



**2025**

# **NAESP-NASSP Federal Legislative Agenda**



The strength of our nation lies in the quality of the education we provide for our children. As school leaders, we believe in the American promise of an education system that is open to all and meets the needs of every student to help them fulfill their potential. We believe there is an essential federal role in these efforts and that federal lawmakers play a critical part in fulfilling this promise by providing guidance, oversight, and resources to ensure that we have great educators in every school and classroom to provide all our children with the opportunities to realize their potential and be their best.

We urge members of Congress to focus on strengthening our public school systems to meet increased global competition for a well-educated and well-trained workforce. Congress and the administration should uphold their commitment to them by bolstering investment in public schools and reject any proposals to eliminate the U.S. Department of Education, reduce funding to federal pre-K–12 programs, or divert taxpayer dollars towards voucher programs which only serve a very small subset of students.

NAESP and NASSP **strongly oppose** legislation like the **Educational Choice for Children Act (S.292, H.R. 817)** that would divert \$10 billion per year in tax dollars to private schools and families who homeschool. School voucher programs are wasteful, ineffective, and unaccountable programs that lead to worse educational outcomes:

- Clear and compelling research shows no academic advantage for students using vouchers to attend private schools compared with students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds in public schools. In fact, studies show that students using school vouchers have lower academic achievement than comparable students in public schools.
- Private schools are not required to meet state-determined accountability requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). They frequently do not have to meet any baseline standard for teacher qualifications, student testing, financial accountability, or even safe facilities.
- Americans overwhelmingly oppose school vouchers. A 2024 national exit poll completed by the nonpartisan Alliance for Excellent Education shows that approximately 70% or three out of four families prefer supporting public schools over increasing funding for school vouchers.
- This past fall, voters in Nebraska, Kentucky, and Colorado resoundingly rejected vouchers or measures to allow for vouchers, continuing a decades long trend where voters across the country have rejected the creation or expansion of private school vouchers every time they have been proposed.

Instead of diverting public funding away from public schools, we urge Congress and the administration to maintain investment in the institutions that serve 90% of all students. As representatives and senators consider Fiscal Year 2025 and 2026 appropriations, NAESP and NASSP request support for the critical ESSA programs below that will reduce shortages in the K–12 educator professions, improve the effectiveness and quality of educators, increase student academic achievement and career readiness, and improve school safety.



# NAESP/NASSP Federal K-12 Education Budget Priorities

## TITLE I GRANTS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

- **FY25 request: \$18.407 billion** (FY24 received \$18.407 billion)
  - » Provides financial support to local education agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children receive support. Any reduction to Title I grants would hurt the most vulnerable students and school districts.
  - » NAESP and NASSP strongly support maintaining or increasing Title I funding as the pillar of federal support to K-12 schools.

## TITLE II, PART A

- **FY25 request: \$2.19 billion** (FY24 received \$2.19 billion)
  - » Provides formula grants to states and districts to strengthen professional development opportunities for teachers and principals, making them more effective educators and more likely to stay in the profession.
  - » Helps districts fund principal residencies, expand job-embedded and cohort-based professional learning, and boost mentorship opportunities for aspiring principals.

## TITLE IV, PART A, STUDENT SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT GRANTS

- **FY25 request: \$1.38 billion** (FY24 received \$1.38 billion)
  - » This flexible ESSA block grant program supports schools in funding activities in three broad areas: 1) Providing students with a well-rounded education, including music, the arts, social studies, and computer science; 2) Supporting the safety and health of students; and 3) Encouraging the effective use of technology in schools.
  - » Title IV has become a key source of funding for school-based mental health and safety funding in recent years and is critical to ongoing violence prevention efforts..

## IDEA STATE GRANTS

- **FY25 request: \$14.214 billion** (FY24 received \$14.214 billion)
  - » Assists state and LEAs in educating children with disabilities.
  - » Supports implementing, expanding, and improving access to high-quality special education services.
  - » Current funding is only 13% of the national average per-pupil expenditure, far below the 40% goal when IDEA was enacted.

## CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) STATE GRANTS

- **FY25 request: \$1.44 billion** (FY24 received \$1.44 billion)
  - » Provides support for states and communities to implement high-quality CTE programs to meet the demands of the 21st century economy and workforce.
  - » According to Department of Education statistics, almost all high school students participate in CTE, and more than half take three or more credits. Additional data also show that students participating in CTE programs have graduation rates of more than 90%.



## HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START

- **FY25 request: \$12.272 billion** (FY24 received \$12.272 billion)
  - » Head Start helps prepare children to succeed in school by providing early learning, health, and development services to families with children from birth to age 5.
  - » The program currently serves close to 800,000 children.
  - » Quality preschool programs provide the academic and social-emotional foundation for a strong start and students' long-term school success.

## PROJECT SERV (SCHOOL EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE) GRANTS

- **FY25 request: \$25 million** (FY24 received \$5 million)
  - » Project SERV funds critical, immediate emergency support to schools that have suffered shootings and other violent or traumatic events. While a small program, Project SERV funding has proved invaluable to school leaders who must lead recovery after the unthinkable.

NAESP and NASSP also strongly support legislation like the **Keep Our Promise to America's Children and Teachers (PACT) Act (S.343, H.R. 869)** that provides a realistic mechanism to fully fund IDEA and Title I. When IDEA was enacted, Congress promised to provide 40% of the national average per-pupil expenditure to states and districts to help cover the additional costs of educating students with disabilities. The federal government has never come close to meeting this goal and currently provides only 13% of the average per-pupil expenditure. Similarly, Title I has never been fully funded and the chronic underinvestment in both programs has left schools unable to adequately accommodate the needs of all the children eligible for their services.

In addition to maintaining adequate funding for these critical ESSA programs via congressional appropriations, NAESP and NASSP urge Congress to address these critical challenges facing our nation's public schools:

## Educator Shortages and the Principal Pipeline

- Widespread shortages among principals and school support staff professionals continue to grow in states across the country.
  - » Nearly 9 in 10 public school districts reported struggling to hire teachers this school year, according to the [National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\) "School Pulse Panel."](#)
  - » Principal turnover more than doubled to 16% by the end of the 2021–22 school year, with roughly 19,000 more school leaders leaving than the previous year. Departure rates were even higher for high poverty (23%) and rural districts (32%), according to a [2023 RAND research brief survey](#).
  - » In 2021, the Wallace Foundation released its research on How Principals Affect Students and Schools and found that a "review of two decades of evidence—including six quantitative, longitudinal studies involving 22,000 principals—found that 'principals have large effects on student learning, comparable even to the effects of individual teachers.'" Other research also suggests that schools led by high-quality principals have lower teacher turnover rates.
  - » A 2023 NAESP survey found that 52% of principals were planning on retiring within the next four years and 75% envisioned retiring within the next six years.



- Congress can address these challenges by:
  - » Bolstering investments in the educator pipeline to attract educators to the profession, strengthening pre-service preparation, and expanding professional development opportunities to retain high-quality principals.
  - » Improving financial incentives for principals by adding school leadership as a job role eligible for existing public service loan forgiveness programs.
  - » Maintaining the Title II funding that supports on-the-job coaching and other professional development opportunities for principals.
  - » Enacting legislation and new federal funding that will support states and districts' ability to increase teacher and school leader compensation.

## Improving School Mental Health, Wellness, and Safety Resources

- Student and educator mental health and school safety continues to be a defining issue across the country.
  - » A national NBC news survey found that 93% of K-12 principals say that youth mental health has worsened in recent years.
  - » According to NASSP's 2022 survey of students and school leaders, three-quarters of school leaders (73%) and students (74%) reported they needed help with their mental or emotional health the previous year. One-half of school leaders also reported student behavior is worse than before the pandemic, with more than 80% concerned about bullying and/or drug use in their school.
  - » A 2022 RAND survey found that 86% of principals named supporting their teachers' mental health as a source of stress.
  - » Preteens (8- to 12-year-olds) use or watch screens approximately five and a half hours per day with teens spending up to 9 hours per day on them. Some screen time has benefits but excessive screen time can be harmful.
  - » Chronic absenteeism rates decreased to 28% last school year, but most schools with large concentrations of FARMS eligible students have extreme absentee rates (+30% absences).
- Congress can address these challenges by:
  - » Significantly increasing federal support to promote the physical and emotional well-being of educators and students as a critically important factor in the safety, security, and comprehensive success of students.
  - » Empowering principals who are uniquely positioned to leverage trauma-informed schoolwide strategies to address the enormous wave of social, emotional, and mental health needs among students and staff.
  - » Increasing the reimbursement rates for school lunches by 40 cents and school breakfasts by 15 cents.
  - » Preserving existing Medicaid funding levels to provide medically necessary services for students with disabilities.
  - » Increasing the number of school counselors, psychologists, and social workers, and supporting parent, student, and family engagement opportunities along with after-school programs.





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