



Principals' Groups Applaud Introduction of Bill to Support School Leadership, Urge Congress to Include Key Provisions in ESEA Reauthorization

Bill seeks to improve current federal programs to better support aspiring and in-service principals through one-year residency, mentoring, and other professional development

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February 19, 2015; Alexandria, VA, Reston, VA, and Washington, DC – The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA), applaud the reintroduction of a bill to improve federal programs for the nation's principals and assistant principals. S.476 and H.R.930, The School Principal Recruitment and Training Act of 2015, was introduced by Sen. Al Franken (D-MN) and Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA), to amend Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to recruit, prepare, and support principals through capacity-building measures that will improve student academic achievement in high-need schools. The legislation emphasizes mentoring programs for principals, especially for aspiring and early-career principals.

The School Principal Recruitment and Training Act would create a competitive grant program for one-year residencies to train aspiring principals on instructional leadership, organizational management, and the use of data to inform instruction. The programs are required to provide ongoing mentoring and support for at least two years after the aspiring principals complete the residency and commence work as school leaders. The bill also provides ongoing, job-embedded professional development to current principals and assistant principals to strengthen their capacity to engage in effective instructional leadership practices, and to use a variety of data for the purposes of instruction, supervision, evaluation, and the development of teachers. Principals must master core competencies or the necessary leadership skills within these areas in order to lead schools to higher levels of performance.

"Principals fulfill a key role in closing achievement gaps in our nation's schools. Congress must include the bill's provisions in any reauthorization of ESEA to provide principals with the knowledge, tools, and resources to effectively lead schools, especially those who serve the nation's students living in poverty," said Gail Connelly, Executive Director of NAESP. "The demands on principals have never been greater as they work to meet the social, emotional, and cognitive needs of students to be college- and career-ready. This bill is needed to improve principals' access to and the quality of sufficient recruitment, preparation, and ongoing professional development programs. It will also provide much-needed reinforcement of the nation's principal pipeline," she added.

To carry out these activities, districts could form partnerships with nonprofit organizations or institutions of higher education to recruit, select, train, and support aspiring or current principals with track records of transforming student learning and outcomes and preparing these principals to lead the highest-need schools.

“Principals and assistant principals are responsible for the achievement of all students in their schools and deserve appropriate training, ongoing mentoring, and professional development that will help them meet the needs of students with diverse backgrounds and implement college and career readiness standards and new teacher evaluation systems,” said JoAnn Bartoletti, Executive Director of NASSP.

“Today’s principals and assistant principals are expected to be visionary leaders, instructional experts, building managers, assessment specialists, disciplinarians, community builders, and much more,” said Diann Woodard, president of AFSA. “It is incumbent upon members of Congress to address the professional development needs of our nation’s current and aspiring principals. If Congress is truly serious about providing a quality education for all children, then a reauthorized ESEA must provide the leaders of our nation’s schools with the appropriate training, mentoring, and professional development opportunities they need to be successful,” she added.

About NASSP

The [National Association of Secondary School Principals](#) (NASSP) is the leading organization of and national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and all school leaders from across the United States and more than 36 countries around the world. The association connects and engages school leaders through advocacy, research, education, and student programs. NASSP advocates on behalf of all school leaders to ensure the success of each student and strengthens school leadership practices through the design and delivery of high quality professional learning experiences. Reflecting its long-standing commitment to student leadership development, NASSP administers the [National Honor Society](#), [National Junior Honor Society](#), [National Elementary Honor Society](#), and [National Association of Student Councils](#).

About NAESP

Established in 1921, the [National Association of Elementary School Principals](#) (NAESP) is the leading national association representing Pre-K-8 elementary and middle school principals in the United States, Canada, and overseas. NAESP supports principals as the primary catalysts for creating lasting foundations for learning in their commitment to all children through policy development, advocacy, and resources for effective instructional leadership. The association seeks to advance the principals’ profession at the national level and address issues in early childhood development, Pre-K–3 alignment, principal preparation and evaluation, and building the capacity of new principals. NAESP honors principals through its [National Distinguished Principals](#) program and administers a variety of professional services, including the National Mentor Certification program for principals.

About AFSA

The American Federation of School Administrators is the exclusive union for administrators, professionals and supervisors advocating for excellence and equity in all of our schools, workplaces and communities. AFSA members are leaders in their schools and communities and are charged with the privilege and responsibility of helping to mold our nation’s students into successful, mindful individuals. As school leaders, AFSA members are constantly advocating for better public schools and systems of education. AFSA members are active in the labor movement and proudly stand in solidarity with all trade unionists and school administrators.

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