



**2023**

# NAESP-NASSP Federal Legislative Agenda

## EDUCATOR SHORTAGES AND THE PRINCIPAL PIPELINE

Teacher shortages are well-documented and have garnered public attention, but widespread shortages among principals and school support staff professions continue to grow in states across the country. In August 2022, NASSP released its *Survey of America's School Leaders and High School Students* which revealed that one out of two school leaders expect to leave the profession within three years. Three out of four state their stress level is so high they are considering a career change or retirement.

The demand for employment of elementary, middle, and high school principals also grew 6% nationwide in 2022. A 2014 study revealed that the cost for typical urban school districts to recruit, hire, prepare, mentor, and continue training principals is \$75,000 per principal. That financial burden has assuredly risen in the past decade.

NAESP's *Leaders We Need Now* research series found similar concerns, with principals expecting the job stress of the pandemic to result in higher educator turnover for years to come and questions of who will take their place when they retire. Indeed, 16% of principals left their schools last school year according to a new RAND research brief survey. Among high-poverty districts, the report found 23% of principals left their schools, and 21% of rural areas saw principals depart last year.

To address these challenges, Congress can bolster investments in the educator pipeline to attract new educators to the profession, strengthen pre-service preparation, and expand professional development opportunities.

### **NAESP and NASSP urge members of Congress to cosponsor the following legislation to address nationwide shortages:**

#### **• LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR EDUCATORS ACT**

- » Incentivizes candidates to serve in early education programs and high-need public schools by having the federal government make educators' monthly student loan payments and provide complete forgiveness of federal student loan debts at the end of five years of qualifying service.
- » Expands eligibility to school leaders.
- » Sponsors: Sen. Luján (D-NM) and Rep. Leger Fernandez (D-NM)

#### **• EDUCATORS FOR AMERICA ACT**

- » Invests \$1 billion annually in the educator pipeline to ensure schools have a diverse, profession-ready workforce of teachers, principals, and specialized instructional support personnel. The legislation would boost outreach efforts to future teachers, expand educator residency programs, and invest in educator preparation programs.
- » Doubles the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant to \$8,000 per year.
- » Sponsors: Sens. Reed (D-RI), Casey (D-PA), Luján (D-NM) and Rep. Adams (D-NC)

- **PREPARING AND RETAINING EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS (PREP) ACT**

- » Expands the definition of “high need” districts under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to include schools experiencing teacher shortages in rural communities as well as in areas like special education, English language, science, technology, engineering, math, and career and technical education (CTE) in order to give schools access to additional support.
- » Encourages school districts to create partnerships, including Grow Your Own programs, with local community colleges and universities to ensure their programs are educating future educators in areas where there is a shortage of teachers and school leaders.
- » Sponsors: Sens. Kaine (D-VA) and Collins (R-ME)

## **IMPROVING SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFETY RESOURCES**

Students and school staff are struggling. According to NASSP’s 2022 survey, three-quarters of school leaders (73%) and students (74%) report they needed help with their mental or emotional health last year.

Oftentimes students’ mental health challenges manifest themselves as behavioral issues, putting further stress on educators who are already stretched too thin. One-half of school leaders report student behavior is worse than before the pandemic, with more than 80% concerned about bullying and/or drug use in their school.

School leaders are uniquely positioned to leverage trauma-informed strategies to address the enormous wave of social, emotional, and mental health needs among students. It is time for significant increased federal support to promote the well-being of educators and students in our nation’s schools. The emotional well-being of school communities is a critically important factor in the safety, security, and comprehensive success of students.

### **NAESP and NASSP urge members of Congress to cosponsor the following legislation to provide support for mental health, wellness, and safety in schools:**

- **ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELING ACT**

- » Allocates \$5 billion in new federal funding to establish two five-year renewable grant programs to effectively staff elementary and secondary schools with mental health services providers by providing federal grants to states to disburse to school districts.
- » Sponsors: Sen. Merkley (D-OR) and Rep. Clark (D-MA)

- **SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF EDUCATORS AND STAFF ACT (H.R. 744)**

- » Modeled after the bipartisan Lorna Breen Act, the legislation requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education to identify and disseminate evidence-based best practices for preventing suicide, improving mental health and resiliency among educators, and training for educators and school staff in appropriate strategies to promote their mental health.
- » Establishes new grant programs to promote mental health and wellness support among the education professional workforce.
- » Sponsors: Reps. Bonamici (D-OR), Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and Wild (D-PA)

- **INCREASING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS ACT**

- » Establishes a new grant program to increase the number of mental health professionals at low-income schools by supporting partnerships between institutions of higher education and local education agencies to support teaching, training, and employment of school counselors, social workers, and psychologists and expands student loan forgiveness opportunities for those professionals after 5 years of employment at qualifying schools.
- » Sponsors: Sen. Tester (D-MT), Rep. Chu (D-CA), and Rep. Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

- **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR STUDENTS ACT**

- » Provides \$130 million in competitive grants for schools, expanding the scope of the Project Advancing Wellness and Resilience Education (AWARE) program by providing on-site licensed mental health professionals in schools across the country.
- » Sponsors: Sen. Smith (D-MN) and Rep. Napolitano (D-CA)

## FEDERAL K-12 EDUCATION BUDGET PRIORITIES

Emergency pandemic relief funding provided by Congress had a direct and immediate impact in schools for the purpose it was intended—Covid mitigation. However, Congress must also strongly fund programs under ESSA through the normal annual appropriations process at levels that match the gravity of the ongoing crisis in schools and supports their efforts to ensure every child is college, career, and citizenship ready.

Even with increases in recent years, federal K-12 programs receive less today in inflation adjusted dollars than they did a decade ago. Increases in funding for school programs in other areas of the federal budget, including universal pre-K education and universal school meals, need to be enacted.

### **NAESP and NASSP urge members of Congress to support funding for the following programs at the following levels in FY 2024:**

- **TITLE I GRANTS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES**

- » **FY24 NAESP-NASSP request: \$20.5 billion**
- » FY23 received: \$18.4 billion
  - Provides financial support to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children receive support.
  - NAESP and NASSP strongly support increasing Title I funding as requested in President Biden's FY24 budget proposal.

- **TITLE II, PART A**

- » **FY24 NAESP-NASSP request: \$2.4 billion, a 10% increase or \$210 million increase**
- » FY23 received: \$2.2 billion
  - Provides formula grants to states and districts to strengthen professional development opportunities for teachers and principals, making them more effective educators and more likely to stay in the profession.
  - Helps districts fund principal residencies, expand job-embedded and cohort-based professional learning, and boost mentorship opportunities for aspiring principals.

- **TITLE IV, PART A, STUDENT SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT GRANTS**

- » **FY24 NAESP-NASSP request: \$1.48 billion**

- » FY23 received: \$1.38 billion

- This flexible ESSA block grant program supports schools in funding activities in three broad areas: 1) Providing students with a well-rounded education, including music, the arts, social studies, and computer science, 2) Supporting the safety and health of students, and 3) Encouraging the effective use of technology in schools.
- Title IV has become a key source of funding for school-based mental health and safety funding in recent years.

- **IDEA STATE GRANTS**

- » **FY24 NAESP-NASSP request: \$16.26 billion**

- » FY23 received: \$14.19 billion

- Assists state and local educational agencies in educating children with disabilities.
- Supports implementing, expanding, and improving access to high-quality special education services.
- Increased funding in FY24, as proposed in President Biden's budget request, would be a strong step toward ultimately fulfilling the federal promise to fund 40% of the national average per-pupil expenditure for students receiving IDEA services. NAESP and NASSP also urge Congress to pass the IDEA Full Funding Act.

- **CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) STATE GRANTS**

- » **FY24 NAESP-NASSP request: \$1.5 billion**

- » FY23 received: \$1.43 billion

- Provides support for states and communities to implement high-quality CTE programs to meet the demands of the 21st-century economy and workforce.
- According to U.S. Department of Education statistics, almost all high school students participate in CTE, and more than half take three or more credits. Additional data also show that students participating in CTE programs have graduation rates of more than 90%.

- **THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND SUPPORT PROGRAM (SLRSP) — FOUND IN TITLE II, PART B**

- » **FY24 NAESP-NASSP request: \$40 million**

- » FY23 received: \$0

- Previously known as the School Leadership Program, which NAESP and NASSP worked with Congress to create in 2001, the program focuses on recruiting, mentoring, and training principals and assistant principals to serve in high-need schools.
- Funding was not provided in FY 2023 but the Biden administration has requested \$40 million in its FY 2024 budget request.