



Dear Educational Leaders –

The courage of AASA members continues to rise to the top. Our nation's outstanding school system leaders are showing the country that they are the best thought leaders in public education—true ambassadors for our nation's public schools.

Dan Domenech recently shared the launch of our Leaders Matter campaign designed to showcase the powerful contributions being made every day by the men and women leading our school districts. Fresh off last week's AASA advocacy conference, now is a great time to highlight the important ways that school superintendents are the epitome of an advocate, from working at the most local of levels in classrooms and schools to the broader work on state and federal policy. School superintendents and system leaders are uniquely positioned to advance their districts' needs and accomplishments. With AASA advocacy, one of my favorite things is to watch as AASA members testify before Congress. During these hearings, covering myriad topics, school superintendents serve primarily as educators, helping to highlight and bring to life the potential opportunities and obstacles of the policy or proposal being considered, and then advocating for the ways to further strengthen the policy.

Leaders Matter in our efforts on advocacy. Here's just a sampling of examples where school system leaders carried a voice for AASA membership at-large:



David Cox, superintendent of Allegany County (Md.) Public Schools, testified before the House Education and the Workforces Committee in November 2017 in a hearing that examined how the [opioid public health emergency](#) is affecting American families, communities and the economy.

[Read more.](#)



Gary Lilly, director of schools with Bristol (Tenn.) City Schools, [testified](#) before the House Education and the Workforce Committee in May 2018 in a hearing that discussed student privacy and the importance of protecting students' personally identifiable information (PII) and data.

[Read more.](#)



Gail Pletnick, former superintendent of the Dysart Unified School District in Surprise, Ariz., and the 2017-18 president of AASA, [testified](#) before the House Education and the Workforce Committee in July 2017 in a hearing that discussed the [progress of state implementation](#) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). She also testified before the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee in July 2016 in a hearing that focused on proposed regulations related to ESSA. [Read more.](#)



David R. Schuler, superintendent of Township High School District 214 in Arlington Heights, Ill., who is the 2018 National Superintendent of the Year and the 2015-16 president of AASA, [testified](#) before the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee in February 2016 in a hearing focused on education stakeholder perspectives in in ESSA implementation. [Read more.](#)



Paul "Vic" Wilson, executive director of the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS), and former superintendent of Hartselle City Schools in Hartselle, Ala., [testified](#) before the House Education and the Workforce Committee in February 2016 in a hearing designed to help members of the committee better understand what state and local leaders expect from the recently passed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). [Read more.](#)

There is no better voice representing superintendents before our elected officials than superintendents themselves. AASA members have proven—time and time again—that they are very responsive to "Calls to Action" when it comes to proposed changes to federal programs.

Whether on national, state or local levels, you — the leaders of your districts and communities—matter in the future of our children and our nation. Thank you for your service.

Join the conversation on Twitter at [#LeadersMatter](#), and share a story about the leaders that matter in your district, or about a leader that matters to you at <http://aasacentral.org/leadersmatter/>.

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