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The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

Make Your Case for Attending NAESP's Convention




As an education leader, you are the key to making your school a successful learning community. Everyone in your school can benefit by your attendance at NAESP's **Annual Convention and Exposition** in Houston, April 8-11, 2010. Here are some tips

for making your case to your superintendent:

Communicate why attendance is vital. During NAESP's convention, you will meet the best and the brightest in the education industry and you will see what NAESP has to offer. With more than 80 education sessions, you and your school will reap the benefits of best practices, success stories, tools, and practical solutions. Here are just a few additional benefits of attendance:

- Meaningful discussions on a wide variety of topics to enrich your leadership, knowledge, and skills;
- Resources, programs, and materials from vendors to help you achieve success in your school;
- Networking opportunities with other educators; and
- Innovative ideas learned from powerful keynote speakers.

Gain Buy-in. Review the daily schedule on the convention Web site to identify education sessions, continuing education opportunities, and networking events that address specific needs within your school. Identify your current initiatives such as cutting costs, student performance, or overcoming specific challenges. Prepare a list of benefits that can be realized by your attendance. Then, explain the relationship between these annual convention activities and the goals for your school. It's important to be able to logically describe the benefits to your school district and how you can make an impact.

Learn more about the benefits of attending NAESP's convention by visiting the [convention Web site](#). 

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National Principals Month Resolution Proposed on Capitol Hill



Rep. Susan Davis, D-California, has introduced a congressional resolution to designate October 2009 as National Principals Month. The resolution, which is currently pending in the U.S. House of Representatives, would honor elementary, middle, and high school principals for their passion and dedication to students across the country.

NAESP and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) worked together with Davis' office to craft the resolution's text. Among the findings, the resolution states:

- Principal "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school";
- Principals set the academic tone for their schools and work collaboratively with teachers to develop and maintain high curriculum standards ... and set performance goals and objectives"; and
- Principals "are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives as well as being entrusted with our young people, our most valuable resource."

"As the federal government continues to emphasize the role of principals as the catalysts for school reform efforts, it is only appropriate for the U.S. Congress to recognize these dedicated professionals in the month when the brightest and best among them are being honored," said NAESP Executive Director Gail Connelly. "NAESP and NASSP are pleased to support the National Principals Month resolution offered by Representative Susan Davis."


If passed by the House of Representatives, the resolution would encourage U.S. residents to observe National Principals Month with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of school leadership in ensuring that every child has access to a high-quality education.

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NAESP and NASSP are proud to honor these dedicated education professionals. We encourage you to contact your U.S. representatives and ask them to co-sponsor Davis' resolution to make October 2009 National Principals Month. Contact your legislator by visiting NAESP's [Leading Educators' Advocacy Dashboard](#) or calling 202-224-3121. 

Congratulations to the 2009 NDPs!

On Oct. 22 and 23, NAESP will host the 26th **National Distinguished Principals** (NDP) program at the Capital Hilton in Washington, D.C. This year, 63 honorees from across the country and around the world will represent public, private, and State Department overseas schools. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan will address the honorees at the black-tie awards banquet.



A complete listing of all members of the NDP Class of 2009 will be published in the November/December issue of *Principal* magazine. The program is made possible through the generous support VALIC, the Variable Annuity Life Insurance Co.

"Great principals are leaders who can change belief systems, support teachers, and ensure all students have access to good instruction and opportunities to reach their academic potential," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "We need thousands of great instructional leaders like the NDP Class of 2009 to instill the belief that every child can learn, help turnaround the most chronically underperforming schools, and replicate models of success that can be found throughout our nation." 

Answer the Call, Become a Mentor

Principals can lead in more ways than one. In addition to serving their schools and students, veteran principals can provide crucial guidance to their fledgling colleagues by becoming nationally certified principal mentors. NAESP's **National Principal Mentoring Certification Program** gives participants the tools to become effective principal mentors while simultaneously providing professional development opportunities to all involved parties.

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The registration theme for this year's programs is "Answer the Call, Become a Mentor." Most principals can remember what it was like to be handed the keys to a school with the encouraging words of "congratulations and good luck" and then wondering who they will call for advice and guidance. Mentoring provides new principals with a crucial support system as they face the challenges presented by their new leadership roles.

NAESP's mentoring certification program has two goals. It aims to create a group of experienced principals with the appropriate skills and tools to promote leadership consistent with the standards outlined in *Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do*. It also aims to create a model for instructional leadership mentor training that is consistent with professional standards and that addresses the specific needs of school principals and other administrators. According NAESP's publication *The K-8 Principal in 2008: A 10-Year Study*, the number of principals who find mentoring programs helpful has increased substantially during the past 10 years. Properly training future mentors will help assure that this number continues to increase.

For more information, including upcoming training dates and locations, go to the [mentoring certification program's Web page](#) or send an e-mail to mentor@naesp.org. 

Your Input Is Sought for NAESP's Platform

In November, the 2009-2010 Resolutions Committee will meet to review NAESP's Platform, a living document that represents what our membership—today's principals—believe. Each year, the committee is required to review each resolution in the platform that is 5 or 10 years old. This year, the committee is particularly interested in combining duplicative resolutions and culling those that are unnecessary, and therefore will be reviewing the entire document carefully.

The Resolutions Committee invites all NAESP members to review the [NAESP Platform](#) and provide feedback by either contacting the [committee member from their zone](#) or by sending an e-mail to governmentrelations@naesp.org. All thoughts and suggestions are welcome! 

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Leading a New Day for Learning

NAESP and the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) have joined together in support of creating a new learning day for children. Such a day would consider the needs of the whole child; encompass the ways, times, and situations in which children learn; and provide the breadth of enriching experiences that help them become engaged learners.

A new day for learning calls for the creation of a comprehensive approach to learning that would aim to make students more engaged learners by expanding the definition of student success, applying research-based knowledge about how students learn best, fostering collaboration across community sectors, integrating various learning approaches, and providing teachers new opportunities for leadership and professional development.

To achieve this expanded definition of student success, after-school programs would align with traditional school day learning to provide instruction in subject areas that have been neglected due to demands for accountability tied to test scores. Subjects such as art, music, and physical education provide students opportunities to experience success and can be particularly important for students struggling to achieve academically.

Well-trained staff members, sustained by professional development opportunities, are crucial to assuring that quality in school and after-school programs is achieved, and creating a new learning day requires collaboration across all sectors by principals and after-school directors.

Learn more about how principals can work with their after-school directors to make a new learning day a reality by visiting the NAESP [Foundation Web site](#). 

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President's Perspective: Starfish

By Diane Cargile, NAESP President



We have all heard the story of the starfish. It tells of an old man walking along a beach throwing starfish back into the sea when there were thousands lying in the sand. He was performing a task that appeared to be impossible. But each time he threw a starfish into the sea, he made a difference for that one. Principals at the beginning of another school year may sometimes feel like the old man; they make a difference in their community by being a catalyst for change. And while the job may seem impossible, the optimistic nature of principals causes them to stick with it.

This persistence appears to pay off. The noted education research organization, Phi Delta Kappa, discovered in a recent survey that parents voice favorable comments regarding their children's school. They know, as we do, that in many communities, the school is a central gathering place where families and community members are welcomed.

The start of a new school year reaffirms that our school communities are reflections of our greater communities. Schools serve as hubs of positive activity and constructive engagement for students and families, and they radiate a sense of good will, stability, and common purpose. Schools are integral elements of a thriving community; the greater community is an essential component of successful schools.

Principals are education leaders as well as civic leaders who engage community members in teaching and learning. This element of leadership has taken on such significance in recent years that NAESP included it as one of the six central standards that measure what principals should know and know how to do. (These standards are featured in NAESP's 2008 book, *Leading Learning Communities*, available at the Association's [resource center](#)) The "community standard"—to actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student performance and development—is explored at length in the book, but I'm delighted to summarize a few of its key strategies.

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- **Engage parents and the community** to build relationships that support student performance, and make sure that all parents—regardless of the language they speak at home, or their income—can be involved in meaningful ways. Be sure to schedule home visits to reach out to parents who might be reluctant to come into the school.
- **Build connections and forge relationships** with elected officials, members of service organizations such as Rotary International or the Lions Club, parent groups, business owners, and others to gauge their expectations, seek their support for student and family needs, and reinforce their roles as stakeholders in successful schools. Invite community members into the school for meetings and tours and to celebrate students' accomplishments.
- **Represent your school** at community events and meetings—both formal and informal—and take advantage of opportunities to meet with the news media to discuss school goals and achievements. By being a school's "public face" and speaking in public forums, principals can effectively market their schools and make the case for greater levels of support.
- **Be an advocate** for high-quality education for all children, and cultivate a cadre of parents and other supporters who are willing to speak with, or send an e-mail or write to policymakers and legislators—with a superintendent and school board's approval, of course.

Remember that Nov. 16 is just around the corner. That is the day when many principals invite a mayor, council member, or civic leader into our schools to be the principal for a day, hoping that the experience will give these community leaders some insight into the challenges and rewards of the profession. (Read more about the [principal for a day program](#).) That tried-and-true strategy still works, but in these days of escalating expectations, mounting pressures, and broader responsibilities, it's even more important for principals to get out of their schools and into their neighborhoods.

All of us—principals, parents, members of the greater community—share the responsibility for student learning and development, and we all share the rewards when schools and students succeed. And it gives one more reason to celebrate the "Power of the Principal."

Also, make sure to follow NAESP President Diane Cargile as she blogs during her travels. The "Where's Diane?" blog series will feature entries from Cargile throughout her term. 

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Meet This Year's Mentor Center Principal



Jessica Johnson has been selected as the Mentor Center principal for the 2009-2010 school year and she seeks your advice and feedback as she embarks on her third year in the principalship. In this column, Johnson will write about some of the concerns and questions she has as a new principal. Johnson is principal of Dodgeland Elementary School in rural Juneau, Wisconsin. The student population comprises about 390 students in 4-year-old kindergarten through fifth grade, including an early childhood program for children ages 3-4 who have special needs.

Before becoming principal of Dodgeland Elementary in 2008, she served as an assistant principal in a large district of 22 schools in Phoenix, where she had a network of many administrators to call upon for advice. Now, she works in a one-building school district in which she is the only elementary principal.

In this edition of Mentor Center, Johnson seeks your advice about building collaboration among grade-level teams. "I have found that some grade levels truly collaborate and accomplish great things together; however, other grade levels do not stay student focused or data-driven and revert back to venting or chatting if I'm not there to keep them on track," Johnson writes. Read her entire entry and offer your suggestions in NAESP's Mentor Center. 

NAESP Calendar

Key NAESP events are approaching in the coming months.

Oct. 18-21, 2009 – Fall Board Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Oct. 22-23, 2009 – National Distinguished Principals program, Washington, D.C.

Nov. 5, 2009 – Webinar, "Principals Leading Diverse Learning Communities"

Nov. 5-7, 2009 – NAESP Mentor Training, St. Simons Island, Georgia

Nov. 19-20, 2009 – NAESP Resolutions Committee Meeting, Alexandria, Virginia

Dec. 3, 2009 – Webinar, "Principals Leading 21st Century Learning"

Dec. 3-5, 2009 – NAESP Mentor Training, La Quinta, California

April 8-11, 2010 – Annual Convention and Exposition, Houston

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