

# THE Leader

  
American Federation of  
School Administrators  
AFSA, AFL-CIO

Volume 89, Spring/Summer 2017

A NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

## Chicago Public Schools' New Special Ed Funding Creates Discrimination in Nonwhite Communities

By: *Troy LaRaviere*

Systematic racial discrimination in special education funding on the part of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is an outcome of budget schemes that reduce overall funding and force school principals to fund special education needs with dollars meant for the whole school—pitting the needs of special education students against those of students in general education.

CPS also violates federal law with new restrictive Individual Education Plan guidelines, and rampant discrimination in how CPS grants and denies funding to schools that submit appeals for funds frozen by such budgetary maneuvers.

A new report by the Chicago Principals & Administrators Association (CPAA), AFSA Local 2, shows 158 schools collectively filed appeals for more than \$24 million in funding. In response to these appeals, Mayor Emanuel's appointees and designees at CPS granted \$3.5 million—less than 15 percent of the \$24 million requested.

Six percent (10 of 158) of the schools that filed appeals served a student population that was majority white. Those 10 schools accounted for almost 30 percent (\$1,033,000) of the \$3,519,709 total dollar amount approved.

CPS officials granted 60 percent of the total amount requested from schools serving majority white student populations. However, schools serving mostly Hispanic students received 14 percent of their requests, while majority black schools received just 9 percent of requested funds.

The report also found that 56 percent of majority black schools that submitted appeals did not receive an official hearing from CPS, and 47 percent of majority Hispanic schools did not receive a hearing, while all majority white schools that submitted an appeal received a hearing.

*continued on page 17*

### **Saving Buffalo Public Schools: Education and Community Leaders Rally on Steps of Buffalo City Hall**

The future of Buffalo public schools is at stake and members of the Buffalo Council of Supervisors and Administrators (BCSA), AFSA Local 10, want a solution.

*See page 4*

### **Puerto Rico Set to Close Hundreds of Schools Amid Financial Crisis**

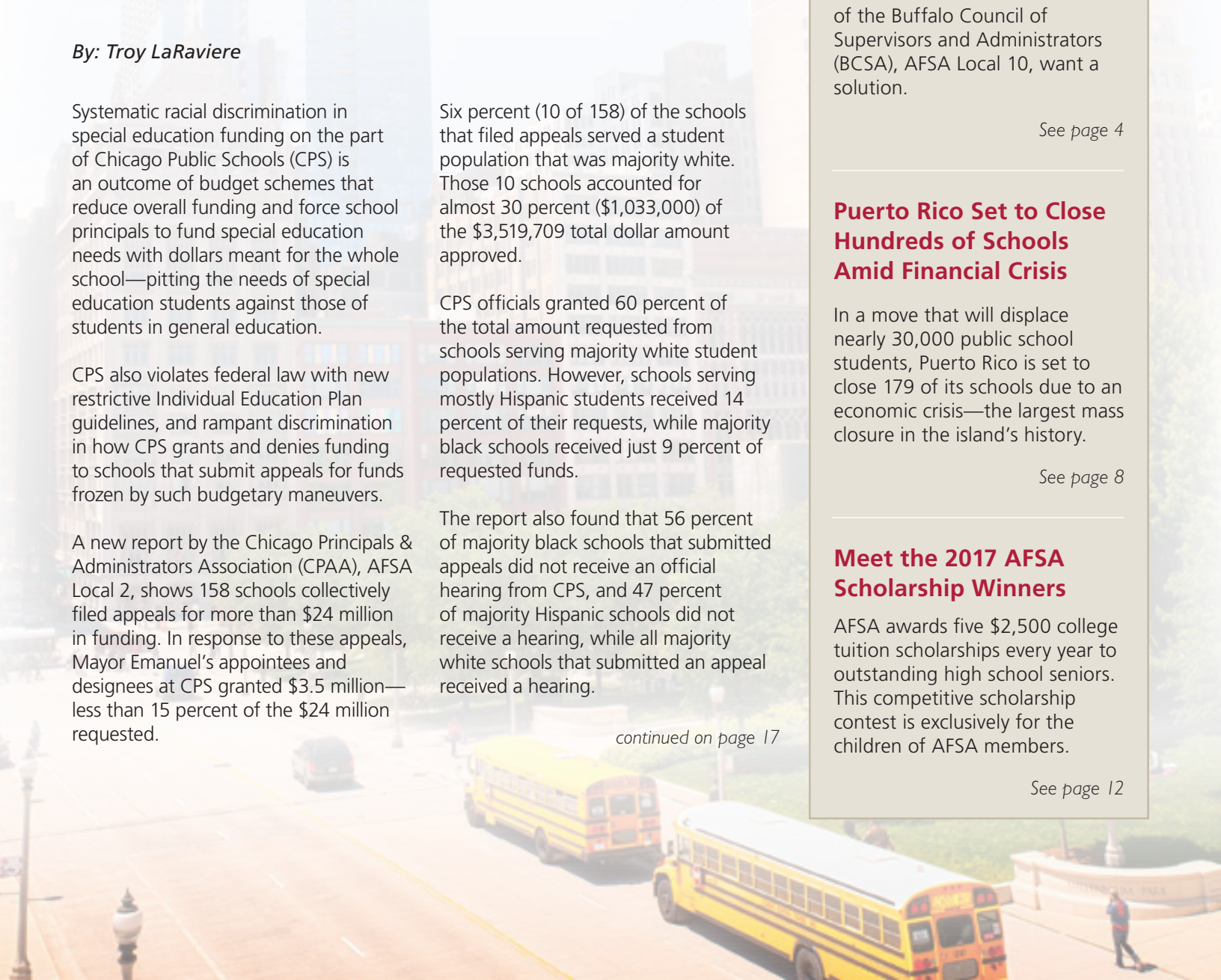
In a move that will displace nearly 30,000 public school students, Puerto Rico is set to close 179 of its schools due to an economic crisis—the largest mass closure in the island's history.

*See page 8*

### **Meet the 2017 AFSA Scholarship Winners**

AFSA awards five \$2,500 college tuition scholarships every year to outstanding high school seniors. This competitive scholarship contest is exclusively for the children of AFSA members.

*See page 12*



# It's Time to Take Action— We Can't Wait

By Diann Woodard



*AFSA President Diann Woodard*

No matter how you voted in the election or how you feel on a host of national issues, one thing is clear—the industry in which we all work and the children we have spent our lives caring for are facing a major crisis.

Our role as school leaders is at risk.

Public education as we know it is on a precipice and if we fail to act, the consequences for our nation are unimaginable. This is not talk. This is real.

This is no time for us to be sitting on our hands. President Trump's first 100 days have changed America and instilled a sense of worry, uncertainty and, to many, horror.

The confirmation of Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to lead the nation's education future and the appointment of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch forced us to face reality and ring the alarm. Now, the release of the FY 2018 budget proposals by DeVos and the Trump administration has confirmed our fears and has us feeling somewhat defeated. We can't let down our guard.

This plan is a reverse-Robin Hood budget. It slashes and decimates programs for the most vulnerable Americans, while stuffing the pockets of the uber-wealthy.

Funding for small class sizes and after-school and summer programs will be eliminated.

Threats of expanding charter schools and vouchers will become a reality. High-poverty schools will suffer from the \$1 billion cut from Title I funding—including \$550 million in direct Title I cuts.

Resources AFSA fought for in Congress and with the last administration to provide training for school principals and other school leaders has all but disappeared.

On the surface it appears we may be doomed, but this should spur us to be more proactive in what we do. It should force us to stand up and protect public education.

As principals, it is our duty to lead our public schools to serve as a pathway of opportunity for our nation's children. We are responsible for supporting teachers and staff, and for providing all students with a high-quality education.

The role of a school principal is to create a stable learning environment, where students can succeed and excel. Schools don't survive without good principals. In order for us to be successful in our communities, we need the proper funding and support for educators.

While this new administration might try to weaken and defund our public school communities, we must come together and make our voices heard. More than ever, *now* is the time to engage with all members of your union or association to take collective action.

We want our nation's schools to be strengthened and supported, not stripped of necessary resources.

We need to be active in our communities—we need to activate the parents of the children we educate with the knowledge of what is at stake and, together, we must contact our House and Senate members to let them know public education is the backbone of the United States—and it must continue. ■

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# AFSCME President Saunders Warns Against *Janus* Case

AFSCME President Lee Saunders, speaking at the spring GEB meeting, said that decades of relentless attacks from right-wing politicians and corporate special interests have taken their toll on unions, making it harder for working people to join together in a union and fight for fair wages, benefits and protections that aid all Americans.



The labor movement remains one of the most effective vehicles for working people to reach the middle class, and declining union membership tracks with greater income inequality. Studies show that union density in communities across the country translates into greater opportunity and socioeconomic mobility for members and nonmembers alike.

Unions will have to face a new "*Friedrichs*" case once again. Saunders warned that the new Supreme Court case out of Illinois, *Janus v. AFSCME*, represents the latest effort by corporate and special interest groups to upend the longstanding rights of people who work in public service. He also noted that newly confirmed Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch is likely to side with the four justices who were willing to rule with the plaintiffs in *Friedrichs*.

Saunders discussed how the corporate CEOs and wealthy special interests behind this case will stop at nothing to make it harder for public service workers like school administrators, teachers, firefighters, nurses and public safety workers to speak up together for better public services, stronger communities, and wages and protections that benefit

all Americans. He said the out-of-balance economy already is being manipulated to benefit those who already are wealthy, and this case could exacerbate the situation.

"We must reach out and engage our members like never before," he added. "We can't expect people to stay in unions if they don't have to. Many good people might leave the union to save money. We must show our value to every member every day."

AFSA President Diann Woodard told the board the union can't expect members to come to it, that the union must go to the members. "It is time to have one-on-one conversations with every member," she said.

Now more than ever, it is important for AFSA to be united and educate our communities. We need to come together and support other labor organizations in their efforts to oppose an anti-worker ruling from the Supreme Court. ■



# Saving Buffalo Public Schools Education and Community Leaders Rally on Steps of Buffalo City Hall



The future of Buffalo public schools is at stake and members of the Buffalo Council of Supervisors and Administrators (BCSA), AFSA Local 10, want a solution.

On May 17, the BCSA rallied on the steps of City Hall to urge the district to negotiate a fair contract, and to ensure all students have access to professional, qualified and committed leaders in their public schools. AFSA General Vice President and BCSA President Crystal Boling-Barton organized the rally, which was joined by parents, teachers and other union officials.

Principals and school administrators have witnessed firsthand the value public schools have, but without a fair contract agreement and vital funding, students, schools and their

leaders will continue to suffer from a lack of resources.

BCSA represents principals, assistant principals and central office leaders, those who are responsible for providing teachers and their students with a stable, consistent learning environment.

Buffalo Public School principals have worked without a contract for 12 years, through control boards, a wage freeze, a revolving door of superintendents and an increased workload, bringing on low morale for school leaders.

The Buffalo Teachers Federation settled its contract with the district in October 2016.

In order for Buffalo school principals to add value and reach their full potential, BCSA is urging the district and Superintendent Kriner Cash to sit down and settle on a collective bargaining agreement.

“Principals’ value to the community is often overlooked. They are the first person you see at school and the last one to leave,” said AFSA President Diann Woodard, who took part in the rally. “Without the necessary resources and stable conditions available, school leaders struggle to implement and maximize their role. The success of our schools and students depends on the effectiveness of administrators.”

In solidarity, Peter McNally, executive director of the New York State Federation of School Administrators, and retired administrator from the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators (CSA), AFSA Local 1, joined the Buffalo school leaders. BTF President Phil Rumore also was on hand, as was Aaron Armstrong, president of the Professional Clerical Technical Employees Association. ■

**“Without the necessary resources and stable conditions available, school leaders struggle to implement and maximize their role. The success of our schools and students depends on the effectiveness of administrators.”**

*—President Diann Woodard*

# High Principal Turnover Undermining Education in the District of Columbia

## 322 Principals Gone from 2007–2016; More Leaving This Year; Churn Greatest in Lower-Income Wards

Washington, D.C.—A dramatically high principal turnover rate in District of Columbia schools is harming the quality of education, school learning environments and test scores, with a greater impact in lower-income Wards 7 and 8, according to the Council of School Officers (CSO), AFSA Local 4, which represents school principals and other leaders in the nation’s capital.

School district data show that 322 principals left the system between 2007 and 2016. Many of those principals were released without cause under a District law that allows for principal nonreappointments. In addition, there will be at least 12 leadership changes next year.

“The role of a school principal is to create a stable learning environment, where students can succeed and

excel,” said Aona Jefferson, outgoing president of CSO and an AFSA general vice president. “Schools can’t thrive and don’t survive without good principals. We are responsible for supporting teachers and staff, and for providing all students with a high-quality education. Unfortunately, the environment we have had to work in the last 10 years has demoralized some of the best educators in

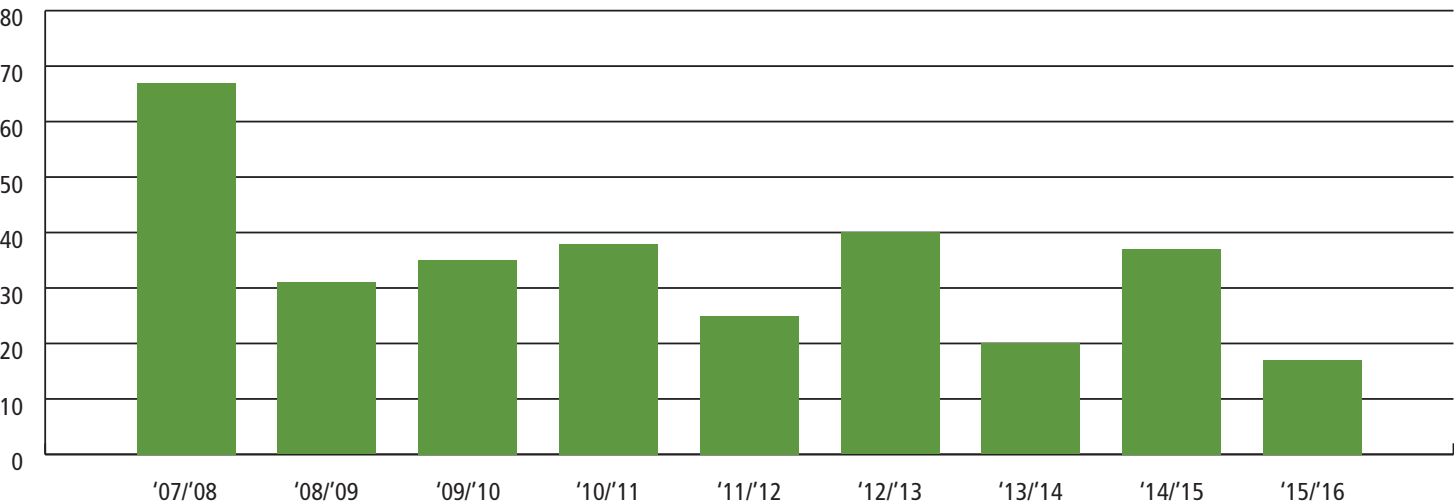
America and created this high turnover.”

Authoritative studies have shown that frequent removals of principals also can have an impact on teacher retention and performance—and it can take up to three years for a new principal to regain lost ground in student performance that often follows the departure of a school’s principal.

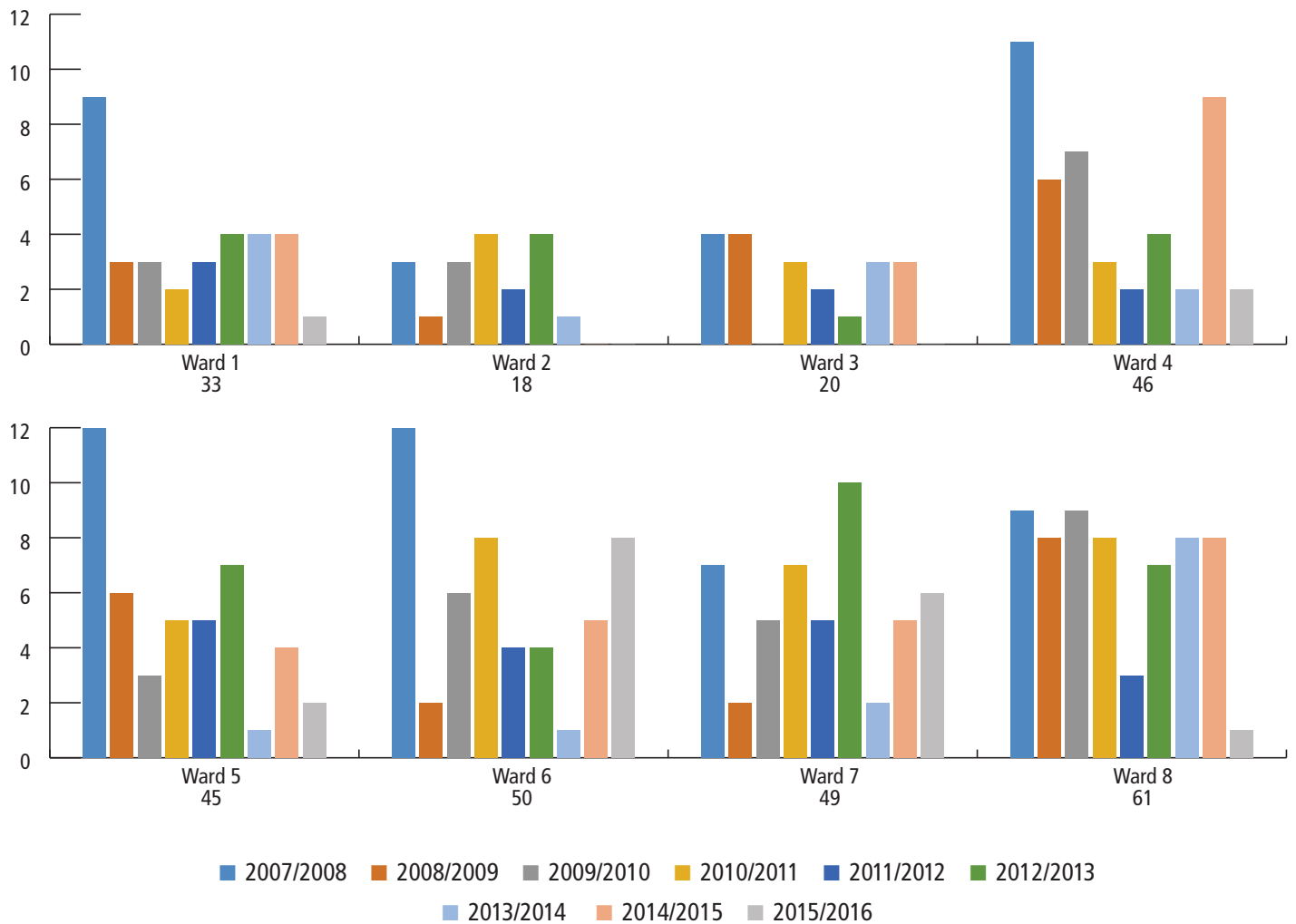
“Research has shown that high principal turnover often leads to greater teacher turnover which, in turn, can have a negative impact on student achievement and other schooling outcomes as well as increase fiscal costs,” said Ed Fuller, associate professor in the Education Policy Studies Department at Penn State University, in a commentary written for the Albert Shanker Institute.

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Number of Principal Turnovers: SY 2007–2016



## Number of Principal Turnovers by Ward: SY 2007–2016



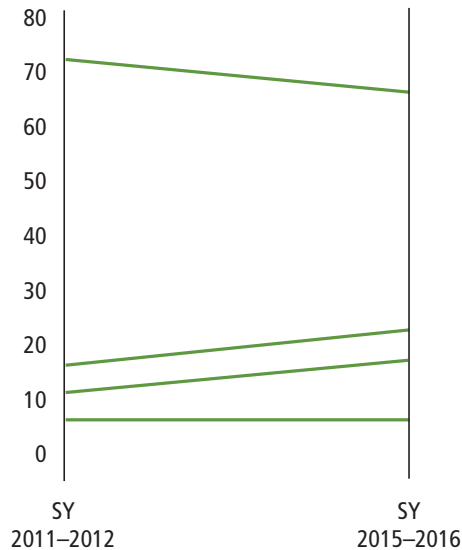
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“Emerging research and theory has found that principal turnover has direct negative effects on student- and school-level achievement, and that the strongest impact appears immediately after turnover occurs,” Fuller added. “Regular principal turnover can lead to teachers not investing in any change efforts, and learning to simply ‘wait [principals] out.’ As a result, it also decreases the probability of school improvement. Thus, research suggests that principals must be in place at least five years for the full implementation of a large-scale change effort, including the recruitment, retention and capacity-building of staff.”

*The CSO data shows lower-income wards in the District experienced the greatest effects of principal turnovers.*

*“Perhaps principals are being made the ‘fall guys’ in some of the toughest schools in the nation,” said Jefferson. “It is easier to blame people than provide the needed resources for success. Our research highlights the disparities in changes between the wards and the role other factors, including race and income, have in evoking positive changes.”*

## Student Demographics of D.C. Public Schools



Lower-income wards experienced the greatest effects of principal turnovers. According to Census 2011–2015 ACS five-year estimates, the median household incomes in Wards 7 and 8, east of the Anacostia River, are \$39,165 and \$30,910, respectively. In Wards 2 and 3, located in some of the city’s most affluent areas, reported median household incomes are \$100,388 and \$112,873, respectively. Additionally, schools in Wards 2 and 3 experienced the least turnover.

In a predominantly minority school system, the District of Columbia Public Schools reported that more than 70 percent of its students qualified for free or reduced lunch.

In the District, five schools experienced five principal changes in the last nine years. In addition, there were 32 schools with three or more principal changes.

A 2014 report by the School Leaders Network titled “CHURN: The High Cost of Principal Turnover,” said students and teachers are bearing significant, unnecessary costs from heightened principal turnover—or churn—because little is being done to provide principals with reasonable support after their second year in the position.

The report was the first to reveal the litany of losses—including critical education resources, disruptions to classrooms and weakened student-learning opportunities—that are occurring because America’s principals leave their jobs at a rate higher than nearly all other white-collar professions.

The study found that the job of principal is too complex and too isolating, and school leaders lack the ongoing support and development required to maintain and foster a long-term commitment. “Principals are being

thrown into the deep end of the pool; once they move into their second or third year on the job, they are generally left to lead and learn in isolation,” said Jean-Claude Brizard, former CEO of Chicago Public Schools.

According to the CHURN report:

- A minimal reduction in principal turnover rates could save U.S. school districts \$163 million annually.
- Keeping the same school leaders in place for years has positive effects on student achievement, particularly at high-poverty schools, as principals constitute one-quarter of the total school influence affecting a child’s academic performance.
- The negative effect of high principal turnover on student performance reveals itself the year after the vacancy, and it can take the next principal up to three years to regain positive momentum in math and English language arts performance. ■

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*“Our children can’t succeed in this environment,” said Jefferson. “Principals are the leaders of the schools [to which] they are assigned. Principal turnovers disrupt continuity. It is time for the community to find ways to better attract and retain the leaders we need to make our schools better and offer our children the opportunities they deserve.”*

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# Puerto Rico Set to Close Hundreds of Schools Amid Financial Crisis

In a move that will displace nearly 30,000 public school students, Puerto Rico is set to close 179 of its schools due to an economic crisis—the largest mass closure in the island’s history.



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*“The adults are trying to cover for their mistakes on the backs of children and, essentially, harming the future of the populace of the island.”*

—Julian Vasquez Heilig

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“We have a fiscal crisis and few resources, and we’ve spent 10 years handing out nearly \$3 billion in a system that hardly has any books,” said Puerto Rico’s Education Secretary Julia Keleher. “We cannot keep doing what we’re doing, because we don’t have the resources.”

The move will save only \$7 million, while Puerto Rico’s public debt is \$73 billion, leading opponents of the plan to voice their objections.

“The problem is that 2,635 school teachers are going to be affected because they are going to be relocated in other schools,” said Domingo Madera, president of Educadores Puertorriqueños en Acción, Inc. (EPA), AFSA Local 105.

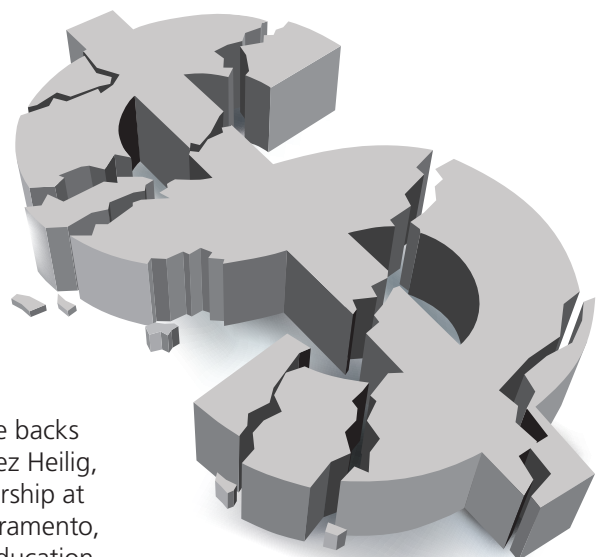
“More than 2,000 teachers are going to be out for the next school year beginning in August. It is a terrible decision in which the students, teachers

and school principals are going to be impacted in their communities,” said Madera.

There is speculation the proposed cuts could go deeper, as an oversight board appointed to guide the U.S. territory back to fiscal health has recommended closing approximately 300 schools. The recommendations also mandate two furlough days per month for teachers, and four furlough days per month for support staff.

“Maybe the priority shouldn’t be to close schools and balance the budget on the backs of children,” said Julian Vasquez Heilig, a professor of education leadership at California State University, Sacramento, whose work has focused on education in Puerto Rico.

“The adults are trying to cover for their mistakes on the backs of children and, essentially, harming the future of the populace of the island,” Heilig said. ■





# Grieving Students: Three Things to Know About Death by Suicide

School staff face unique issues and challenges when supporting students who are grieving a death by suicide. Survivors of suicide experience strong feelings that may limit their ability to put into words those many mixed feelings they experience. A sensitive understanding of their needs is essential when a member of the school community has died in this way.

Here are three things every education professional should know:

**1. *It's good to talk.*** Talking about suicide will not make people who wouldn't otherwise have thought of harming themselves seriously consider doing so. It is important to offer students, as well as staff, opportunities to talk about their thoughts, feelings and responses. Use the phrase "death by suicide." It shows students you are prepared to talk honestly with them. Prior to doing so, ensure facts are verified and that the family has given permission to share information about the death. Never refer to a "successful suicide."

**2. *Focus on the person, not the death.*** In conversations with students, it's useful to bring more focus to remembering what made the person who died special, and less to the details of the death. Acknowledge that strong feelings among survivors are common and natural. Encourage students to talk with a parent or other trusted adult

if they are considering harming themselves, or if they think someone they know might be thinking about suicide. Identify professionals such as school counselors, nurses, psychologists or social workers with whom students may talk. Be sure that needed mental health supports are available over the days and months following the death.

**3. *Keep memorialization informal and personal.*** Formal recognition or a large memorial event can add a glamorous or romantic quality to the death. This, in turn, might make suicide seem more attractive to other students. Those at increased risk include students experiencing depression, substance abuse or other mental health concerns, those engaged in attention-seeking behaviors, or those having experienced the loss of a family member or friend by suicide. Ideally, all student deaths within the school will be handled the same way.

It's important not to invite anonymous comments about the deceased on websites or posters. Negative comments may appear. Some people may look to blame the deceased or others for the death. In addition, if a student anonymously expresses an intention of self-harm, there is no way to follow up or provide assistance.

You can find additional guidance at the Coalition to Support Grieving Students ([www.grievingstudents.org](http://www.grievingstudents.org)), of which AFSA is a member. Find sample scripts for discussing suicide with students of different developmental levels, videos of education professionals who have had to cope with a suicide in their school, and guidance to help prevent additional or cluster suicides. ■

# AFSA Makes It Easy to Advocate from Anywhere: Home, Phone or in Person

You don't need to be a lobbyist or trek to Capitol Hill to have your voice heard; there are things you can do right from your home and locally to advocate for your causes. You can be an advocate from anywhere—and you don't need to be a policy expert.

## **Attend a town hall meeting.**

Attending a town hall gathering is a great way to meet your member of Congress at home to talk about the issues you care about in an open and informal way. Go to the individual websites of your senators and members of Congress to find their recess schedules. If there are opportunities to meet with them in their district offices, be sure to schedule an appointment. If they're holding town halls, sign up to attend and go prepared to share your day-to-day experience as school leaders, highlighting the importance of funding for specialized professional development to improve school climate, support teachers and ultimately improve student learning.

## **Meet in the district office.**

Meeting with your member locally is critically important to establishing and/or maintaining a relationship and ensuring your issues continue to be heard by the member and his/her staff. While members of Congress spend a great deal of time in D.C., they all have local offices with staff well versed in local and federal issues. American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA) members are encouraged to schedule meetings with the education staff in district offices on a continuing basis to discuss the ways that Title II, Part A, which provides funding for principal-specific professional development, benefit them, and to express the need for continued federal investments in the program. The stories and examples you share and the

concerns you address will be relayed to the representative by district staff, having the same effect as a meeting on Capitol Hill. In fact, there is more of a chance to build a good relationship with the staff in district offices, as there is more opportunity to schedule frequent visits. If you need talking points or help understanding federal policy issues, AFSA is able to provide material and leave-behinds for your meeting.

## **Advocate from home or by phone.**

Technology makes it easy to be an advocate and social media has the power to amplify a message, especially when thousands of people make a message go viral. Nowadays, senators and representatives pay close attention to social media and often respond to the



issues that get significant traction. School leaders and principals have the power to raise awareness about the need to support professional development specifically for principals, and can stress the importance of continuing to fund Title II, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act. You can advocate from home or from your phone by sending a prewritten letter directly to Congress, posting on members' Facebook pages, or tweeting to your members using these sample tweets:

- Fund #TitleIIA @[Senators and Reps]

- #FundTitleIIA, it is critical for school leaders and principals to do their jobs effectively; cuts threaten this ability
- Millions of school leaders depend on #TitleIIA to improve schools and instruction in the classroom...fully #FundTitleIIA
- #ESSA allows states to use 3% of #TitleIIA funds for PD for principals; cutting decreases the chances to seize this opportunity

Feeling old school? Submitting an op-ed to a local paper about your job as a school leader and the ways Title

II, Part A benefits you is also a great way to raise awareness about the impact of cutting federal funding for the program. Members of Congress still read their local papers to find out about the issues affecting their constituents!

Remember, your elected officials are serving in Congress to represent you and your concerns—it is important they hear from you regularly and via different methods and media. AFSA is grateful for your continuing advocacy and is committed to amplifying your voice as a school leader at the national level. ■

## The Benefits of Investing in AFSA's PAC

Our political action committee is an extremely critical benefit of AFSA membership given today's tumultuous political climate. The American Federation of School Administrators, AFL-CIO PAC (AFSA PAC) provides direct support to federal candidates to obtain elected positions to help improve the livelihoods of school leaders, the students they serve and their families. Specifically, the AFSA PAC supports candidates who pledge to fight for quality public schools, early childhood education, collective bargaining rights

and organized labor, and meaningful professional development for principals, assistant principals and school supervisors—for the tools education professionals need to provide America's youth with the highest-quality education possible.

At a time when the administration and Congress continue to disinvest in public education and enact policies that undermine the American public school system, it is critically important for the AFSA PAC to be adequately supported by

our membership, and for our unified interests to be advanced, not hurt, by legislation at the federal level. Your contributions go a long way in supporting political candidates who share AFSA's beliefs about public education and the importance of great school leaders.

AFSA members can contribute to the national PAC by sending a personal check made out to "AFSA PAC" to 1101 17th St., N.W., Suite 408, Washington, D.C. 20036. Your canceled check will serve as your receipt. ■





# Meet the 2017 AFSA Scholarship Winners

AFSA awards five \$2,500 college tuition scholarships every year to outstanding high school seniors. This competitive scholarship contest is exclusively for the children of AFSA members. The General Executive Board selects the winners based on academic excellence, passion for volunteerism and display of exceptional work ethic.



## Catalina Zacarias

**AFSA Member: Heather Zacarias**  
**AFSA Local 79, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

Catalina Zacarias is a graduate of Oklahoma City's Classen School of Advanced Studies. She is a member of the National Honors Society and International Key Club, which have given her many opportunities to serve her community. A few of her goals are to become a physical therapist, work in Third World countries and to always keep music a part of her life. Catalina graduated as a valedictorian and will attend Oklahoma Baptist University in the fall, majoring in pre-allied health and rehabilitation services.



## Klara Wichterle

**AFSA Member: Suzanne Ort**  
**AFSA Local 1, New York City**

Klara Wichterle was born and raised in New York City, but also spent time in the Czech Republic, where her family is from. She loves to play tennis, explore places to eat around the city and ride her bike. Klara wants to study global public health and is involved in a program to help increase access to education for girls in rural India, an issue she hopes to continue working on. Klara graduated from the Bronx High School of Science and will attend Brown University in the fall.





## Hope Robertson

**AFSA Member: Jean Robertson**  
**AFSA Local 3, San Francisco**

Hope Robertson, a student leader at Mission High School in San Francisco, has thrived within the diversity that makes Mission a unique urban school. She continually made connections with a broad range of her fellow students, participating in the Gay Straight Alliance, the Buddy Club (fostering inclusion for students with special needs), the Student Advisory Committee and Surf Club, among others. She especially enjoys science. Hope plans to attend Portland State University in the fall.



## Amanda Tudda

**AFSA Member: Frederick Tudda**  
**AFSA Local 1,**  
**New York City**

Amanda Tudda graduated from Notre Dame Academy High School with honors, and has been accepted into the physician assistant program at Wagner College in Staten Island. Amanda is also a recipient of Wagner's Presidential Scholarship. Amanda loves working with children, and has volunteered numerous hours at various New York City elementary schools. It is her desire to combine this with her passion for medicine and specialize in pediatrics.



## Taylor Bowen

**AFSA Member: Rebecca Bowen**  
**AFSA Local 84,**  
**Calvert County, Maryland**

Taylor Bowen graduated from Calvert High School in Prince Frederick, Maryland. She is a member of the Biomedical Sciences Pathway and plans on continuing her education in the medical science field. She served as captain for both the field hockey and softball teams, and is a member of the National Honors Society and National Technical Honors Society. Taylor also participates in HeartFelt, a church-based organization where community members fill backpacks with food for local lower-income children. Taylor will be attending York College of Pennsylvania in the fall to study nursing.

# Leroy Gaines: A Principal of Many Hats



It takes a special type of leader to take on the role as principal in a high-need school community where the environment is constantly shifting. Leroy Gaines, principal of Acorn Woodland Elementary School in Oakland, California, exemplifies just that.

Gaines, a member of Unified Administrators of Oakland Schools (UAOS), AFSA Local 83, has been leading Acorn Woodland Elementary for seven years now. The school constantly struggles with being understaffed and not having enough resources. Even though Gaines faces these challenges, he goes above and beyond in fulfilling his principal duties. From fixing a leak in a classroom to subbing for a teacher, Gaines wears multiple hats on a daily basis.

Gaines additionally has taken on a new role as executive principal in the 2016–2017 school year. He was among five school site leaders chosen by UAOS and the Oakland Unified School District superintendent to perform additional educational leadership responsibilities. These candidates demonstrated strength in building staff/community relationships, coaching site leaders, closing academic

achievement gaps, transforming culture and climate, and engaging the Common Core curriculum, as well as knowledge of special education needs, budget processes and navigating OUSD central office systems.

Executive principals were chosen also for their demonstrated social-emotional and leadership capability in building adult and student learners,

**“I’m trying to create a learning school, where we’re able to try things out and be innovative and see what works with our students.”**

as well as fostering adult-to-adult and adult-to-student relationships. The executive principal position mentors, coaches other site leaders and serves on districtwide projects. So far as an executive principal, Gaines has had the opportunity to go to Spain to help recruit teachers for the Oakland school district’s Spanish-language program.

While he contributes time and effort to the whole district, Gaines also works hard to innovate his school. He’s exploring a new Japanese curriculum for math instruction by sending teachers to Japan to learn the curriculum. “I’m trying to create a learning school, where we’re able to try things out and be innovative and see what works with our students. We want to be able to share what we’re doing with other schools so that we all can be successful,” said Gaines.

Gaines has helped his school reach many accomplishments. Acorn Woodland Elementary was recognized as a California Distinguished School in 2012, which is the highest honor a California school can receive based on its state assessments. The school also received a seal of recognition from the Human Rights Coalition in 2014, for providing socio-emotional diversity and an LGBT curriculum.

“As a leader, it’s tough, but I’m lucky to be surrounded by a wonderful team of teachers and staff who are so passionate about what they do. It helps you get by the most difficult times,” said Gaines. ■

*To nominate an AFSA member for the next Member Spotlight, please email [nspina@afsaadmin.org](mailto:nspina@afsaadmin.org).*

# Life may be left to chance...

**but that doesn't mean YOU should be left to take chances.**



As an AFSA member you have the opportunity to take advantage of a variety of insurance plans designed to help you protect yourself, your loved ones and your financial future from life's uncertainties. AFSA has a full spectrum of products available to you, so you can choose plans that fit your lifestyle and your budget to help keep what is most important to you protected. And all are offered at highly competitive rates with the award-winning customer service that our valued members and their families deserve.

## **AFSA sponsors the following plans:**

- **Group Term Life Insurance**
- **Disability Income Insurance Plan**
- **Short-Term Medical**
- **Group Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance<sup>1</sup>**
- **Long-Term Care Insurance**
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**American Federation of  
School Administrators**  
AFSA, AFL-CIO





## USA Today Education Writer Meets with AFSA GEB to Discuss Gaming in Schools

Technology is everywhere in education and it's become much more than iPads or Chromebooks. Textbooks have become digital, and the implementation of bring-your-own device (BYOD) in schools shows signs that could help improve productivity and enhance learning.

Educational video games are becoming more present not only in the student's home, but in the classroom as well. Teachers and school administrators have access to an endless selection of educational games that explore such topics as history, mathematics, foreign languages, and reading and writing.



Greg Toppo, USA Today's national K-12 education writer, met with AFSA's General Executive Board members to discuss his new book and the evolution of technology and video games in the classroom.

In "The Game Believes In You: How Digital Play Can Make Our Kids Smarter," Toppo argues that video games are poised to transform individual schools and education as a whole.

"Almost as soon as I began poking around this topic, I found teachers who were trying to sneak games and

game-like thinking into classrooms—not because they loved games, but because they loved children and wanted something better for them," he said. "The results are this book."

Toppo found that games focus, inspire and reassure people in ways that many teachers can't. "We are just now discovering what something like games [and digital technology in general] can do."

Games give people a chance to learn at their own pace, take risks, cultivate deeper understanding, fail and want to try again right away and, ultimately, succeed in ways that too often elude them in the classroom.

"Principals and other school-based administrators can play a vital role in supporting teachers as they test out new ways to allow students to engage more in school," said Leonard Pugliese, AFSA secretary-treasurer and executive director of City Association of Supervisors and Administrators (CASA), AFSA Local 20. "When technology is introduced into the classroom, teachers are learning how to teach with tablets, iPads and SMART Boards®, while students are using these tools to shape how they learn."

Toppo says it is important for school administrators to advocate for their teachers who experiment with educational games within the classroom.

"You are a leader and you need to think about this stuff as a leader," he said. "Trust your teachers to do what's right." ■

## Membership Has Its Benefits

Being an AFSA member has a variety of benefits. Whether it is union liability insurance, legal defense protection, or health coverage and discounts, AFSA always will be there for our members. We take pride in our union when members show their appreciation toward us. Our organization will continue to stand in solidarity and advocate for our nation's public schools and school leaders.

AFSA has approved a legal grant for the Taylor Principals Association (TPA) in Michigan to help with the cost of an arbitration scheduled for one of their members who was terminated wrongfully.

***"I am grateful for AFSA for providing us with the funds to help us win this case," said Patricia Kaechele, principal of West Middle School and TPA president. "Over the past few years our union funds have dwindled due to closing schools and a decline in membership. Without AFSA's generosity and support, we may not have been able to assist our member during this time."***

"I am in full belief we will have a positive outcome for all involved," Kaechele said. ■



# CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS' NEW SPECIAL ED FUNDING CREATES DISCRIMINATION IN NONWHITE COMMUNITIES

*continued from page 1*

CPAA is calling on the residents of Chicago to put pressure on Mayor Emanuel to fully fund special education in all school communities, and end the district budget schemes and IEP violations that delay and deny services to students across Chicago.

"We must not quarrel over the scraps they throw to our children with one hand while the other is doling out multimillion-dollar contracts, tax breaks and interest payments to the self-serving, profit-driven corporate interests they serve," said CPAA President Troy LaRaviere. "We must see our common destiny as Chicagoans and work together to build a city and a school system that invests heavily in the realization of potential in every single child."

Other report findings include:

- Four majority white schools accounted for 2.5% of the 158 schools submitting appeals. Yet the \$828,000 awarded to these four

schools accounted for 23.5% of the total awarded to all schools.

- The \$828,000 combined total granted to four majority white schools is more than the \$760,470 combined total granted to 74 majority African American schools.
- 50 percent of majority white schools making appeals received an amount greater than \$100,000, while only 1 percent of appeals from majority black schools received greater than that amount.
- CPS approved the appeals of the 10 schools with the highest percentage of white students to a total of \$1,033,000. At the same time, not one cent was awarded to the 10 schools serving the fewest white students.
- CPS officials told principals at some majority black and Latino schools to fire their assistant principals and fund their special education needs with the money they would have spent on school leadership. Majority

white schools were allowed to keep their assistant principals.

- CPS officials approved the appeals of the 10 wealthiest schools (those with the lowest percentage of low-income students) to a total of \$963,000. At the same time, not one cent was awarded to the 10 poorest schools (those with the highest percentage of low-income students).
- The amounts awarded to the schools serving the 54 poorest communities (\$976,219) would have to be added together in order to surpass the \$963,000 awarded by CPS to the schools serving the 10 wealthiest communities.
- Survey data indicated that more than 200 schools may have failed even to file an appeal because of intimidation by CPS officials. ■

*Troy LaRaviere is president of Chicago Principals & Administrators Association, AFSA Local 2*

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*CPAA is calling on the residents of Chicago to put pressure on Mayor Emanuel to fully fund special education in all school communities, and end the district budget schemes and IEP violations that delay and deny services to students across Chicago.*

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# FY17 Funding Partially Cuts Title II, Part A While Trump's Budget Totally Guts It

Seven months after the fiscal year began, House and Senate negotiators finally clinched a deal on FY17 appropriations, which the president signed into law the first week in May. While President Trump had proposed to cut in half the \$2.3 billion Title II, Part A program, which supports principal recruitment, induction, mentoring and professional development, the final FY17 compromise cuts only \$294 million from Title II, Part A, which represents only a 12.5 percent cut.

The fight to save this program is not over yet, as President Trump proposed to eliminate the program entirely in the FY18 budget proposal released just a few weeks after he signed the final FY17 spending bill.

Given the recent cuts by Congress and the total elimination of the program under Trump's proposal, AFSA is deeply concerned with the fate of the program in FY18, and is working closely with other national organizations advocating for Title IIA to ensure Congress understands the critical support the measure provides to school leaders. In response to the FY17 funding bill, AFSA, along with the National Association of

Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), New Leaders, ASCD and Learning Forward, issued the following statement:

*"We are extremely disappointed by Congressional negotiators' decision to cut \$294 million from FY17 funding for the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants block grant. As a result of this deep and painful reduction, each state and school district will have to strip 12.5% of funds from districts' efforts to recruit, induct and train our nation's educators. If Congress*

*and the Administration are serious about improving educational practice and increasing student achievement, slashing federal spending for our educators' professional needs is the wrong course. We call on Congress and the Administration to restore these dollars in FY18 and make this critical program whole again."*

In response to Trump's budget, the same groups said:

*"We adamantly oppose President Trump's FY 2018 budget proposal to completely eliminate funding for Title II, Part A, the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program. Eliminating funding for this program, which was authorized in the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), will devastate state and school district budgets nationwide. If approved by Congress, this cut will hinder states' and local school districts' ability to implement ESSA plans with fidelity; curtail critical professional learning and leadership initiatives aimed at supporting teachers, school leaders and principals; and cause student learning to suffer unnecessarily."*



*"We call on Congress to reject this shortsighted and damaging budget proposal by President Trump. Rather than eliminating funding for this crucial program, we urge Congress to restore the \$294 million cut in the FY 2017 Omnibus Appropriations Act and provide funding at the full authorized level of \$2.295 billion in FY 2018."*

**"If Congress and the Administration are serious about improving educational practice and increasing student achievement, slashing federal spending for our educators' professional needs is the wrong course."**

Aside from Title IIA, one of the most interesting negotiations in this budget cycle involved Title IV, Part A, the new flexible block grant the Every Student Succeeds Act established to support some 25 previous programs and their varied subject areas. Called the Student Support and Academic Achievement Grant (SSAE), this program authorizes \$1.6 billion in formula grants for districts to spend on health and safety programs, well-rounded academic programs and education technology. However, in its first funding year, appropriators agreed to a \$400 million FY17 appropriation, which is roughly one-quarter of its authorization level. Recognizing that this low funding level could not support meaningful formula allocations to districts, Congress offered states the option in FY17 only of operating the

program as a competition. Additionally, Congress elected to increase, from 15 percent to 25 percent, the statutory cap on expenditures for technology infrastructure, which includes hardware, software and equipment for states that opted to conduct competitions. AFSA hopes that states and districts will make meaningful investments in the programs that Title IV, Part A dollars were meant to support, including well-rounded programs, safe and healthy schools and the effective use of technology. Before states and districts have even received funding for the first year of this program, Trump completely eliminated funding for Title IV, Part A in his proposal.

The final FY17 bill did contain some good news for education, though. The \$1.16 billion afterschool program

saw an increase of \$25 million despite President Trump's threats to completely eliminate it, while the charter schools program saw only a slight increase despite Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos' stated desire to expand charters. In Trump's FY18 proposal, however, which prioritized funding for school choice programs, afterschool programs are completely eliminated, while charters are increased by \$153 million. AFSA will continue to advocate against the elimination of and harmful cuts to programs that support public schools, educators and our students. ■





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