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Great Teaching and Leading for Great Schools Act

Improve Professional Development for Teachers and Principals to Increase Student Learning

Improving teacher and principal quality is critical for ensuring that all students can reach their full potential. However, our system for helping teachers and principals improve is falling short. Numerous studies have shown that most professional development is offered through one-time workshops, instead of providing teachers with opportunities to engage in meaningful, continuous professional learning.

Today more than ever, teachers deserve intensive, job-embedded professional development that is useful and relevant to their work. This can be achieved by building strong professional learning communities, offering multiple career paths for effective teachers to expand their reach, and ensuring teachers can collaborate to lesson plan and problem solve during the school day. Unfortunately, current law provides a menu of options for professional learning that are not based on evidence of effectiveness.

The Great Teaching and Leading for Great Schools Act:

- Advances a new definition of professional development in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that is based on research and best practices.
- Encourages professional learning strategies that involve the use of technology, peer networks, and protected release time for educators to engage in collaborative team-based learning multiple times per week.
- Ensures that educator input is included in the development, implementation, and revision of professional learning plans.
- Invests in the capacity of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders to evaluate and provide professional learning opportunities for teachers.
- Ensures that evaluation systems for teachers and principals are meaningfully connected to useful and relevant professional learning opportunities.
- Assists local educational agencies in developing educator advancement initiatives that promote professional growth and emphasize multiple career paths.
- Advances evidence-based professional learning strategies for principals to provide useful feedback, engage the community and partners, and foster professional learning communities.

This bill is supported by: Learning Forward, National Education Association, National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY), National Writing Project, New Schools Venture Fund, Third Way, Teach Plus, and WestED.