

Pennsylvania Principals Association

Executive Director

PAUL M. HEALEY, PH.D.
122 Valley Rd., P.O. Box 39
Summerdale, PA 17093

Assistant Executive Director

DR. JOSEPH H. CLAPPER
122 Valley Rd., P.O. Box 39
Summerdale, PA 17093

Manager, Western Region Office

JOSEPH J. FORISKA
1028 Fox Terrier Drive
Bethel Park, PA 15102

President

DR. WILLIAM T. ZIEGLER
Pottsgrove S.D.

President-Elect

DR. BETH A. HALDEMAN
Cocalico S.D.

Immediate Past-President

JACQUELINE CLARKE HAVRILLA
Spring-Ford Area S.D.

Treasurer

KURT J. NYQUIST
Penns Valley Area S.D.

NAASP Coordinator

MARK A. KORCINSKY
Seneca Valley S.D.

NAESP Representative

MARGARET S. FOSTER
Crestwood S.D.

WEST REGION

Teresa Szumigala, *Erie City S.D.*
Sharon Sielski, *Conneaut S.D. (Ret.)*
David Keibler, *South Butler County S.D.*
Raymond Omer, *Mohawk Area S.D.*
Heather Bigney, *Highlands S.D.*
Dr. Zeb Jansante, *Bethel Park S.D.*
Dr. Nina Sacco, *Pittsburgh S.D.*
Dr. Shemeca Crenshaw, *Pittsburgh S.D.*

CENTRAL REGION

James Orichosky, *Bald Eagle Area S.D.*
Curtis Johnson, *State College Area S.D.*
Brian Raab, *Red Lion Area S.D.*
Dr. Scott Richardson, *Manheim Central S.D.*
Darren McLaurin, *Cambria Heights S.D.*
Dr. David Crumrine, *Spring Cove S.D.*

EAST REGION

Paul Stefani, *Scranton S.D.*
Christopher Gegaris, *Crestwood S.D.*
Philip Giaquinto, *Pen Argyl S.D.*
Frank Derrick, *Allentown S.D.*
Jonathan Ross, *Downingtown Area S.D.*
Jonathan Bauer, *Upper Merion Area S.D.*

Alternative Funding

Frank P. Galicki
Tunkhannock Area S.D.
Richard P. Houseknecht
Pennsbury S.D. (Ret.)

March 15, 2016

Dear Secretary Rivera,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Principals Association representing approximately 3,800 principals, assistant principals and other school leaders, we would like to highlight the unprecedented opportunities created by passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to invest in a robust principal pipeline. As the state begins to address implementation of the new law, our organization would like to work with you to help drive investments to areas of the state system that will best support the capacity of educators.

A new body of knowledge has been amassed over the past decade regarding the importance of school leadership. Valid and reliable research has now proven that effective school leadership is second only to direct classroom instruction in raising student achievement, and evidence shows school leadership has the greatest impact in schools with the greatest need. Over this same decade, the role of principals and other school leaders has become increasingly complex. Principals are not only operational leaders responsible for establishing a safe and supportive school environment, they are also instructional leaders responsible for providing ongoing coaching and mentoring to teachers and students.

Despite the increased demands placed on principals, state and local efforts around effective recruitment, preparation, and ongoing support have not kept pace. The New Teacher Center recently found that only 20 states offer any kind of induction or mentoring program for new principals, and in just six states does that support continue into the second year. In the states where programs do exist, they are often not funded at that level that would allow all principals to take advantage of them.

Section 2101(c)(3) of ESSA allows states to reserve up to three percent of their district allotments for statewide school leadership activities. ESSA now affords our state the opportunity to identify where there may be shortfalls in the state system to support principals, and fill in the gaps through specific programmatic strategies such as:

- Revising or updating principal certification and licensure systems to align to leadership standards
- Developing or implementing programs or activities for recruiting, selecting, and developing aspiring or current principals and other school leaders to serve in high-need schools
- Developing or implementing leadership training programs designed to prepare and support principals and other school leaders in high-need schools, including through school leader residency programs
- Increasing induction and mentoring programs that are “evidence-based” and designed to improve school leadership, which would in turn improve classroom instruction and student learning, as part of preparation and support programs
- Developing principal evaluation and support systems that must include multiple measures of educator performance, provide clear, timely and useful feedback for principals, and inform professional development opportunities
- Developing and disseminating information on best practices and strategies for effective school leadership in high-need schools

Our mission is to ensure a quality education for every child by comprehensively supporting the educational leaders of our schools.

122 Valley Road • P.O. Box 39 • Summerdale, PA 17093

phone: (717) 732-4999 • fax: (717) 732-4890 • e-mail: papprincipals@papprincipals.org • web site: www.papprincipals.org

Affiliate of the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals
Serving Principals, Assistant Principals and Other Educational Leaders

- Providing assistance and support to local educational agencies and individual elementary schools that are creating, expanding, or improving early learning programs, such as through plans for engaging and supporting principals and other school leaders responsible for improving early childhood alignment with their elementary school, supporting teachers in understanding the transition between early learning to kindergarten, and increasing parent and community engagement.

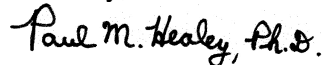
Now more than ever, we must focus our efforts on building capacity for future leaders as well as retaining our current leaders by providing ongoing, robust professional development. We don't need to tell you how districts have been hurt by not having a State budget and how school districts have been forced to cut professional development programs for both school leaders and teachers. While we certainly have challenges this year, we believe that ESSA provides us with a unique opportunity to restore and enhance school leadership recruitment, training, and support for our instructional leaders.

In addition, ESSA calls on states to coordinate with local stakeholders and principals in the development of plans to use federal funds and to ensure that any strategies to improve student achievement demonstrate evidence. It also requires that state review panels consist of educators who have been practicing within the past five years, including teachers and principals representing various school contexts across the state. In light of these provisions, we would like to work with you to establish a meaningful process for high-quality engagement with principals, assistant principals and other school leaders throughout Pennsylvania. This work must be done together to address professional development, school accountability measures, principal evaluation systems and other policy or programmatic changes that will improve schools and provide a well-rounded education for every student.

Pennsylvania has an opportunity to be a national example in the area of building school systems that sufficiently provide for effective school leadership using existing funds for programs, trainings, and resources that will help principals and other school leaders continue to lead their school to success.

We look forward to working with you on this important effort to help advance the much-needed support for principals and other school leaders to the benefit of every student.

Sincerely,



Paul M. Healey, Ph.D.
Executive Director
PA Principals Association