Ensure equitable access to updated materials, technology, and digital resources for all students.

D. Strengthen Standards, Review Processes, and Transparency

- Establish inclusive curriculum review processes that involve educators, families, historians, and community stakeholders.
- Require transparency in curriculum adoption decisions and alignment to academic standards.
Prevent the use of curriculum policies that disproportionately silence or marginalize the experiences of Black students.

E. Promote Accountability and Data-Informed Practice

- Require states to monitor and report access to inclusive curriculum and coursework opportunities by race, geography, and school level.
- Align accountability systems to evaluate how curriculum implementation supports student engagement, achievement, and school climate.
- Support research and evaluation to identify and scale effective culturally responsive instructional practices.