

The Best Start



We don't expect world-class athletes to compete without having had months of preparation. Therefore, why should we expect our nation's children to begin their educational experience without the constructive, high-quality "training" they need to become successful? All children deserve the same opportunities to start school ready to learn.

NAESP's 2005 book, *Leading Early Childhood Learning Communities: What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do*,

provides a synthesis of key findings on early childhood education and outlines the role principals play in leading and advocating for early learning opportunities. Since the release of the book, the conversations about providing students with high-quality early childhood education have steadily increased; and more states have placed the issue at the top of the agenda. According to Pre-K Now, between 2005 and 2008 state funding "for high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten increased by nearly \$2 billion nationally." Yet there are still millions of children who don't get the start they deserve. State-funded pre-K programs currently serve less than 20 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds and 10 states have no state-funded pre-K program at all.

This month's issue of *Principal* adds to the conversation about how principals can ensure that high-quality early childhood education is provided in the schools they lead. It includes articles on ways to improve early childhood literacy outcomes, the value of play interventions to enhance learning for young students with developmental delays, steps to take when starting a preschool program, and an examination of children's readiness for formal education. In addition, you'll find a special section on schoolwide support for students with autism spectrum disorders and our annual principals' salary survey, which looks at the trends in salaries for principals compared with those of other administrators and classroom teachers.

This issue also brings our editorial year to a close. Vanessa, Kaylen, Jennifer, and I hope that you have an enjoyable and relaxing summer.

Principal Themes and Deadlines for 2008-2009

Issue	Theme	Submission Deadline
September/ October 2008	The Future of K-8 Education Is Now	May 5, 2008
November/ December 2008	Special Education/Early Intervention Strategies	July 7, 2008
January/ February 2009	Arts Education for the Whole Child	August 29, 2008
March/ April 2009	The Many Stages of the Principalship	October 27, 2008
May/ June 2009	The Talented and Gifted Child	December 10, 2008

For descriptions of these themes and writing guidelines, visit www.naesp.org/writing.

Executive Director
Gail Connelly

Associate Executive Directors

Frederick N. Brown

Margaret Evans

Ernest J. Mannino

Sally McConnell

Patrick Murphy

Carol Riley

PRINCIPAL

Raven Padgett

Editor

rpadgett@naesp.org

Vanessa St. Gerard

Managing Editor

vtstgerard@naesp.org

Kaylen Tucker

Associate Editor

ktucker@naesp.org

Jennifer Apperson

Production Assistant

japperson@naesp.org

EDITORIAL ADVISORS

Jan G. Borelli

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

janborelli@cox.net

Jeanette Gilliland

Phillipsburg, New Jersey

jgilliland@pburg.k12.nj.us

Christopher Hammill

Sterling Heights, Michigan

chris.hammill@uticak12.org

Lisa Hannah

Virginia Beach, Virginia

lisa.hannah@vbschools.com

Robert Heath

Rock Hill, South Carolina

rheath@rock-hill.k12.sc.us

Olaf Jorgenson

Kamuela, Hawaii

ojorgenson@hpa.edu

James Linde

Baltimore, Maryland

jlinde@bcps.k12.md.us

Katherine Ralston

Mt. Solon, Virginia

kralston@augusta.k12.va.us

Teresa Tulipana

Kansas City, Missouri

tulipanat@parkhill.k12.mo.us

James Warnock

Alma, Arkansas

jdwarnock@cox.net

ADVERTISING SALES

Fox Associates Inc.

800-345-8670, ext. 119

Fax: 312-644-8718

adinfo.nep@foxrep.com