

Your Voice in Washington

In July 2010, three of your association leaders represented your concerns on Capitol Hill in the 2010 NAESP Leadership Conference. Ernie Bentley, Teresa Dennis, Kimber Halliburton, and Dr. Nancy Meador traveled to Washington, D.C. and met with legislators to discuss legislation impacting education and the principalship.

Your association leaders met with Congressman Marsha Blackburn, Congressman Jim Cooper, Congressman Phillip Roe, Congressman Zach Wamp, Mr. David Cleary, Legislative Aide to Senator Lamar Alexander, and Mr. Ryan Berger, Legislative Aide to Senator Bob Corker.

Your representatives discussed critical issues and proposed bills such as the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA). The reauthorization of ESEA could potentially change the appearance and structure of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Each of the legislators our team met with believed the reauthorization would occur next year at the earliest. Most felt the reauthorization process would be lengthy and require a great deal of discussion between political parties.

Mr. David Cleary, Aide to Senator Alexander, stated the Senator certainly wants to support a bill “less punitive and more incentive based” to schools who are struggling to meet inaccessible NCLB benchmarks. Congressman Wamp would like to see more funding for Pre-K programs. Congressmen Blackburn, Cooper, and Roe believe the current NCLB targets are unrealistic and appear to believe in the current direction taken by Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education. Under Mr. Duncan’s leadership, momentum is emerging to concentrate efforts less on the current NCLB targets. The new push will be toward measures of success being determined by the number of K-12 graduates who leave our schools college ready.

The team also discussed concerns surrounding the evaluation of principals under the “First to the Top Act.” A 15 member team has been called by the state legislature to meet and develop a framework and protocols to evaluate teachers and principals. Evaluations of principals across the state will be based on academic growth of students as measured by achievement test results along with other measures. Student achievement scores will account for 50% of the principal’s and teacher’s evaluations (35% growth, 15% achievement).

Let your voice continue to be heard on current bills and other legislation impacting education and your work as a principal. Share your concerns with Kimber Halliburton, legislative liaison for the Tennessee Principals’ Association. Kimber can be reached via email at kimber.halliburton@mnps.org.

A team of leaders will be representing your concerns in February 2011 in Washington and in March at the state capitol.