

## Leaders We Need Now

Principals say that their jobs changed over the last two tumultuous years

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The last couple of years—marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and a national reckoning with racial and social injustice—have left their imprint on schools and principal leadership. That’s why NAESP teamed up with the American Institutes for Research to discover principals’ perspectives on the ways schools and the profession are changing, and what policy supports they believe are necessary to help schools recover and rebuild.

You probably won’t be surprised by some of the findings from the resulting “Leaders We Need Now” research series. Principals described feeling that their job descriptions have changed, telling researchers that they now spend less time on curriculum, instruction, and equity issues because their responsibilities have expanded into the areas of crisis management and communications. What’s more, principals felt underprepared and under-supported to manage these new priorities, and they are seeking more training, support, and staff to improve in these areas.

### Principals at the Table

Principals’ voices have never been more important as schools seek to recover, reset, and reprioritize student learning after the disruptions caused by the pandemic. As a leader of school buildings and staffs, no individual knows and understands a school’s needs better than the principal. Unfortunately, this reality is not always reflected in the policymaking process. Too often, principals lack the opportunity to provide input in K-12 policy and program development. Changes to programs and school funding have huge impacts on a school. Shouldn’t the individuals who lead schools and are expected to implement K-12 programs have a say in how they’re crafted?

As an NAESP member, you have joined thousands of principals from across the country in securing your seat at the policymaking table. Your membership in NAESP leads to a better understanding among policymakers of what you do on a day-to-day basis, the powerful role you play in student success, and the resources you need to

best serve students. It also helps prioritize the policies that matter to you: increased funding for your school, stronger investment in support and professional development for principals, and improved recognition of, and benefits for, principals.

Know this: NAESP has your back as a principal. As we continue to learn more about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and schools, we will be here to help secure the resources you need to lead dynamic learning communities for every student in your charge. ●

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## Rapid Response

WHEN THE COVID-19 pandemic struck two years ago, it became immediately clear that principals would need significant federal support to meet students’ academic, mental health, and safety needs throughout this period of turmoil. NAESP’s advocacy team jumped into action. Since then, the NAESP advocacy team has worked with other national K-12 groups to secure nearly \$200 billion in additional federal K-12 funding to help principals and their schools respond to the coronavirus. NAESP’s members helped make this happen.