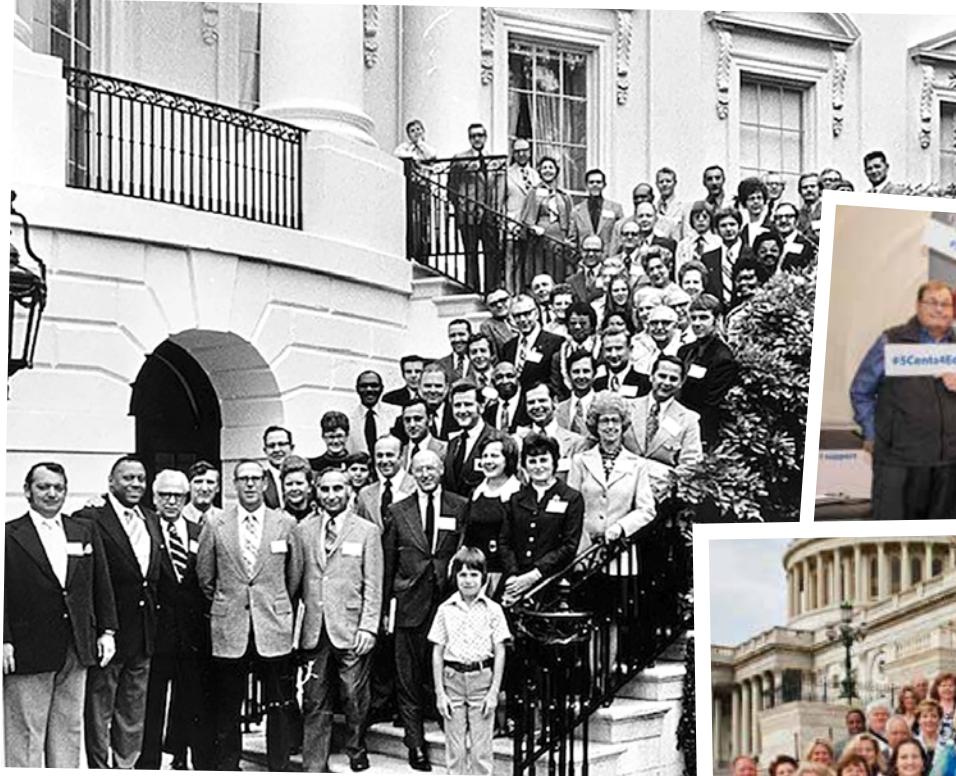




Advocate

Legislative priorities and championing the cause



NAESP members visit Washington, D.C., to advocate for principals nationwide.

How Can Principals Get Started With Advocacy?

"You can start by getting involved with NAESP and your state, but the best advocacy is built on relationships with congressional staff and the congressperson," says Danny Carlson, NAESP's associate executive director for policy and advocacy.

"During COVID-19, because of social distancing, it is easier to invite a congressional staffer to a meeting or to get them on the phone for a half-hour call. Give them granular information about what's actually happening in schools. It's valuable information for them, and they can turn around and think about legislation or the beginning of a long-term conversation. It's a powerful way to establish those core relationships," Carlson said.

In December 2020, Carlson was elected treasurer of the Committee for Education Funding, which is a national coalition dedicated to increasing federal investment in education. CEF takes positions on federal education funding issues that represent a consensus of its membership and then communicates those positions to federal government officials and members of Congress. In his position as treasurer, Carlson will assist with the financial affairs of the organization and supporting the preparation of the annual budget.

Follow Danny on Twitter to stay up to date on federal funding and policy developments.



Connect with Danny on Twitter at
@dannydcarlson



5 Themes in Education Policy and Advocacy

During the 2021 virtual National Leaders Conference, education and policy experts discussed the future of K-12 education under the new administration and the impact of COVID-19 on state and local budgets.

The conference featured presentations and discussions from education policy experts. Speakers included Arne Duncan, former U.S. Secretary of Education; Erica Green, *New York Times* education reporter; Marguerite Roza, director of the Ednomics Lab at Georgetown University; Jeremy Anderson, president of the Education Commission of the States; and Charlie Cook, editor and publisher of the *Cook Political Report*.

What emerged from these conversations were several trends in education that have been amplified by the pandemic and are likely to have impacts far beyond this school year:

Theme 1: Decreased enrollment affects funding. Fewer students are enrolling in schools, and decreases in attendance mean funding cuts for schools at a time when they need it most.

Theme 2: The pandemic is hitting certain areas harder than others. COVID has hit every community, but it has hit the Black community especially hard—including students and teachers of color. People of color

have also been affected by heightened levels of racial injustice over the past year.

Theme 3: Assessments need to happen. Educators can't just guess or trust their intuition to figure out where students are academically and social-emotionally, Duncan said. He recommended assessing students now and again in the fall.

Theme 4: This is an opportunity to rethink education. This includes rethinking teacher training and pay, as well as making processes easier for parents.

Theme 5: There's no financial playbook for recovering from a pandemic. Though this situation is new, Roza highlighted a lesson learned from the Great Recession in 2008: Federal money stopped coming in when the recession was over, but school districts didn't adjust their budgeting practices. Districts then needed to make cuts to survive on state and local revenue streams. Pace yourself with funding, Roza cautioned.

To keep up to date on all things policy and advocacy in the education arena, check out the Advocacy section on naesp.org and sign up for text alerts.



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