Principal, Red Pump Elementary School, Bel Air, MD
at the
Hearing on “Examining the Federal Role in Public School Accountability”
House Committee on Education and the Workforce
September 14, 2011

Principals are required to operate—day in and day out—in today’s one-size-fits-all federal approach to accountability that affords little room for state and local input. As the House Committee on Education and the Workforce considers adjustments to correct current, narrow, federal accountability measures, principals encourage that the following be taken into account.

- **The appropriate federal role in education is to promote equity and provide targeted resources to assist states and local districts.** Federal policies should ask us to set high expectations, but also must support state- and locally-developed accountability systems, curriculum, and instruction to best meet the needs of students in the local school context.

- **Principals support assessments in order to measure the progress of our students. But, federal policy must encourage and support state and local assessments that include growth models and multiple measures of student performance** (both formative and summative) to accurately gauge social and emotional development, language fluency and comprehension, creativity, adaptability, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

- **Assessment data should be used to inform instruction**, be fair, flexible, and authentic, and reflect students’ progress toward academic proficiency.

- **Standards, curriculum, and assessments must be closely aligned to be effective**, and any assessment data must be available in a timely manner for practical or instructional use.
- **Standardized assessment scores must never be used as the sole or primary criterion to measure student performance**; to rate, grade, or rank principal, teacher, or school effectiveness; to allocate funds; or to take punitive measures against schools and/or school personnel.

- **State and local systems must be measured in multiple ways** to accurately capture students’ emotional and social development, language fluency and comprehension, creativity, adaptability, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills, in addition to proficiency in the core academic content areas.

- **Measuring these factors and the many others that contribute to improved student outcomes must provide a complete picture**, not by an up or down, pass-fail, standardized test score that is designed at the federal level and that has no regard for the multitude of ways students progress. Assessment using a single metric produces a one-dimensional view of the child, the teacher, the principal, and the school.

Simply put, those of us in the field who are working every day in education want the federal government to provide opportunities to have more input into the development and implementation of accountability mechanisms.