

# 2024

## NASSP Principal Recovery Network (PRN)

### Legislative Agenda

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

Providing students and educators with mental health services and supports is a critical component of preventing violence and improving school climate, safety, and learning. Unfortunately, most schools and districts face a severe lack of funding to employ qualified full-time mental health professionals.

According to NASSP's 2022 "Survey of America's School Leaders and High School Students," three-quarters of school leaders (73%) and students (74%) reported they needed help with their mental or emotional health the previous year. Student mental health challenges can manifest themselves as behavioral issues including violence, putting further stress on educators who are already stretched too thin. According to the NASSP survey, one-half of school leaders reported that student behavior is worse than before the pandemic, with more than 80% concerned about bullying and/or drug use in their school.

The PRN commends Congress for passing the **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022**, providing much needed safety and mental health support to K–12 schools. The legislation was an important step, but more work remains for the federal government to fully address the magnitude of this issue.

### The PRN urges members of Congress to build on the success of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act and cosponsor/pass the following legislation to provide support for mental health, wellness, and safety in schools:

#### ◆ **MENTAL HEALTH OF EDUCATORS AND STAFF ACT** (S. 2530/H.R. 744)

- ◆ Modeled after the bipartisan Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act, the legislation requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education to identify and disseminate evidence-based best practices for preventing suicide and improving mental health and resiliency among educators and training for educators and school staff in appropriate strategies to promote their mental health.
- ◆ Establishes new grant programs to promote mental health and wellness support among the education professional workforce.
- ◆ Sponsors: Sen. Casey (D-PA) and Reps. Bonamici (D-OR), Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and Wild (D-PA)

#### ◆ **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR STUDENTS ACT** (S. 1884/H.R.3713)

- ◆ Provides \$130 million in competitive grants for schools, expanding the scope of Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) by providing on-site licensed mental health professionals in schools across the country.
- ◆ Sponsors: Sen. Smith (D-MN) and Rep. Napolitano (D-CA)

#### ◆ **TACTICAL RESPONSE IMPROVEMENT ACT**

- ◆ Ensures emergency call centers get the information they need to identify fake swatting calls to schools in real time using authenticated caller ID and location data, allowing law enforcement officers to respond appropriately and safely.
- ◆ Sponsor: Sen. Wyden (D-OR)

# Federal K–12 Education Budget Priorities

In addition to the bipartisan legislation outlined above, Congress must also adequately fund essential programs of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) through the normal annual appropriations process at levels that match the gravity of the ongoing safety, trauma, and mental health crisis in schools. Federal K–12 programs receive less today in inflation adjusted dollars than they did a decade ago. Students and educators have made immense sacrifices in recent years and should not suffer any further reductions in funding for training and services desperately needed.

## The PRN urges members of Congress to support funding for the following programs in FY 2025:

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

- ◆ **FY25 PRN request: \$25 million**

- ◆ FY24 received: \$5 million

- » Authorized under Title IV-F-3, Section 4631 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Project SERV grants funding for short-term and long-term education-related services for local educational agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) to help them recover from a violent or traumatic event.

### ◆ **TITLE II, PART A**

- ◆ **FY25 PRN request: \$2.4 billion**

- ◆ FY24 received: \$2.2 billion

- » Provides formula grants to states and districts to strengthen professional development opportunities for teachers and principals, making them more effective educators and also likely to stay in the profession.

- » Title II can be used by school districts to provide in-service training for school personnel on how to refer students affected by trauma, the use of referral mechanisms that effectively link such children to appropriate treatment and intervention services in the school and the community, and guidance on forming partnerships between schools and mental health providers. It provides key federal support for trauma-informed training of school staff, making them better prepared to identify threats, mitigate behavioral health issues, provide mental health assistance to students, and prevent violence.

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

- ◆ **FY25 PRN request: \$1.48 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.



Image courtesy of the U.S. Department of Education.

**FOUNDED IN APRIL 2019**, the NASSP Principal Recovery Network (PRN) is a national network of current and former school leaders who have experienced gun violence tragedies in their buildings and led in the aftermath of a shooting. Together, the PRN seeks to assist the next principal who endures a shooting by reaching out directly to their colleagues to provide much-needed support, share the combined wisdom of their experiences with the larger principal community through various outlets, assist schools during recovery, and advocate for national school safety enhancements and violence prevention programs.



For more information, visit [nassp.org/PRN](https://nassp.org/PRN).

To access and share the PRN “Guide to Recovery,” visit [nassp.org/prnguide](https://nassp.org/prnguide).