

We Stand Together

Together, NAESP and NASSP can ensure that principals have a say in education funding and policy

BY L. EARL FRANKS, ED.D., CAE, AND RONN NOZOE



As former principals, we know that every day and every stage in a child's education matters. Students deserve to step into schools—from their first day of preschool through their high school graduation—that foster their learning, nurture their development, and inspire and support them to become their best, most authentic selves. As principals, we know that consistent, quality school leadership is essential in creating such positive school cultures.

A recent report by The Wallace Foundation, *How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Syn-*

thesis of Two Decades of Research, shows that “the effectiveness of the principal is more important [for a school as a whole] than the effectiveness of a single teacher.” Further, “the importance of school principals may not have been stated strongly enough in prior work, particularly from the perspective of state and district leaders and policymakers seeking to move the needle on student achievement.”

NAESP and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) believe in the urgency of supporting school leadership across the education continuum, and the opportunity to collaborate between our organizations can allow us to support leadership more effectively and realize greater impact. While our organizations are specialized to meet the unique needs of our memberships, the core work is the same. By honoring each organization's expertise but working in step together, we can promote the value and expertise of principals among decision-makers and ensure that school leaders are influential in shaping education policy.

Recently, NAESP and NASSP united to mobilize our members to advocate for \$125 billion for K-12 schools to be included as part of the latest COVID-19 relief package. Experts agree that this level of funding is needed to support schools now and prepare for the looming state and local revenue shortfalls on the horizon. Leaders nationwide tirelessly—and

successfully—championed the passage of meaningful funding on behalf of their schools, including \$7 billion to close the homework gap and fund home internet access for the millions of students who lack the adequate connectivity to learn remotely.

We are stronger when we come together and, in community, advocate for the educational equity, student success, and professional excellence we all seek to achieve. Now, as we continue to grapple with the consequences of more than a year of disrupted learning, we need every school leader's voice with us. We must ensure that decision-makers listen to those of us who are in our schools and communities every day, and hear the truth of what our students need from the people doing the good, hard work.

When we speak with a unified voice, we are a force that policymakers will have to hear. When we advocate together, we will make impactful change. When we stand together, we will succeed. ●

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