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The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

Prepare to Vote in Board Election

This spring, eligible NAESP members will elect a new president-elect as well as directors for Zones 3, 4, and 6. The election will take place April 1-30, 2013. Electronic ballots will be available on the NAESP website—but you will need to log in to access the ballot, which is members-only content. If you have never logged in to www.naesp.org (or if it has been a while) take a moment to do it now—and ensure that you are able to vote for your candidates as soon as you are notified.

Go to <https://www.naesp.org/user/login>.

Type your “Username”—the email address NAESP has on file with your membership.

Type your “Password”—your last name is your password the first time you log in. If you have changed your password and can’t remember it, click on the “Request new password” tab and follow the instructions. 

ED’s Perspective: Student Safety Requires Community and School Collaboration

By Gail Connelly

Days after the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, a reporter approached NAESP President Mark Terry to gauge a principal’s perspective on the events. The reporter asked Terry, principal of Eubanks Intermediate School, in Southlake, Texas, if he knew other principals who would do what Sandy Hook Elementary principal Dawn Hochsprung did: place herself in mortal danger to protect her students.

Terry—true to his Texas roots—did not mince words. “I don’t know one who *wouldn’t* lay down their life for our kids,” he replied.

It’s not surprising that overwhelmingly, principals’ first responses have been to put aside their own grief to support anxious parents of anxious children—many who are too young to fully understand the situation—assuring them of school safety. Principals across the country are also assessing their school safety plans, sharing them with teachers and families, and encouraging a national discourse on the issues that Sandy Hook raises about student mental health and well-being.

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The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

In the days and weeks since that awful morning in Newtown, many of us—parents, educators, lawmakers, and leaders alike—have struggled to find ways to prevent violence in our schools and take action to protect our nation's children from harm. To this end, [NAESP and NASSP joined together to offer recommendations](#) to the National Gun Violence Task Force chaired by Vice President Joe Biden. Representing the majority view of the nation's elementary, middle, and high school principals, we called for solutions that are multi-faceted, meaningful, and proactive, and that will truly help schools prevent gun-related violence and improve safety. We do not believe that guns should have a place in our schools, or that arming educators is the answer.

The tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School has shown that violence in our schools and communities is not a school problem or a community problem—it is both. First, we know that there are immediate priorities and actions that principals can take to address security, such as installing deadbolts on classroom doors, repairing a broken lock on the exterior gymnasium door, or perhaps even installing a security camera and electronic entrance system. And while these types of measures might help, albeit with extra support from a central office, it is unlikely they alone would stop another incident like Sandy Hook from occurring. In addition, schools must be able to provide intervention and supports for students and families to address issues before they escalate to violence. A comprehensive solution requires drawing on the collective resources of an entire learning community—including superintendents, principals, teachers, school psychologists, and counselors—to address students' safety, social, emotional, and mental-health needs. School safety and violence prevention must begin with schools and local communities coming together to provide thoughtful, pragmatic, and inclusive programs and initiatives that will address the underlying issues that lead to violence.

NAESP will work to provide safety and planning resources necessary to keep schools current on security measures and help principals deal with issues such as updating and repairing security equipment and influencing or changing district policies that hinder them in meeting unique safety needs that are contextually different for each school. But, more importantly, we will strive to strengthen school communities as sanctuaries of non-violence by encouraging incentives designed to bring together schools with community-based health and safety institutions, providers, and policymakers. Principals, who take extraordinary measures to protect the safety and well-being of their students, should be afforded the tools and resources needed to safeguard students, families, and school buildings.

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The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

We are cautiously optimistic about the proposals put forth by President Obama. They represent a meaningful first step to address broad-ranging gun violence prevention, effective school safety measures and training for educators in emergency management, and coordinated systems that can promptly address students' mental-health needs. And we agreed with President Obama who said that schools must be supported to cultivate a nurturing climate and culture. That is where principals take the lead. The recommendations read: "[O]ne of the best things schools can do to reduce violence and bullying is to improve a school's climate and increase trust and communications between students and staff." We couldn't agree more—principals are already devoted to helping school climates flourish. NAESP is committed to building principals' capacities to continue to do so and to share best practices around discipline, bullying policies, and school culture.

As we carry this message to lawmakers on Capitol Hill, we will continue to seek meaningful solutions that work for principals, schools, and communities. Principals like Mark Terry are determined to protect every child even if it means putting their own lives on the line—as a society we must do everything possible to keep our children safe so that no one ever has to make this ultimate sacrifice.

—**Gail Connelly** is NAESP Executive Director. 

Twelve Key Common Core Shifts: Action Steps for Principals

To lead implementation of the Common Core State Standards, school leaders must focus on building the capacity of their teachers.

For school leaders and counselors, implementing the CCSS is not about thinking out of the box—it is about transforming the box itself. Principals will need to collaborate with their teacher leaders, listen to the needs of their staff, and consider how to make sure that their schools are teacher- and student-friendly environments in which the norm is trying new things.

A new action brief from NAESP, NASSP, College Summit and Achieve, explores the role of principals in this process. "Implementing the Common Core State Standards: The Role of the Elementary School Leader" offers a primer on the standards and twelve key schoolwide changes that must occur with implementation.

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The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

One of the major shifts, for instance, is that instructional time must be retooled. According to the brief:

While they have input into the curriculum, school leaders directly control three variables in teaching and learning — time, setting and methods. Of the three, increasing quality instructional time may offer the most immediate gains in student achievement.

Simply put, all students do not learn at the same rate. The most obvious yet often overlooked way to differentiate instruction schoolwide is to allow students to learn at their own pace.

Teachers will likely need more instructional time in order to teach more rigorous, higher-level content in more depth and to integrate literacy skills into their lessons. Even as policy makers are considering ways to make extended school days, an extended school year, after-school tutoring and multi-tiered interventions financially possible, school leaders must help teachers make maximum use of the time they already have. Teaching “bell to bell” under the CCSS is now a minimum, first step. Long term, school leaders will need to work to improve teaching methods by greatly enhance teacher capacity to actively engage students and employ high-level questioning and thinking strategies.

Action Steps: Instructional Time

- *Discuss the relationship of learning time to student achievement with the school leadership team, particularly with respect to Tier 1 interventions.*
- *Communicate an expectation that all teachers will teach “bell to bell” and that meeting that expectation will take time to realize.*
- *Ask teacher leaders to identify all the ways that teachers are extending learning time for students, including such Tier 2 interventions as tutoring and additional review sessions.*
- *Identify the number of opportunities students have to participate in extended learning opportunities, including such Tier 3 interventions as reading classes and extended time or “double-block” mathematics classes.*
- *Identify extended learning opportunities for students to participate in accelerated or enriched learning opportunities that go beyond standard course offerings.*

communicator



The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

The other important changes include shifts in: school culture, literacy instruction, text complexity, close reading, math instruction, student engagement, create-and-learn versus sit-and-get, professional learning, assessment, and technology integration. Read more about each one, including action steps and talking points, in the [action brief](#).

The CCSS represent a real shift in instructional intent from high school graduation to college and career readiness. This shift in intent means profound changes in the way students learn and are assessed, in the way teachers teach, and in the way instructional leaders lead. The reality is that the responsibility for ensuring high-quality, transformative professional development and fidelity of implementation will fall squarely on the shoulders of the school leaders. 

Open Educational Resources: A Policy Overview

By Reginal J. Leichthy

Successfully navigating the challenging transition to college- and career-ready standards and assessments will depend in part on district and school leaders' ability to ensure that all students have access to high quality, standards-aligned instructional resources, including versatile digital materials that support effective teaching and learning. In a growing number of states and localities, open educational resources (OER) offer a pathway for delivering powerful, standards-aligned materials to every student and teacher. OER are resources for teaching, learning, and research that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or repurposing by others. OER permit educators to share, access, and collaborate, so they can customize and personalize content and instruction.

Many innovation-minded federal, state, and district leaders championed OER in 2012, including calling for and securing new OER investments at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. Groundbreaking public and private OER ventures also significantly expanded the public's recognition of the potential of OER to help improve teaching and learning. While these recent developments represent exciting progress, the most important long-term impact of these still nascent policies—which focus

communicator



The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

almost exclusively on content development and, to a lesser degree, educator and school leader awareness building—could be the foundation they lay for an even more powerful and sophisticated set of next generation reforms focused on promoting effective OER use. Given this emerging trend, now is an important time for school leaders to learn more about OER's potential to support their objectives and to inform the work of district and state leaders that might be considering implementation of OER policies or investments.

Promoting standards-aligned OER use at scale will require deeper and more strategic integration of OER values and concepts into a broader array of ongoing education reforms. In other words, ensuring that all students have access to the high quality instructional materials they need to graduate ready for college or career is only a first critical step. Comprehensive and coherent OER practices and policies must be developed and adopted to empower educators to seamlessly collaborate (with each other and with students), including enabling them to customize and personalize content and instruction. This challenging effort will require the thoughtful input of school leaders and teachers, and should be informed by the lessons learned from significant OER projects already underway.

State and local leaders significantly advanced OER policy and practices in 2012. Utah's open textbook project began to expand statewide, including the development of open books for all secondary language arts, mathematics, and science courses. Utah leaders also integrated OER policy into the state's Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver plan, which was designed to permit the state to implement innovative K-12 reforms. Washington State approved a new OER law, supported with first year funding of \$250,000, directing the state's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to create a collection of openly licensed courseware aligned to the Common Core State Standards and an associated awareness campaign to inform school districts about the availability and potential of open resources to support student learning.

Perhaps most significantly (if measured by the number of potential students impacted), California approved two new laws designed to provide all students at the state's public postsecondary institutions with access to free digital textbooks for popular lower-division courses and to open source the curriculum to faculty members.

National organizations also got into the act, providing critically needed technical assistance and creating opportunities for state and local leaders to discuss and develop OER policy. Leading interstate collaboratives like the Council of Chief State School

communicator



The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

Officer's Innovation Lab Network and national organizations like the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA), the International Association of K-12 Online Learning, and Achieve made OER technical assistance a core element of their work with state, district and school leaders.

These collaborative state efforts were supported by publication of valuable new OER tools and resources, including a new paper published by SETDA—[Out of Print: Reimagining the K-12 Textbook in a Digital Age](#)—and the launch of a new [State Education Policy Center](#) describing and cataloging recent policy developments in the instructional materials market. Additionally, to help support open materials adoption, Achieve developed and published [OER rubrics](#) for teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders to evaluate OER quality.

Federal leadership and support for open educational resources development also continued in 2012. The Department of Labor granted \$500 million for community colleges to develop open curriculum and tools focused on meeting the educational needs of displaced workers. The Department of Education made OER an element of the Administration's marquee Investing in Innovation (I3) program. The Fiscal Year 2012 i3 program included a competitive preference priority for applications proposing to use OER and other actions "designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes."

Though very meaningful, these recent federal, national, and individual state efforts must be expanded and improved if open educational resources are to achieve their full potential for improving teaching and learning. The next generation of OER policies must move beyond simply investing in high quality content and tools and instead also focus on deeper strategic integration with other policy reforms aimed at promoting college and career readiness. Interested school leaders should be prepared to engage with their peers, district leaders, and state officials to help inform and shape this discussion. If school leaders and teachers help policy makers ultimately grasp the importance of moving to a more sophisticated "OER policy 2.0," however, 2013 could be an historic year for moving closer to the goal of making high quality OER a powerful tool in every American classroom.

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communicator



The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

Early Bird Registration for 2013 Conference Closes Jan. 31

Don't miss your chance to register early and save on the [2013 NAESP National Conference of the Year](#).

This summer, Baltimore will be a magnet for the most inspired and motivated elementary school principals, assistant principals, teachers, superintendents, and experts in the nation. At the NAESP National Conference of the Year, you'll find engaging speakers and like-minded colleagues eager to share solutions on areas such as:

- Teacher recruitment and retention;
- Integration of the new Common Core Standards;
- Leading school change and improving student learning; and
- Running the best possible building—from the cafeteria to the parking lot.

The roster of exciting speakers is growing by the day! Bestselling author Daniel Pink has just joined the lineup, which already includes experts such as Freeman Hrabowski, Michael Fullan, Todd Whitaker, and Adam Sáenz.

Early bird registration closes January 31, just a matter of days away. [Register now](#) and take advantage of the best rates.

Plus, when you register, don't forget to sign up for Community Service Day on Wednesday, July 10. Join over 100 volunteers to help transform John Ruhrah Elementary/Middle School's playground into a better and brighter place for students



Countdown to Digital Learning Day

NAESP is joining more than 50 national organizations, 45 states plus the District of Columbia, and over 17,000 teachers to celebrate Digital Learning Day, taking place Wednesday, Feb. 6. Created by the Alliance for Excellent Education, Digital Learning Day is a nationwide celebration of innovative teaching and learning through digital media and technology that engages students and provides them with a rich, personalized, educational experience.

communicator



The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

All across the nation, students, parents, and educators will be celebrating and engaging in digital learning activities. In addition to the many [state events](#) going on, a national celebration will be taking place at the Newseum in Washington D.C., including a [Digital Town Hall](#) showcasing promising practices in digital learning from around the country.

There are countless ways that principals can participate in Digital Learning Day, such as organizing an assembly highlighting digital learning in the classroom, or inviting a local businessperson to talk about new skills needed to succeed. Visit www.DigitalLearningDay.org to share your stories and best practices, or how you plan on celebrating. You'll also find great resources such as [lesson plans](#), information on free monthly [webinars](#), and [toolkits](#) providing guidance on how to implement digital learning in your school. 

Principals to Convene in D.C. for National Leaders Conference

NAESP will host its annual National Leaders Conference February 24-27, 2013, in Washington, D.C. Nearly 200 elementary and middle-level principal leaders from around the nation will converge on the nation's capital and participate in programming around leadership, membership, advocacy, and policy.

The conference will include leadership development and information on membership, as well as updates and insights into the federal advocacy and policy landscape in Washington. On Tuesday, February 26, attendees will meet with legislators on Capitol Hill to discuss issues of critical importance to principals.

The conference will kick off with an important Delegate Assembly, at which attendees will vote on proposed resolutions for the [NAESP Policy Platform](#). Representatives on the NAESP Resolutions Committee worked in November to update the statements to accurately reflect the realities of the profession. The results of the Committee's diligent work this year are changes (edits, combinations, and deletions) to 38 resolutions that can be found on the [NAESP website](#).

There is one final opportunity for members to offer insights and suggestions on these proposed resolutions. The Resolutions Committee will hold an Open Hearing Conference Call on February 4, 2013, at 2:00 p.m. (Eastern). During the Open Hearing

communicator



The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

Conference Call, the Resolutions Committee will hear any comments and suggestions regarding the proposed resolutions. To participate in the Open Hearing Conference Call, please call 866-290-3067, and enter conference code 9437098830.

Following this Open Hearing, the Committee will review the feedback and prepare a final report for the February Delegate Assembly. 

Revolutionize Discipline at Your School

Change the way your school handles discipline with [Responsive School Discipline: Essentials for Elementary School Leaders](#), available now in the National Principals Resource Center. Authors Chip Wood and Babs Freeman-Loftis offer practical strategies for building a safe, calm, and respectful school climate based on deep respect.

Responsive discipline ensures that children feel physically and emotionally safe in school so that they can learn at their best, and develop self-discipline and skills for working cooperatively with others.

"This book offers school leaders strategies for achieving this kind of learning environment. Such an environment is the result of working in classrooms at the schoolwide level," write Wood and Freeman-Loftis. "At the schoolwide level, school leaders must set up systems and do the leadership work that ensures that this same kind of discipline is maintained throughout the school—not just inside classrooms but at recess, lunch, and special area classes, and everywhere in between."

This book helps school leaders do just that. The authors share tips on how to craft school rules that children take seriously, empower staff with techniques for teaching and reinforcing expected behavior, and help children with challenging behaviors.

Share these two excerpts from [Responsive School Discipline: Essentials for Elementary School Leaders](#) with your staff:

- [Proactive Supports for Students with Challenging Behaviors: Ten Practices That Can Help](#)
- [Playground: Make Recess a Time of Joy and Learning](#)

Pick up a [copy of the book in the National Principals Resource Center](#) to see the other chapters on school-home partnerships, positive adult language, school rules, and staff learning. 

This is the printer-ready version of *Communicator*, an electronic newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).

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The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

Subscribe to the *WowEd* Newsletter

Wow!Ed is the newsletter of NAESP's research center, the Center for Educational Improvement. Each issue is packed with the latest information on topics such as STEM, technology in schools, and global education. The January issue examines the arts in schools.

Archived copies are available at <http://www.edimprovement.org/newsletter-archive/>

You can receive *Wow!Ed* directly by sending a request to info@edimprovement.org or cmason@naesp.org. Simply put yes! in the subject line. 

Grants, Opportunities, & Free Resources

Contests and Grants

Tennis, Anyone?

United States Tennis Association Southern offers matching equipment grants to elementary schools that organize a kids' tennis club. No tennis courts are required. Kids' tennis clubs can be located in schools, parks, youth centers, or tennis facilities. This grant is available for schools in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. **Deadline: Ongoing**

http://www.southern.usta.com/community_tennis/grants_and_scholarships/

Grant for Salad Bars in Schools

Seeking to increase children's consumption of fruits and vegetables, the Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools program plans to fund and grant 6,000 salad bars to schools across the nation by 2013. Any K-12 school or district participating in the National School Lunch Program is eligible to apply. **Deadline: Rolling**

<http://saladbars2schools.org/>

Classroom Resources

Books for Children in Need

First Book donates 35,000 books per day to programs and schools serving children from low-

communicator



The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

income families throughout the United States and Canada. Educators or program administrators at schools where at least 70 percent of the children come from low-income families are eligible to apply for the nonprofit's book distribution programs.

www.firstbook.org/receive-books

Free Classroom Supplies

Teachers can use a helping hand when it comes to stocking up on school supplies. That is why The Clorox Company is launching the *Canisters for Classrooms* program to help teachers get Clorox® Disinfecting Wipes for their classrooms and get parents involved in donating, too! When teachers put Clorox Disinfecting Wipes on their back-to-school list, Clorox will automatically donate two canisters to their classroom (while supplies last)! Visit [Clorox Classrooms](http://www.clorox.com/classrooms/canisters/) to upload your back-to-school supply list or create your back-to-school supply list online.

<http://www.clorox.com/classrooms/canisters/>

Curricula and Teaching Tools

Financial Literacy Resources

Money as You Grow—20 Things Kids Need to Know to Live Financially Smart Lives, an online tool to help improve the financial capability of America's youth, offers 20 essential, age-appropriate lessons kids need to learn about money. The President's Council on Financial Capability developed the website.

www.moneyasyougrow.org

Free Fitness Curriculum

The ACE Operation FitKids curriculum from the American Council on Exercise is designed for educators looking to integrate health and fitness into classroom learning. The 7-lesson curricula for grades 3 to 8 and teach students the dangers of being overweight and the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle.

<http://www.acefitness.org/ofk/curriculum.aspx>

Free Pen Pal Club Subscription

Pen Pal Kids Club, a global social network for kids, is offering free classroom subscriptions to K-8 teachers across the United States. The website promotes cross-curricular collaboration by integrating nonfiction writing, geography, social studies, and technology while offering students a chance to discover different cultures and meet new friends from across the globe.

communicator



The Monthly Newsletter of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

<http://www.PenPalKidsClub.com>

Powerful Free Tool for Data, Tutoring

School leaders know that every minute spent testing is a minute taken away from teaching. ASSISTments, a new, free web-based platform developed by Worcester Polytechnic Institute, aims to change that, offering teachers the ability to blend assessment questions and tutoring. Students receive real-time guidance, while teachers see instant reports on student progress. Plus schools and districts can build benchmarks right into the system. Contact NAESP@wpi.edu for training and more information.

<http://teacherwiki.assistment.org/wiki/About>

Free Professional Development and Learning Resources

Green Strides - Webinar Series

This webinar series, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools initiative, features experts from the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and other federal programs. Topics include fitness, solar energy, life in space, and more.

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/webinar.html>

Implementing Common Core Standards in Math - Webinar Series

This free webinar series and online professional learning community, sponsored by ETA/Cuisenaire, provides advice and support regarding the national math curriculum. The program provides free webinars, live chats, lesson plans and online discussions to assist teachers in connecting and collaborating with others in the same grade level.

http://www.edweb.net/inv_math

RTI in Early Childhood Settings - Webcast

"Implementing Response to Intervention in Early Childhood Settings: National, State, and Program Perspectives," an 80-minute webcast from the RTI Action Network, features a panel of nationally recognized researchers and dynamic RTI implementers on RTI's role in early childhood. This unique blend of multiple perspectives targets matching high-quality instruction and interventions to meet learning needs during the early childhood years.

<http://www.rtinetwork.org/professional/forums/rti-national-online-forum-implementing-response-to-intervention-in-early-childhood-settings>