

Principles of Advocacy and Engagement

Use your influence to inform policymakers
and promote meaningful solutions



D O YOU WANT to be a principal advocate? According to Riverhead, New York, principal Thomas Payton, “you already are one.” Working on the front lines of schooling with direct influence on teacher effectiveness and student success, principals routinely use their voices for policies and funding that provide all children with a quality education.

Dispelling the myth that principals don’t have time to engage in advocacy, this issue of *Principal* magazine profiles school leaders such as Payton who have harnessed their influence to inform policymakers and promote meaningful solutions at the local, state, and national levels. Learn strategies from your peers about how to level up your advocacy on a range of issues, from forming relationships with state legislators and arranging school visits to securing professional learning for assistant principals across the state (see “Stepping Up to the Plate” on page 16).

While principals rightly focus their advocacy on behalf of students and staff, their own professional needs are just as important, especially in equity leadership. Karin Chenoweth, writer in residence for The Education Trust, has been researching schools and districts that serve large percentages of children of color and children from low-income homes and are high-performing. The most important commonality she found is that these schools’ leaders ask and address this essential question: “Your kids are doing better than mine. What are you doing?” She adds, “An awful lot of systems need to be in place in order for educators to be able to ask that question” (see “Equity Against Adversity” on page 22).

Rounding out the focus on principal advocacy and engagement, this issue addresses how principals can build on the relationships with families and communities that deepened during the pandemic, even as their roles have become more politicized. Find out how school leaders can navigate hot-button issues in “Communication That Conquers Divides” (page 26) and lead crisis response in “Safe Environments for Student Success” (page 30).

And finally, as we start the new year, know that your NAESP family is with you on the journey.



Reach Kaylen on Twitter
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—**Kaylen Tucker, Ph.D.**
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