



2020 Voter Education Guide

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is a nonpartisan professional association and does not endorse any specific candidate or political party. Rather, NASP advocates for public policies that align with our vision that all children and youth thrive in school, at home, and throughout life. We offer school psychologists evidence-based information, tools, and resources to support their work with children, youth, and families.

The purpose of this document is to provide you with information about the voting rules and processes in your state and how to find out what issues will be on your ballot. This document also is intended to convey NASP priorities and how they compare with the major presidential candidates' federal policy priorities on related educational and child/family issues. NASP believes in the importance of participation in the democratic process and strongly encourages members to educate themselves in order to make informed choices when voting. Although this guide contains information specific to the 2020 Presidential Election, readers are also strongly encouraged to become informed about the views of candidates running for other federal, state, and local offices.

The Importance of Voting

Advocacy is a [core value](#) of NASP and is at the center of our work as school psychologists. In fact, the NASP 2020 Professional Standards state that “School psychologists function as change agents, using their skills in communication, collaboration, and consultation to advocate for necessary change at the individual student, classroom, building, district, state, and national levels.” Advocacy can take many forms, and it often begins with identifying policy makers who share a common goal and collaborating with them and other stakeholders towards legislative and other action. Policy makers at all levels, from the local school board member to the President of the United States, can set policy that impacts our lives and the issues we care about, both professionally as school psychologists and personally in our private lives. As such, a critical component of advocacy is voting for candidates who share your values, vision, and goals. Elections are moments of transition and potential opportunity; as school psychologists, we need to participate and be present in these moments.

Voting Amidst COVID-19

COVID-19 will affect the methods by which many people will vote. Many may not feel comfortable voting in person, so it is important that you become familiar with your local election rules and plan accordingly. States differ in how to access mail-in ballots, so it is important to check now! You can visit your local elections board or www.vote.org to find relevant deadlines, current rules about voting by mail or early voting, and other considerations as you make your plan to vote.

How to Identify Candidates and Issues That Are on the Ballot

Visit your local elections board for a sample ballot and list of candidates running for local elections (e.g., county board, school board, mayor), state legislature, U.S. Congress, and President. While much of the national and state media attention may highlight the positions of the candidates for President and U.S. Senate, it is also crucial to be engaged in state and local elections. In addition, you will find additional information about any proposed bond measures that could affect local education funding, state constitutional amendments, and other decisions that have been put forth for the public to decide.

How to Be an Informed Voter

As school psychologists, we pride ourselves on the use of evidence and reliable data as part of the problem-solving and decision-making process. This same process should apply when determining your votes. Your decision is likely to be influenced by a number of factors including the appropriate role of government, issues you are passionate about (e.g., education, social justice, the economy), and the specific impact policy proposals may have on your local community. As educators and school psychologists, it is important that we also consider the implications of elections, at all levels, on the families and communities we serve. As such, we encourage you to take the time to educate yourself on the various issues and policy positions of the candidates who will be on your ballot. We have provided information below that is specific to school psychology, but you may also choose to visit other reputable sources of information and other associations/organizations focused on other areas of importance to you.

Alignment to School Psychology and NASP Priorities

When determining which candidates will earn your vote, it can be helpful to consider the potential influence proposed legislation or other public policy may have on the field of school psychology and the students and families we serve. You may want to review the [NASP Policy Platform](#) and [NASP Position Statements](#) to determine how your local and federal candidates' positions align with issues important to the profession. While it is unlikely that one candidate is 100% aligned to every priority, you may wish to identify which priority is most important to your role as a school psychologist.

2020 Presidential Candidates' Statements Regarding NASP Policy Priorities

As provided in the past, information included in this document is taken from NASP Position Statements and other formal policy papers, candidates' official campaign documents, or major party platform documents. This document also includes actions President Trump has taken while in office as they relate to key NASP priorities. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to give you a general idea of how the candidates do or do not align with NASP's policy agenda. We encourage you to also do your own research into the candidates to help inform your vote by visiting the campaign websites of [President Trump](#) and former [Vice President Biden](#). The full citation links to the complete document (when available), and other information are included at the end of this document.

Policy Issue: School Climate and Safety

NASP Position and Policy Priorities	Joseph Biden (D) Policy Priorities	Donald Trump (R) Policy Priorities
<p>NASP promotes policies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Balance physical and psychological safety; ● Restrict the presence of guns in schools to only commissioned school resource officers; ● Promote a positive, respectful, and supportive environment for all students; ● Integrate school climate, effective discipline, social–emotional learning, positive behavior, mental health, and academics through a multitiered system of supports (MTSS); ● Establish comprehensive school crisis response plans; ● Support the comprehensive role of school psychologists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Background checks, gun safety legislation and policies barring teachers from being armed at schools.¹ ● Prohibit the use of federal funds to arm or train educators to discharge firearms.² ● Expand and improve federal support for trauma-informed and culturally responsive care, including for the disability community.³ ● Invest in training of early child care staff working with children with disabilities.³ ● Keeping All Students Safe Act, which will end the use of seclusion and prevent and decrease the use of physical restraints in schools.³ ● Safe Schools Improvement Act, which will require school districts to develop bullying and harassment policies that protect <i>all</i> students.³ ● Fund a demonstration project to help schools pursue nontraditional approaches to healing trauma.⁴ ● A comprehensive review of all federal programs to identify how they can be more trauma-informed and supportive of survivors of violence. ⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formed the Federal Commission on School Safety to develop recommendations to prevent school violence. (See final report and NASP response). ● Supported passage of the STOP School Violence Act to provide funding grants to schools to improve physical security in schools security.⁵ ● Rescinded 2016 guidance that clarified Title IX provided civil rights protections to transgender youth.⁶ ● Supports arming teachers and eliminating gun-free school zones.^{7,8} ● FY21 Budget proposed eliminating the Safe Schools National Activities funding stream, which supports school climate transformation grants.⁹

Policy Issue: Comprehensive School Mental and Behavioral Health

NASP Position and Policy Priorities	Joseph Biden (D) Policy Priorities	Donald Trump (R) Policy Priorities
<p>NASP promotes policies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase federal, state, local, and private funding to support students’ mental and behavioral health; ● Promote culturally responsive, comprehensive school-based mental and behavioral health services, including universal screening, prevention, early intervention, and targeted supports; ● Support mental health first aid and other professional development for relevant educators and families; ● Promote comprehensive suicide prevention programs; ● Reduce shortages in school psychology; ● Advance the role of school psychologists as school mental and behavioral health providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Double the number of psychologists, guidance counselors, nurses, social workers, and other health professionals employed in our schools, and partnering with colleges to expand the pipeline of these professionals.¹³⁴ ● Expand the Community Schools model in an effort to increase wraparound supports for an additional 300,000 students and their families.¹ ● Provide funds to ensure there are early childhood development experts in every community health center across the country.¹ ● Double funding for home visiting under the Affordable Care Act, which is correlated with improved child health and reduced child maltreatment.¹ ● Expand the National Health Service Corps and developing high school–community–health center partnerships to inspire rural youth to pursue jobs in mental health care.¹⁰ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposed the elimination of the Safe Schools National Activities Program, which would end a grant program specifically targeted at improving the pipeline of school psychologists and other school employed mental health professionals to underserved districts.¹¹

Policy Issue: Equity in Access, Opportunity, and Discipline

NASP Position and Policy Priorities	Joseph Biden (D) Policy Priorities	Donald Trump (R) Policy Priorities
<p>NASP promotes policies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equity in access to resources and opportunities for all students. • Eliminate disparities caused by factors including, but not limited to, low income economic marginalization (LIEM), zip code, disability status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, race, or ethnicity. • Prioritize the recruitment and retention of school staff with minoritized identities, and/or backgrounds (e.g., LGBTQ+, BIPOC), especially in leadership positions. • Provide ongoing professional development on culturally responsive and antiracist practices within the school context. • Reject efforts that seek to increase zero tolerance policies and the use of exclusionary discipline (e.g., suspensions and expulsions). • Support funding for high-quality, evidence-based, and job-embedded and discipline specific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various approaches to recruiting teachers of color.¹ • Provide grants to school districts to create plans and implement strategies to diversify their schools.¹ • Ensure that students of color are not inappropriately identified as having disabilities.³ • Provide young people with disabilities who are incarcerated with accommodations for their education.³ • Providing students with disabilities early interventions to postsecondary education.³ • End the school-to-prison pipeline by focusing on prevention to help schools address the high number of suspensions and expulsions that affect students of color at higher rates than White students.⁴ • Fully implement the special education significant disproportionality regulation.³ • Expand funding for after-school programs, community centers, and summer jobs.¹² • Restore the Obama–Biden Administration guidance to help schools address the high number of suspensions and expulsions that affect students of color at higher rates than White students (disproportionality in discipline).⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Education is expanding an initiative that allows individuals in Federal and State prisons to receive Pell Grants to better prepare themselves for the workforce.¹³ • RESCINDED guidance for states, districts, and schools that addressed the negative impacts of zero-tolerance and exclusionary discipline policies and encouraged nonpunitive alternatives. • Directed Federal agencies to halt all training and work related to racial diversity, White privilege, antiracism and critical race theory.”¹⁴ • Opposed the Equality Act, which would prohibit discrimination in education (and other settings) on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.¹⁵

<p>professional development for educators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide professional development in areas including, but not limited to: implicit bias, antibullying, antiharassment, and antidiscrimination efforts; positive discipline strategies; and restorative justice practices.● Support policies that prohibit school resource officers (SROs) and other school-based law enforcement from having any role in student discipline.● Endorse the implementation of inclusive schools where specific groups of children are not disproportionately represented in restrictive educational settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create a new grant program to encourage states to place nonviolent youth in community-based alternatives to prison.⁴● Add to juvenile justice grant programs a requirement that states eliminate detention as a punishment for status offenses, and instead make sure these young people engage in community service, workforce programs, or mentorship and therapy as needed.⁴	
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Policy Issue: Federal Investment in Education

NASP Position and Policy Priorities	Joseph Biden (D) Policy Priorities	Donald Trump (R) Policy Priorities
<p>ASP supports policies that increase federal, state, local, and private funding to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure a high quality public school for every child and a public education system that serves all students. ● Increase access to comprehensive school psychological services for all students, regardless of where they live. ● Prevent bullying, harassment, and discrimination in our nation’s schools. ● Promote resource equity (financial and human) for all schools and students. ● Reduce shortages in school psychology and the mental and behavioral health workforce. ● Ensure all children and youth thrive at home, in school, and throughout life. <p>NASP is opposed to any educational funding system that funnels public money to pre-K–12 schools that lack public accountability, require the loss or declination of rights afforded to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build on 21st Century Cures Act by doubling the number of psychologists, guidance counselors, nurses, social workers, and other health professionals in our schools.^{1, 2} ● Fully fund and enforce IDEA, and triple Title I funding.¹⁶ ● Invest in teacher mentoring, leadership, and additional education.¹ ● Federal infrastructure legislation funding \$100 billion specifically for improving and modernizing public school buildings.¹ ● Fund a new competitive program that challenges local communities to reinvent high school to meet changing work demands.¹ ● Provide grants to school districts to create plans and implement strategies to diversify their schools.¹ ● Increase funding for community and 4-year colleges for inclusive postsecondary programs, such as:³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Model Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities Coordinating Center. ○ Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (TPSIDs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The 2020 Trump campaign agenda includes “teaching American exceptionalism” and “providing school choice to every child in America” as his top education priorities.^{17, 18} ● Expanding private school vouchers through the Education Freedom Scholarships and Opportunity Act.¹⁸ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FY2021 budget included \$5 billion for private school vouchers and public school choice options.¹⁹ ● Provided funding flexibilities to states to best meet the needs of students and educators due to COVID-19 via the CARES Act.²⁰ ● FY2021 budget includes \$14 billion for IDEA programs, a \$100 million increase over FY 2020 enacted levels for IDEA Grants to States.^{21 22} ● FY 2021 Budget proposes cutting 10% of the Health and Human Services budget. This includes cutting \$900 billion from Medicaid over 10 years and eliminating programs such as the Community Services Block Grant and the Social Services Block Grant.²³ ● FY 2021 Budget proposal includes \$749 million in discretionary funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and programs that serve disadvantaged populations.²¹ ● FY 2021 budget proposal consolidates 29 elementary and secondary programs, including those focused on school climate, safety, and school mental health into a new \$19.4 billion block grant to states.²¹

<p>students or families, or enable discriminatory practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with Congress to pass the Assistive Technology Act (ATA).³ ● Provide emergency funding for public schools and child care providers during COVID-19 pandemic:¹⁶ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional \$4 billion for technology upgrades. ○ Ensure that schools have the resources to double the number of psychologists, counselors, nurses, social workers, and other health professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FY2021 budget requests \$66.6 billion for the Department of Education, a \$5.6 billion or 7.8% decrease compared to the 2020 enacted level.²¹
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¹ <https://joebiden.com/education/>

² <https://joebiden.com/gunsafety/>

³ <https://joebiden.com/disabilities/>

⁴ <https://joebiden.com/justice/>

⁵ <https://www.promiseskept.com/recent/>

⁶ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201702-title-ix.docx>

⁷ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-listening-session-students-teachers-parents/>

⁸ <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/school-safety/school-safety-report.pdf>

⁹ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget21/summary/21summary.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://joebiden.com/rural-plan/>

¹¹ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget21/summary/21summary.pdf>

¹² <https://joebiden.com/blackamerica/>

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- ¹³ <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-devos-expands-second-chance-pell-experiment-more-doubling-opportunities-incarcerated-students-gain-job-skills-and-earn-postsecondary-credentials>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/M-20-34.pdf>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/trump-opposes-federal-lgbtq-nondiscrimination-bill-citing-poison-pills-n1005551>
- ¹⁶ <https://joebiden.com/school-reopening/>
- ¹⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/28/us/politics/trump-rnc-speech-transcript.html>
- ¹⁸ <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/media/trump-campaign-announces-president-trumps-2nd-term-agenda-fighting-for-you>
- ¹⁹ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget21/summary/21summary.pdf>
- ²⁰ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-trump-is-fighting-for-every-family-s-freedom-to-choose-the-best-possible-education-for-their-children/>
- ²¹ https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/budget_fy21.pdf?fbclid=IwAR22bkjfuyP2uq50rHy7NEOp5DKTRH5q3efKxxqLKxqN9vW650MPmGk2hQo
- ²² <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/president-trump-proposes-transformative-student-first-budget-return-power-states-limit-federal-control-education>
- ²³ <https://budget.house.gov/publications/report/president-s-2021-health-and-human-services-budget>