

Federal Relations Report – Carole McKittrick

The Montana delegation to the National Leaders Conference had a very successful visit. We were able to see both Senator Tester and Senator Daines. Congressman Zinke had originally said he did not have time to see us, but at the last minute showed up! Our conversations were very productive and were focused the new ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act), IDEA funding, Formula vs competitive funding and professional development specifically for principals. We asked that congress provide oversight of the implementation of ESSA so that it includes building capacity in systems to better recruit, prepare and support principals in the profession, shift accountability systems in a way that appropriately factors student growth measures, eliminate unnecessary state assessments and includes sound measures of “school quality” as accountability indicators that accurately reflect student and school success.

One of our main points was to ask congress to abide by the overall spending levels set forth by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. This includes support for funding increases for formula grants in the newly-authorized ESSA such as Title 1 and Title II part A state grants, to help schools meet the needs of disadvantaged students and strengthen educator capacity. It also includes support for funding for discretionary programs in ESSA, such as national activities in Title II and the School Leader Recruitment and Support program.