Elementary Principals Support Bipartisan Legislation to Expand Early Childhood Education

The Strong Start for America’s Children Act authorizes federal expansion of early learning programs.

Contact: Kaylen Tucker, Director of Publications and Public Relations at ktucker@naesp.org or 703-518-6257

November 13, 2013; Alexandria, VA – The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) joined advocates from the early childhood community, the White House, and Congress on Capitol Hill today in support of bipartisan legislation that will significantly expand the nation’s investment in prekindergarten programs. The Strong Start for America’s Children Act of 2013, was introduced today by Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, Tom Harkin (D-IA); Ranking Member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, George Miller (R-CA) and Representative Richard Hanna (R-NY).

“Now more than ever, principals share in the success of our nation’s education system and know the advantage of high quality early learning opportunities that help our nation’s young children ready for kindergarten, especially those from low income homes,” said Gail Connelly, NAESP Executive Director.

“The profound and lasting effect of a child’s high-quality early experience underscores the vital need for Congress to come together and pass the bill. Millions of children from disadvantaged families depend on this investment to break the cycle of poverty, which will ensure that they are college- and career-ready, complete college, and go on to become part of a productive workforce,” Connelly noted.

The legislation authorizes federal expansion of early childhood education programs, including funds for Head Start and Early Head Start, over a ten-year period and provides matching funds to states to improve access to high quality prekindergarten for all 4 year old children, especially those living in poverty. The bill encourages states to align early learning standards with K-12 systems to provide developmentally-appropriate education and address domains of school readiness, including physical well-being, motor development, social-emotional development, literacy and language development, approaches to learning, cognition, and early math and scientific development.

As the national representative of the nation’s elementary and middle level principals, NAESP will continue to advocate in support of the legislation. The federal investment is needed to bolster state systems in early learning as student success relies on systems and schools to provide a seamless continuum of learning for children from age three to grade three, or effective P-3 alignment. Elementary principals know that providing a continuum of developmental and cognitive support for all children’s instruction and learning in the early grades is necessary to realize the full potential of the investments.

About NAESP
Established in 1921, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) serves elementary and middle school principals in the United States, Canada, and overseas. NAESP supports principals as the primary catalyst for creating lasting foundations for learning through policy development, advocacy, and resources for effective instructional leadership. NAESP seeks to advance the principalship and address issues in pre-K–3 alignment, principal preparation and evaluation, and building the capacity of new principals. For more information about NAESP, please visit www.naesp.org.

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