

THE Leader


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AFSA, AFL-CIO

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New Coalition Introduces Resource to Support Grieving Students

The Nation's Largest Education Groups Come Together to Help Prepare Educators for Childhood Bereavement

Members of leading organizations gathered for the launch of the Coalition to Support Grieving Students and its new, dedicated online resource. The kickoff event, held in Washington, D.C., addressed the issue of student grief and introduced the first-ever bereavement resource for educators on Jan. 13.

AFSA partnered with educators across the nation to find solutions for supporting students by forming the Coalition after a survey conducted by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the New York Life Foundation found that only seven percent of teachers reported having any bereavement training.



AFSA members supporting the release of the Coalition to Support Grieving Students and its new resource at the kickoff event in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 13, 2015. (Left to right, top row: James Dierke, AFSA executive vice president; Barbara Childs, executive vice president, Council of School Officers, AFSA Local 4; Dwayne Jones, AFSA general vice president. Second row: Wendi Caporicci, AFSA secretary; Diann Woodard, AFSA president; Aona Jefferson, AFSA general vice president.)

Multi-Year Contracts in the Works for D.C. Principals

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Newark Delegation Travels to Washington, D.C., Demands Federal Investigation

A delegation of 22 political, union, civil rights and religious leaders from Newark, N. J., led by New Jersey State Senator Ronald L. Rice, traveled to Washington, D.C. on March 4, 2015 for a meeting with the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). The purpose of the meeting was to request an immediate federal investigation into the state-operated Newark School District.

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Restore the True Spirit of ESEA



AFSA President Diann Woodard

The single most important task facing the 114th Congress is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), a law originally written to alleviate the conditions of poverty that often cripple educators' ability to meet our professional commitments and crush the hopes of the children we serve.

At its recent meeting, the AFL-CIO Executive Council introduced and passed a statement titled Restore the Promise of ESEA asking Congress to reclaim ESEA's true spirit – to provide adequate resources to disadvantaged and special needs children, thereby helping them to better compete.

The AFL-CIO statement further calls on Congress to invest in the things frontline educators know our students need to secure a high quality education, rather than perpetuating the mandates and evaluation schemes promoted under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that have so clearly failed.

Indeed, recalling the intent of ESEA only highlights the flaws in the first draft of H.R.5 (the Student Success Act). The draft continues to be heavily weighted toward testing and keeping funding at sequestration levels, making it difficult, if not impossible, to provide services and resources in areas where child poverty is at an all-time high.

In fact, a recently released White House report found that the bill would cap spending for the next six years at a level \$800 million lower than it was in 2012.

During the public response phase of H.R.5, AFSA suggested ways to improve the act. In collaboration with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), we submitted recommendations calling for inclusion of school leaders in the development of evaluation plans and more professional development and training. In addition, our recommendations challenged performance assessments currently in use.

A joint statement we submitted to Congress noted that, "assessments that are attached to high stakes and a punitive label regardless of whether or not a student is actually making academic gains and growth are counterproductive. This has led to an untenable environment of over-testing, and [has] forced educators to spend less time on instruction in order to prepare for standardized tests. "

To address these inequities, we urged states and districts to use more expansive growth models instead of high-stakes assessments. We believe that such an expansion of assessment systems would put more balance, fairness and accuracy in measuring student and school progress and performance. The AFL-CIO Executive Council's statement strongly endorsed this approach by, among other things, calling for an end to the federal mandate on teacher and principal evaluations.

Dr. Christine Handy, principal at Gaithersburg High School in Gaithersburg, Md., outlined a more viable path to success in her testimony before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee when she said, "ESEA must acknowledge the vital role of principals and provide them with appropriate professional support to ensure high academic achievement for all students."

Congress has the opportunity to invest in our nation's most valuable resource – our youth. We need to write to our legislators to remind them of ESEA's original intent and the need to ensure that our students get a world-class education so they can become contributing members of society. ■

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Atlanta mayor Kasim Reed speaks about labor issues during the Dream Big Mass Meeting: Looking Forward to the Next 50 Years of Civil Rights at AFL-CIO's 2015 Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference.

GEB Holds First Meeting of 2015 in Atlanta to Attend MLK Conference

The AFSA General Executive Board (GEB) kicked off the New Year with its first official meeting of 2015 during the Martin Luther King Day holiday weekend. AFSA committees and the full GEB met in Atlanta, Ga. in order to attend AFL-CIO's 2015 Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference.

AFSA joined hundreds of other union and civil rights activists in honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The conference focused on community service, and attendees learned effective methods for infusing community service into the labor movement. Board members participated in plenary sessions, workshops and panels, gaining knowledge about race issues and underrepresented groups. They also honed their skills in developing labor-community relationships, especially with other civil rights and community service organizations.

On Jan. 15, AFSA leaders attended the Dream Big Mass Meeting: Looking Forward to the Next 50 Years of Civil Rights. Participants heard presentations from AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre and Kasim Reed, mayor of Atlanta. Mayor Reed discussed

the critical role of labor in ensuring the equality of all workers and holding elected officials accountable. The session also reflected on a difficult year for the civil rights community and expressed the determination for progress in 2015.

On Jan. 16, AFSA participated in the Town Hall: Setting the Economic Agenda for Women in the Workplace. The session concentrated on the importance of addressing women's issues, which are often seen as secondary to a progressive economic agenda. The panelists led discussions on policy, organizing, training and leadership development in women's and working families' agendas. Panelists also discussed how individuals could lead campaigns in these areas. The session's panelists included: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth Shuler, Georgia House of Representatives Representative-Elect Erica Thomas, 9to5 Atlanta board member Sonya Underwood and Ms. Foundation CEO and President Teresa C. Younger. It was moderated by Connie Leak, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

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School Improvement Grants Transformed by Evidence Requirements

Last fall, Robert E. Slavin, Ph.D. gave a presentation to the AFSA General Executive Board on using evidence in education policy and updated them on the School Improvement Grant program. AFSA president Diann Woodard also toured a Success for All school located in Detroit, Mich. in January. Dr. Slavin explains how the program's recent changes could benefit all schools.

School Improvement Grants (SIG) are about to undergo a major restructuring.

Up until now, low-performing schools that wanted large grants had to agree to one of four models: closure, take-over, turnaround or transformation. In most cases, schools choosing any of these had to fire their principal and often up to half of their staff.

Under SIG's new rules, three additional options have been introduced. One of these, "evidence-based whole-school reform," allows schools to select a proven, whole-school reform model. Such a program has to affect all students and must have at least one study showing positive effects and must meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards.

Schools choosing this option need not fire anyone and can receive up to \$2 million over five years for planning and implementation.

Another option, a state-determined model, allows states to create and define a model of their own. If they build around a proven, whole-school model that satisfies the evidence model's requirements, their application will be automatically accepted.

We are very happy about this for three reasons. First, our proven Success for All program for grades pre-K to 8 meets the standards. Second, it is great to offer schools an opportunity to reform without firing their principals. Third, and most importantly, the new rules give evidence of effectiveness an importance it has never had before. If many SIG schools adopt proven programs, they are likely to achieve very positive

outcomes, which will benefit thousands of children. Further, SIG's use of proven models could serve as an example of what Title I schools can achieve if they are given the right tools. This could benefit all schools, not just SIG schools.

Proven programs of all kinds give school leaders many options for improving outcomes for children. Just as people look in Consumer Reports before they buy a car, school leaders will soon be able to find out what works before they choose programs.

The federal Investing in Innovation (i3) program has been funding development, validation and scale-up of proven programs, adding to the set of ready-to-go innovations known to improve learning.

The new SIG models, and many other developments, are making it easier for schools to learn about and adopt programs with strong evidence of effectiveness. This benefits everyone – especially our children, who need the most effective approaches we can give them.

Robert E. Slavin, Ph.D. is the co-founder and chairman of the Success for All Foundation. ■

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Multi-Year Contracts

in the Works for D.C. Principals

After school and community leaders' continued calls for more leadership stability at their schools, D.C. Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson announced her plan to offer principals multi-year contracts, possibly within the next school year.

"We are at a point where we can offer multi-year contracts as a matter of practice," Henderson said at a hearing of the D.C. Council's Education Committee.

Since 2008, school closures and terminations have caused hundreds of principals and assistant principals to lose their jobs and have burdened hundreds of others with the uncertainty of not knowing whether they will stay in their schools longer than a year.

"We need to minimize the revolving door of principals and assistant principals," said Aona Jefferson, president of the Council of School Officers, AFSA Local 4. "You can't turn a school around in one year," she said, emphasizing that getting to know the whole school community takes time.

Chief of Human Capital for D.C. Public Schools Jason Kamras says the school system has created a task force to consider longer-term contracts that include members of the principals' union.

Principals were evaluated and put into performance categories for the first time in 2012-2013. School system data revealed that the largest group of 61 principals was ranked as "developing." Nine principals were rated as "ineffective," which is cause for automatic termination.

In 2013-2014, the "developing" category was also the largest group, but the category was renamed "minimally effective."

The results are based on whether students are improving on academic goals, regardless of how well principals score on leadership.

Henderson agreed that in order for principals to show significant progress, they need three years. "If principals are terminated before then, something has happened" that may be cause for additional concern, she said. ■

Student Privacy – An Emerging Issue



With growing numbers of articles discussing data breaches and vocal parental objections to student data collection through assessments and other means, the issue of student privacy is gaining ground fast.

Congress has turned its attention to this issue. A bipartisan group of Congressional members are planning to introduce versions of President Obama's privacy bill soon, and a House subcommittee recently held a hearing on the topic of student privacy.

Student privacy has even had an impact on ESEA, with the inclusion of at least one contentious student data privacy provision in the House's version of ESEA reauthorization legislation (H.R.5). With 10 months still to go in the current session of Congress, 2015 may well become the Year of Student Privacy.

At the beginning of the year, President Obama delivered a major policy speech on this topic and authored legislation to regulate school vendor use of and access to student data.

Additionally, he delivered a speech at the Federal Trade Commission in January, highlighting technology's value to education.

"If we are going to be connected, then we need to be protected," said the president. While lauding the more than 90 companies who have signed a Student Privacy Pledge, which commits them to ensuring the safety of student data, the president nonetheless urged Congress to take

up and pass his proposed Student Digital Privacy Act, which would allow school vendors to collect and use student data for educational purposes only. At this writing, student privacy legislation remains on the drafting table and has not yet been introduced formally.

Another area in which Congress may choose to legislate is updating the Federal Education Records Privacy Act (FERPA), a 40-year-old law that came into existence well before the digital age. FERPA governs how schools and districts handle student records and protect students' personally identifiable information. House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline (R-MN) has expressed repeatedly his concern that FERPA is outdated and fails to protect adequately digitized student data that educators, schools and districts transmit to companies for administrative and educational purposes. His staff has been at work on an update to FERPA for the past six months, but he has not yet introduced legislation.

In the meantime, Rep. Kline's committee is soliciting public input, most notably through a hearing entitled "How Emerging Technology Affects Student Privacy." All four hearing witnesses mentioned the need for Congress to update FERPA and emphasized the importance of finding a balance between protecting student data and allowing data to be used to inform instruction.

Diann Woodard, president of AFSA, believes schools are intended to provide students with a safe and secure

learning environment. Protecting sensitive student information is a vital part of keeping students safe. "Recent advances in technology have greatly increased the amount of personal student data that schools are required to collect and monitor," she said. "While this data can help our students, we must ensure that it is only used for educational purposes."

Student data privacy issues also arose during the mark-up of the House version of ESEA, where Rep. Steve Russell (R-OK) offered an amendment that would prohibit "personal, private student data ... from use beyond assessing student performance." Although Rep. Polis expressed reservations about this amendment, stating that it would limit data's ability to inform and personalize instruction, the Committee approved it, and it is now a part of the House's version of ESEA reauthorization.

Despite action at the federal level, states are not waiting for Congress and the president to act on student privacy. Since the beginning of the year, state legislators have introduced more than 100 separate pieces of student privacy legislation. With technological innovation outpacing law and regulation, expect more student privacy issues and legislative remedies to emerge in Congress and state legislatures.

AFSA continues to monitor this issue and advocate for the protection of our students' privacy. We need more effective enforcement policies that address FERPA in order to keep our students safe. ■

AFSA Praises Bill to Promote School Leadership

Sen. Al Franken (D-MN) and Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA) have introduced legislation crucial to the development of school leadership. S.476 and H.R.930 (School Principal and Recruitment Training Act) amend Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to implement training programs for school principals and assistant principals.

"Today's principals and assistant principals are expected to be visionary leaders, instructional experts, building managers, assessment specialists, disciplinarians, community builders and much more," said AFSA President Diann Woodard.

"It is incumbent upon members of Congress," she asserted, "to address the professional development needs of our nation's current and aspiring principals. If Congress is truly serious about providing a quality education

for all children, then a reauthorized ESEA must provide the leaders of our nation's schools with the appropriate training, mentoring and professional development opportunities they need to be successful."

Sen. Franken's and Rep. Davis' legislation is actively supported by AFSA, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

The School Principal and Recruitment Training Act would create a competitive grant program to provide for training aspiring principals on the use of data, leadership and organizational management in one-year residencies. After the principals complete the one-year placement, the program requires at least two additional years of mentoring and support to aid principals as they begin work in their school leadership roles.

"An inspirational principal at the helm can make an enormous difference in a school's direction," said Rep. Davis. "Currently, only five percent of federal funding for teacher preparation goes toward principal training. This legislation would provide resources for communities to recruit and train a new generation of school leaders with the ability to inspire academic success and turn around struggling schools."

Through the program, principals would master essential skills to strengthen their leadership practices and their use of data in instruction, supervision, evaluation and teacher development in order to increase their schools' performance levels. According to research conducted by the University of Michigan, the school-related factors that most impact student learning are teacher quality and school leadership. ■



Newark Delegation Travels to Washington, D.C., Demands Federal Investigation

A delegation of 22 political, union, civil rights and religious leaders from Newark, N. J., led by New Jersey State Senator Ronald L. Rice, traveled to Washington, D.C. on March 4, 2015 for a meeting with the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). The purpose of the meeting was to request an immediate federal investigation into the state-operated Newark School District.

The meeting with the DOE was arranged by Rep. Donald Payne, Jr., who strongly supports the delegation's position and the request for a federal investigation.

Speaker after speaker from the New Jersey delegation provided concrete evidence and examples of the abuses that were taking place in Newark under the state schools takeover and Superintendent Cami Anderson's leadership. The concerns ranged from the open enrollment policy, which can send

children 30 minutes from their home to a school and neighborhood they might not be welcomed in, to the closing of schools, and from the siphoning of taxpayer dollars to fund charter schools to the complete lack of collaboration with Newark parents.

Sen. Rice conveyed the tremendous anger and frustration of his constituents and himself with the unresponsiveness of Superintendent Anderson, the disrespect city and state officials have shown, and the unwillingness of New Jersey officials to conduct an investigation into allegations of abuses in Newark's schools. "If we can't get the state to conduct an investigation, then we need a full federal investigation," he said. "Somebody must pay attention. We in Newark will not rest until a full investigation is conducted."

AFSA President Diann Woodard attended the meeting in support of the Newark delegation. In her presentation, President Woodard stressed the importance of neighborhood schools. She said, "it takes a village to raise a child and a community to educate a child." She indicated that closing schools

creates chaos, "moving babies from one place to another," with no positive change. She also stated that the DOE must look closely at the reauthorization of ESEA, and its own education policies, to ensure they are not exacerbating the situation in Newark and other school districts across the nation by supporting turnaround models that lead to school closings and disruption.

President Woodard pledged her full support to the citizens and families of Newark in their struggle to strengthen their schools and to regain community control of their schools.

AFSA General Vice President Len Pugliese presented statistics demonstrating that the reform effort in Newark was not only failing, but that it is also causing harm to the students and families of Newark.

At the conclusion of the two-hour session, each of the senior DOE officials assured the Newark delegation that they would carefully review the issues raised by the delegation speakers, and that the meeting was the first of several conversations they will have. They are currently conducting a civil rights investigation regarding the Newark schools, due to the volume of complaints they have received.

Sen. Rice thanked the officials and indicated that the people of Newark would continue their fight against the tyranny and injustice forced upon them. He also assured the DOE that he would continue his dialogue with them until justice was restored in Newark, N.J. ■



Dr. Leonard P. Pugliese (center), AFSA general vice president and executive director of CASA, AFSA Local 20, presents his statistics and evidence on why school reform in Newark, N.J. isn't succeeding.



The New Jersey delegation meets with United States Department of Education in Washington, D.C. on March 4, 2015.



Students from Staten Island's Markham Intermediate School (IS 51) raise more than \$40,000 for March of Dimes, making them the national school winner in raising funds. Photo courtesy of Council of School Supervisors and Administrators.

School Earns First Place in Raising Funds for Campaign

Staten Island's Markham Intermediate School (IS 51) was the 2014 national school winner in raising funds for the March of Dimes' annual "March for Babies" campaign. Markham students raised more than \$40,000, beating their previous 2013 record of \$35,000.

Students worked hard to raise money by selling wristbands, "little feet" support cards, and sponsorships for advertising signs along the walk's path. They also got friends and families to help through social media sites.

Andrew Cataneo, assistant principal of Markham and CSA member, AFSA Local 1, is also a board member of the Staten Island division of the national charity.

"March of Dimes has become a culture and tradition at our school," said Mr. Cataneo, who organizes fundraising activities at Markham. "We're not a wealthy school. Two-thirds of our student population live at or below the poverty level qualifying for free lunch. Our students give because they see it as belonging to a community bigger than themselves," he stated.

Markham is known for their remarkable fundraising work. Since 2005, they have raised about \$250,000. Mr. Cataneo says the fundraising efforts incorporate into student lessons. "Our students are learning history, science, medicine and how to be a good citizen. These lessons are life." ■

Creating Opportunities for High Achieving Low-Income Students

Like many school leaders dealing with the challenge of serving high achieving low-income students, Engineering and Science University Magnet School (ESUMS) principal and School Administrators Association of New Haven, AFSA Local 18 member Medria Blue-Ellis finds it difficult to see talented students without the financial support necessary to succeed further.

To learn more about how to cope with these challenges, Blue-Ellis joined school leaders and experts from across the country at a two-day summit located outside of the nation's capital to identify solutions to help overcome the troubling disparity in academic performance between lower income and higher income students at advanced levels.

"Closing the Excellence Gap: Advocating for High-Achieving, Low-Income Students" was convened Feb. 5-6 by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, which is dedicated to advancing the education of promising students who have financial need. The Foundation offers

the largest scholarships in the country to high-performing students who have financial needs.

The Foundation believes the event participants will put forth all their efforts to help create opportunities for low-income students. "I wanted to bring these school leaders together to discuss how to better support high-performing students with financial need because I know the high caliber of their leadership and of the education provided at their schools," said Harold Levy, executive director of the Cooke Foundation and former chancellor of New York City Schools.

Principal Blue-Ellis was invited by the Cooke Foundation to collaborate with more than 100 other education professionals selected to learn about cutting-edge research in identifying best practices for supporting high achieving, low-income students. Among those invited to attend were high school principals, leaders of professional educational organizations, researchers, scholarship providers and John B. King, Jr., senior adviser to the U.S. Secretary of Education.

The event resulted in the formation of the Coalition of Leaders for Advanced Students Success in an effort to support and advocate for talented students.

Blue-Ellis was honored to have the opportunity to attend such an empowering event. "We are the leaders in our communities who have a stake in nurturing talent whenever we find it and regardless of a student's economic status," she said. "We need talent to remain competitive as a nation. This summit underscored the fact the ESUMS is part of the solution." ■



Principal Inspires Million-Dollar Fundraiser for New York City School

When a student was asked who had influenced him the most in his life, his answer was his principal. His response has led to over \$1 million in fundraising for his middle school in Brownsville, Brooklyn, N.Y.

The creator of “Humans of New York,” Brandon Stanton, launched a campaign for Mott Hall Bridges Academy after posting the story of eighth-grader Vidal Chastanet describing his principal as the most influential person in his life.

“When we get in trouble, she doesn’t suspend us. She calls us to her office and explains to us how society was built around us. And she tells us that each time somebody fails out of school, a new jail cell gets built. And one time she made every student stand up, one at a time, and she told each one of us that we matter,” he told Stanton in a post on the “Humans of New York” Facebook page.

“Humans of New York” is a popular online photo blog of people Stanton

meets and photographs on the streets. Its Facebook page alone has over 12 million likes.

Nadia Lopez, Mott Hall Bridges Academy principal and Council of School Supervisors and Administrators member, AFSA Local 1, met with Stanton after the story went viral. In light of the school’s small budget and the limited incomes of students’ families, they came up with the campaign to fund a field trip for each incoming sixth-grade class to visit Harvard University.

“This is a neighborhood that doesn’t necessarily expect much from our children,” Lopez explains, “so at Mott Hall Bridges Academy we set our expectations very high. We don’t call

the children ‘students,’ we call them ‘scholars.’ Our color is purple. Our scholars wear purple and so do our staff. Because purple is the color of royalty.”

“I want my scholars to know that even if they live in a housing project, they are part of a royal lineage going back to great African kings and queens. They belong to a group of individuals who invented astronomy and math. And they belong to a group of individuals who have endured so much history, and still overcome,” Lopez said in a “Humans of New York” Facebook post. “When you tell people you’re from Brownsville, their face cringes up. But there are children here that need to know that they are expected to succeed.”

The campaign was initially designed to give students a chance to visit Harvard, but it turned into a scholarship fund after raising \$700,000. “Let’s Send Kids to Harvard: Vidal Scholarship Fund” has received \$1,417,984 in donations between Jan. 22 and Feb. 10. Vidal will be the fund’s first scholarship recipient.

This story has raised awareness through media and has even received attention from President Obama, who met with Vidal, Lopez and Stanton at the White House.

Principal Lopez’s story serves as an inspiration to all school leaders by showing that we have the power to lead and create movements like this. ■

Braving the Cold and Taking the Plunge

Members of the Southington Administrators Association, AFSA Local 74, Board of Education participated in the Polar Plunge on Jan. 17. The team plunged into the frigid 17-degree waters of Sloper’s Pond in Southington, Conn. for the local YMCA fundraiser to help send disadvantaged kids away to Camp Sloper, a local summer camp. ■



Members of the Southington Administrators Association take the Polar Plunge on Jan. 17, 2015. (Left to right: Board Chair Brian Goralski, Plantsville Elementary School Principal Steve Bergin, Southington High School Principal Marty Semmel and Superintendent Tim Connellan. Photo courtesy of Southington Administrators Association).

Legislative Update

Congress is considering reauthorizing the current iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). There is widespread agreement by members of Congress that NCLB is broken, and both the Senate and House are considering proposals to change the law. This is welcome news for school leaders, because NCLB does not provide principals and assistant principals with adequate support, training and resources, but still holds them accountable for student achievement. However, the proposals in both chambers as currently written do not go far enough in meaningfully differentiating the role principals play in schools serving children from pre-kindergarten to grade 12 and don't provide them with the appropriate support.

SENATE

On Jan. 13, 2015, Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP), released a discussion draft on the reauthorization of ESEA that would revamp NCLB and significantly reduce the federal role in education. The draft was followed by a series of Senate HELP committee hearings on testing and accountability, supporting teachers and school leaders, and innovation.

The Draft:

- Provides two options for the issue of testing. One would give states flexibility in determining the assessment systems they use, while the other option would keep the assessment language as is under current NCLB law, which requires states to test students in grades 3-8 in reading and math.
- Alters current funding structures by consolidating most programs into block grants and allows states to decide how to use their federal dollars. Additionally, programs such as Investing in Innovation, Race to the Top and School Improvement Grants (SIG) would be terminated.
- Increases funding levels for the teacher and principal preparation and recruitment block grant, Title I and Title II, by over \$500 million each, but would likely limit their growth in future years. However, it would allow for the transfer of 100 percent of funds appropriated for Title II and Title IV, "Safe and Healthy Students," between the two programs. While it remains unclear how much transferring would occur, this proposed flexibility raises the specter of bleeding funds from principal professional development programs.

The draft does not require states to adopt teacher and principal evaluation systems, but it would allow states to use federal funds to do so. It also supports multiple measures of teacher and principal effectiveness by basing evaluations “in part on evidence of student achievement” instead of “in significant part on evidence of student achievement.”

Following the release of the draft, AFSA, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) submitted joint comments to the

Senate HELP Committee offering recommendations to further support the role of principals. The comments reflected our strong belief that in order to be successful, ESEA must acknowledge the vital role of principals and provide them with the professional support necessary to ensure improved learning for all students.

AFSA, NAESP and NASSP sent the recommendations to all members of the Senate HELP committee (read them at www.AFSAadmin.org/esea-recommendations/) and met with several key members of Congress to advocate for their inclusion.

We will continue working together to make sure the voice of principals is heard throughout the process of reauthorizing ESEA, and to ensure that the current law’s shortcomings with regard to support for our nation’s principals and school leaders are addressed.

In a sign of bipartisanship, Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) released a joint statement in early February stating their commitment to reaching a bipartisan solution to fixing No Child Left Behind.

HOUSE

On Feb. 3, 2015, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce released its legislation to reauthorize ESEA, the Student Success Act (H.R.5). Unlike in the Senate, the House committee did not hold a series of hearings on the bill, and approved it on a party-line vote on Feb. 11.

The House legislation proposed:

- Keeping NCLB’s current schedule in place, with states required to assess students.
- Removing adequate yearly progress (AYP) and letting states design their own accountability systems. States would be required to disaggregate data for different subgroups and issue school report cards. States would not be required to set up teacher and principal evaluation systems but would be allowed to do so.
- Ending the SIG program and requiring states to set aside seven percent of their Title I funding for school improvement.
- Authorizing Title I at \$16.2 billion for FY 2016-2021, which is the same amount appropriated by Congress in FY 2015 and is lower than the Title I authorization level NCLB received in 2001.

Following the introduction of the Student Success Act, AFSA, NAESP and NASSP submitted detailed comments to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. The comments (read them at www.afsaadmin.org/principals-push-legislators-for-changes-to-esea-bills/) note many concerns with H.R.5, which does not strengthen ESEA to acknowledge and support the vital role of principals or provide them with the necessary professional support to ensure better teaching and improved learning for all students.

AFSA sent an Action Alert to all members providing them with a sample letter to send to their representatives in Congress in support of the joint recommendations. We sincerely thank all those who took the time to send their member of Congress a letter, helping to ensure that their representative considers the voice of school leaders in reauthorizing ESEA. ■

NEW COALITION INTRODUCES RESOURCE TO SUPPORT GRIEVING STUDENTS

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George Washington University's auditorium was filled with leaders from the founding education groups, bereavement experts, members of school communities and supporters of this new partnership. The day consisted of guest speakers, a moderated panel, presentations, a Q&A session and personal testimonies from a teacher, a parent and a student. Several AFSA members were present to support and participate in this empowering movement.

U.S. Department of Education Director, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, David Esquith discussed the importance of bereavement in schools, emphasizing that educators and school staff need to feel more comfortable dealing with grieving students. Following his remarks, NBC4 Washington

reporter Tisha Thompson moderated a panel of Coalition members, giving each participant the opportunity to discuss the issue. Panelists included leaders from AFSA, AFT, the National Education Association Health Information Network (NEA HIN) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).

"The lack of grief and bereavement training among educators is troubling," said AFSA president Diann Woodard. "There are not enough social workers and school counselors. We need to ensure we have resources in order to make our schools better equipped to help these students."

The new online bereavement resource was then introduced by David Schonfeld, M.D., director of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement. The website, www.grievingstudents.org, provides downloadable training modules, videos and additional materials all easily accessible and available to the entire school community for free. He also announced the Coalition's future plans

for more modules, webinars and a national conference.

During the Q&A session, Executive Vice President of the Council of School Officers (CSO) Barbara Childs, AFSA Local 4, shared her experience of how a tragic student death affected her entire school when she was assistant principal. She stressed how valuable it would have been to have had these resources during that time.

A panel discussion, entitled "Perspective from the Classroom," was led by CSO member Richard Trogisch, principal at School Without Walls HS and School Without Walls at Francis Stevens Education Center. "We must have child-centered schools," he said. His team of psychologists, social workers and counselors assisted in the panel covering points of view from a teacher, mother and grieving child.

AFSA and its founding leaders believe that this coalition will help educators feel more confident and prepared to deal with students compassionately during the grieving process. ■

GEB HOLDS FIRST MEETING OF 2015 IN ATL TO ATTEND MLK CONFERENCE

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AFSA was very pleased to be able to attend and participate in such an influential event working toward solutions to issues in our community.

Program Committee

The AFSA Program Committee continued its planning for the AFSA Fourteenth Triennial Constitutional Convention, which will be held July 23-27, 2015 in New Orleans, La. The convention's theme is *Engaged Leadership for a Brighter Future*. The committee worked on the schedule for

each day, reviewed confirmed speakers, and developed workshops to support AFSA members in their professional duties. Attendees will depart New Orleans richer in knowledge on issues of concern to school leaders and inspired to raise their voices in support of AFSA's commitment to equal education for all children.

Legislative Committee

The AFSA Legislative Committee met to discuss the latest developments regarding the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). On Jan. 13, Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committee, released his 400-page ESEA discussion draft. The draft is intended to promote discussion on the law's reauthorization and to

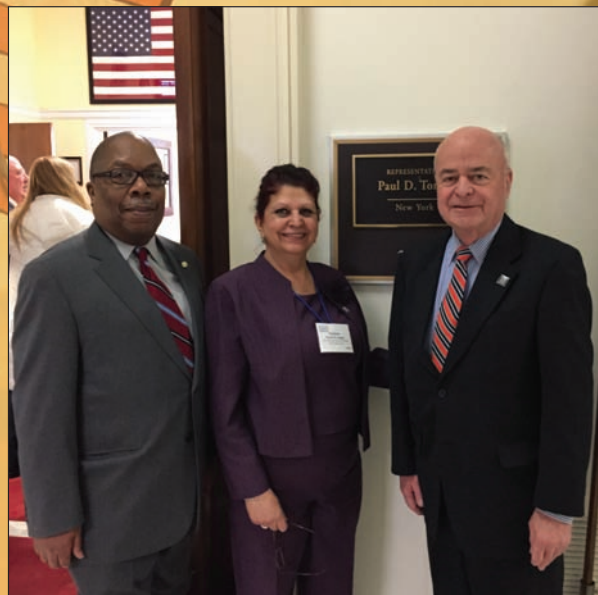
solicit feedback from key stakeholders. AFSA is reviewing the draft, monitoring all developments related to ESEA reauthorization, and collaborating with NASSP and NAESP by submitting official comments and recommendations in response. The groups are also meeting with committee staff to make sure the voices of principals are heard.

Scholarship Committee

The AFSA Scholarship Committee met briefly and sent out a reminder announcement about the 2015 AFSA Scholarship Program Feb. 28 deadline. The program awards five scholarships of \$2,500 each to children of AFSA members in good standing. Scholarship winners will be decided during the April GEB meeting. ■

Striving for a Better ESEA

Members of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA), AFSA Local 1, travelled to D.C. last week to participate in the National Association of Elementary School Principals' (NAESP) Hill day and to advocate for several of the recommendations for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). AFSA fully supports all motions towards a reauthorized ESEA that gives principals the opportunity to be the best leaders they can be.



Members of CSA join NAESP to take action on the reauthorization of ESEA on Feb. 24, 2015. (Left to right: Herman Merritt, Paulette Foglio, and Pierre Lehmuller).

UPCOMING EVENTS • 2015

April 17–18

AFSA GEB Meeting

Naples, Fla.

May 17

CSA Retiree Chapter's 10th Anniversary Celebration

New York, N.Y.

June 30–July 2

NAESP Annual Conference & Exhibition

Long Beach, Calif.

July 6–10

Alliance for Retired Americans Legislative Conference

Washington, D.C.

July 23–27

AFSA 14th Triennial Constitutional Convention

New Orleans, La.

July 29–30

AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting

Silver Spring, Md.

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