

Leveraging Resources

In the opening weeks of first grade at Prichard Elementary School in Kentucky, Kimmie struggled hard with phonics, sight words, and other early literacy challenges. Her inability to keep up was the source of ongoing frustration, which led to behavior problems. As the school's chief instructional officer, principal Jason McGlone met with Kimmie's teacher and together they formulated a technology-infused personalized learning plan. Within the first quarter, Kimmie's literacy skills had made a huge leap, and along with that came engagement and a positive attitude.

Kimmie's tale of transformation represents more than just one young child's turnaround resulting from a timely intervention. Her experience is part of a more sweeping success story occurring at Prichard Elementary under McGlone's leadership. Within a single year, the school went from scoring in the 62nd percentile on state tests to the 89th percentile.

Technology and social media are significant elements of McGlone's creative strategy, tactics that are implemented in schools across the nation. Under his leadership:

- Teachers and administrators use Twitter to collaborate and share best practices;
- Parents and community members are brought inside the school walls through social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook; and
- Students who've never left their hometown or neighborhood are exposed to broader ideas and perspectives through virtual field trips to places like the Smithsonian Institution.

Research and Practice

The 2014 study, "Using Technology to Support At-Risk Students' Learning," published by the Alliance for Excellent Education and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy, reinforces what McGlone and other astute school leaders already know: Technology can be a powerful force for closing the achievement gap, but it's only as effective as the educator who uses it—and professional development is key. As one example, the study cites the growing trend of blended learning and the importance of training and supporting teachers who can provide students both



structured activities and collaborative discussions within the context of project-based learning that reinforces 21st century skills.

Also shining a strong spotlight on the area of educator development is the Wallace Foundation's 2015 report, "Districts Taking Charge of the Principal Pipeline." The study focuses on the importance of innovative pre-service training programs as well as standards, systems, and goal-setting in preparing, supporting, recruiting, and evaluating school leaders. Technology facilitates such practices through video-based teacher evaluation modules for aspiring principals and leader tracking systems, which build a district's capacity to collect and organize data on experience and performance to inform staffing and other decisions.

Connecting the Dots

NAESP is dedicated to meeting the needs of its membership as we progress throughout the next several years and beyond. Goals outlined in our 2014-2017 Strategic Growth Plan include a focus on aligning mentorship certification programs with the changing research, seeking new partnerships to provide more diverse perspectives, enabling technology-based special interest networks, and establishing closer community ties to sister educational organizations for enriched resource offerings. To this end, NAESP recently relocated its headquarters to Reston, Virginia, occupying a portion of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASSP) campus. NAESP and NASSP will maintain separate identities and governance structures. However, with this arrangement, space and proximity will allow for stronger collaboration with NASSP, facilitating an aggregation of intellectual and physical resources in order to forge a stronger education leadership community for the benefit of all.

As our body of knowledge grows and the concepts of what school leaders must be and know continue to evolve, NAESP will be there, as always, acting as your voice at the national level, advocating for policies and providing resources that will help us all better educate our nation's children.

For principals like Jason McGlone, who are deeply invested in the success of students like Kimmie and other young learners getting off to a rocky start, the future may be a bit of a moving target, but the constant will always be doing whatever it takes. "That's what every one of us is in this for," he says, "to give kids hope through education." **P**

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