

2022 NASSP and NAESP Legislative Agenda

▶ EDUCATOR SHORTAGES AND THE PRINCIPAL PIPELINE

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly exacerbated an already alarming issue in K-12 education: widespread shortages in the principal, teacher, and school support staff professions. A recent NASSP survey showed that almost 4 in 10 principals are planning to leave the profession within the next 3 years, and 68% are concerned about teacher shortages in their school. NAESP's *Leaders We Need Now* research series found similar concerns, with principals expecting the job stress of the pandemic leading to higher educator turnover for years to come and questions of who will take their place when they retire.

To address these challenges, Congress can bolster investments in the educator pipeline to attract new educators into the profession, strengthen pre-service preparation and expand professional development opportunities. The **Educators for America Act (S. 3360/H.R. 6205)**, introduced by Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) and Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC), would invest \$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. It would also reduce financial barriers to entering the profession by doubling the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant to \$8,000 per year and creating a new monthly credit for teachers, principals, and other educators towards repayment on their student loans so they earn loan forgiveness while they serve.

The **Build Back Better Act**, currently being negotiated in Congress, also includes investments in the educator pipeline. The legislation includes \$112 million for grow your own programs, \$112 million for educator residencies, \$112 million to support the recruitment and support of principals, \$112 million to support diverse educators through the Hawkins program, and \$160 million for IDEA personnel preparation and support.

NASSP and NAESP urge Congress to reauthorize the Higher Education Act and incorporate the provisions of the Educators for America Act into the bill, and pass the Build Back Better Act.

▶ IMPROVING SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES AND SAFETY

NASSP and NAESP believe in strong federal support to promote the well-being of staff and students and safe schools. The pandemic and school closures have caused trauma and increased mental health challenges for educators and students. For some students, being physically out of school for months has upended their support systems, created isolation, and made it difficult for school-based mental health professionals to reach them.

As educators and students recover from this tumultuous period, federal support is needed to expand and strengthen school-based mental health services. NASSP and NAESP support several bills aimed at improving access to school-based mental health services, including the **Mental Health Services for Students Act (S. 1841/H.R. 721)**, introduced by Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN) and Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA); the **Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Act (S. 3356/H.R. 6214)**, introduced by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA); the **Increasing Access to Mental Health in Schools Act (S. 1811/H.R. 3572)** introduced by Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) and Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA); and the **Safe Schools Improvement Act (H.R. 2653)**, introduced by Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA), Rep. John Katko (R-NY), and Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA); These bills would support our students by:

- Expanding school-based mental health services to help schools support educators and students at this critical moment.
- Improving staffing ratios of school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers to help serve more students.
- Addressing widespread shortages by providing student loan forgiveness to school-based mental health professionals.
- Providing funding for the development and operation of evidence-based school threat assessment and crisis intervention teams, including training for school officials in responding to mental health crises.
- Requiring schools to implement comprehensive anti-bullying policies that address the bullying and harassment of all students.

NASSP and NAESP urge Congress to pass the Mental Health Services for Students Act, the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Act, the Increasing Access to Mental Health in Schools Act, and the Safe Schools Improvement Act.

▶ SCHOOL FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Underinvestment in K-12 facilities is an urgent matter that demands Congress' attention. Outdated and crumbling schools due to decades of underinvestment pose alarming health and safety risks, hindering a generation of students from reaching their full potential.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated the deficiencies in many school buildings, especially in our country's most underserved communities. Many schools have inadequate systems to ensure even the basic safety of their students and staff. A recent Government Accountability Office report found that 4 in 10 districts need to update or replace HVAC systems in at least half of their schools, which are essential to safe and effective air circulation and mitigating the spread of viruses. Longstanding neglect has resulted in millions of students attending school in buildings in need of major repairs, creating unsafe conditions that depress student and educator performance. In many districts, expansions or new buildings are needed to keep up with ever-growing student populations in public education, but often these districts lack a local tax base that can be leveraged to make these upgrades. Federal support of K-12 school infrastructure would help reduce maintenance and construction backlogs, positioning these districts to address long overdue school building upgrades and modernizations.

In November 2021, Congress passed the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package, but funding for K-12 infrastructure was not included. An earlier version of the Build Back Better bill included \$82 billion for school facilities, but the funding was later removed.

The **Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act (S.96/H.R. 604)**, introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) and passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in July 2020, would invest \$100 billion in grants and \$30 billion in bond authority targeted at high-poverty schools with facilities that pose health and safety risks to students and staff. The bill would also expand access to high-speed broadband to ensure schools have the tools they need for digital learning.

NASSP and NAESP strongly urge the passage of at least \$100 billion in direct grants and \$30 billion in bonds for K-12 public school facilities—consistent with the Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in July 2020.

2022 NASSP and NAESP Federal Education Funding Priorities

COVID-19 relief funding is having a direct and immediate impact in schools. Funds are being used to implement layered COVID-19 prevention strategies to keep schools open safely and to address academic and student mental health needs. This emergency funding is critical in the near-term to support students and put them on a path to success. But it is only one piece of the holistic support puzzle schools will need in the coming years to help students fully recover. Congress must also strongly fund programs under the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** through the normal appropriations process at levels that match the gravity of the moment and that position schools to confront head on this recovery period for K-12 schools.

▶ PROGRAMS UNDER (ESSA)

TITLE I GRANTS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES:

→ Provide 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. Received \$17.3 billion in FY 2021. Title I grants have been reduced since FY 2012—hurting the most vulnerable students and school districts.

The Biden administration's FY 2022 budget proposes funding Title I at \$17.3 billion and adding an additional \$20 billion in Title I "Equity Grants." Taken together, passage of the administration's proposal would more than double the total funding for Title I.

NASSP and NAESP urge Congress to support the funding levels proposed for Title I formula grants and the Title I Equity Grants in the administration's FY 2022 budget.

TITLE II, PART A:

- Provides formula grants to states and districts to strengthen professional development opportunities for teachers and principals, improving supports for educators and making them 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.
- Funded at \$2.14 billion for FY 2021.

The pandemic has led to more educators feeling burned out and wanting to leave the profession. Now more than ever, strong federal funding is needed to boost support for principals and teachers, including through expanded professional learning opportunities. President Biden has proposed \$2.15 billion in funding for Title II, Part A, in his FY 2022 budget.

To strengthen supports for educators and to address educator shortages, NASSP and NAESP urge Congress to fund Title II, Part A, at no less than \$3 billion for FY 2022.

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

- Was known previously as the School Leadership Program, which NASSP and NAESP worked with Congress to create in 2001.

- Focuses on recruiting, mentoring, and training principals and assistant principals to serve in high-need schools.
- Underwent funding elimination by Congress in the final FY 2020 appropriations bill, but President Biden recommended restoring \$30 million for the program in his FY 2022 budget request.
- The current version of the Build Back Better Act includes \$112 million for principal support and development, which is funded through SLRSP.

NASSP and NAESP call on Congress to recognize the important role of school leaders in advancing student achievement and provide no less than \$30 million for SLRSP in FY 2022. In addition, NASSP and NAESP support the \$112 million in principal support funding included in the Build Back Better Act.

COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY STATE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS (FOUND IN TITLE II, PART B):

- Help advance literacy skills for students from birth through grade 12, including students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities.
- Previously called the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program, which has transitioned to the newly enacted Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) under ESSA.
- Received \$192 million in FY 2021.

Forty-six states completed plans for comprehensive literacy programming, with 11 states (GA, KS, KY, LA, MD, MN, MT, ND, NM, OH, and OK) receiving awards to implement them in 2017, and 13 states (AK, AR, CA, GA, HI, KY, LA, MN, MT, NM, OH, RI, and SD) receiving new awards in 2019.

NASSP and NAESP urge Congress to provide \$500 million in the FY 2022 budget to maintain a dedicated federal funding stream for literacy programming to help all states address lost instructional time and improve the reading and writing skills of struggling students.

TITLE IV, PART A, STUDENT SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT GRANTS:

ESSA included a flexible block grant program under Title IV, Part A, authorized at \$1.65 billion annually. Unfortunately, this grant program received only \$1.22 billion in FY 2021. This grant authorizes activities in three broad areas:

- Providing students with a well-rounded education, including music, the arts, social studies, and computer science.
- Supporting the safety and health of students.
- Encouraging the effective use of technology.

NASSP and NAESP urge Congress to fund the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants program at its authorized level of \$1.65 billion in FY 2022. Under this grant, each state receives an allocation based on the Title I funding formula.

▶ OTHER GRANT PROGRAMS

IDEA STATE GRANTS:

- Assist state and local educational agencies in educating children with disabilities.
- Support implementing, expanding, and improving access to high-quality special education services.
- Received \$12.94 billion in FY 2021.
- The Biden Administration's FY 2022 Budget proposes \$15.54 billion in funding for IDEA state grants.

NASSP and NAESP urge Congress to include \$15.54 billion for IDEA state grants, which both the House-passed FY 2022 budget and Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Committee proposal provide. This would represent a strong step toward ultimately fulfilling the federal promise to fund 40% of the national average per-pupil expenditure for students receiving IDEA services. NASSP and NAESP also urge Congress to pass the IDEA Full Funding Act (S. 866/H.R. 1878).

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) STATE GRANTS:

- Provide support for states and communities to implement high-quality CTE programs to meet the demands of the 21st-century economy and workforce.
- Received \$1.33 billion in FY 2021, a \$50 million increase over FY 2020.

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%.

NASSP and NAESP call on Congress to continue to recognize the value and effectiveness of these grants and continue to increase funding for CTE state grants in FY 2022.