



NAESP Platform

2015-2016

The National Association of Elementary School Principals' Platform serves as the statement of beliefs for the Association and its members, elementary and middle-level principals. The Platform is reviewed and updated annually and approved by the NAESP Board of Directors at the Winter Board Meeting.

Approved by
the Board of
Directors
February 2015

INTRODUCTION

The NAESP landmark publications, *Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do, Second Edition* (NAESP, 2014), *Leading After School Communities* (NAESP, 2006), and *Early Childhood Learning Communities: What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do* (NAESP, 2005) provide a comprehensive framework outlining the major responsibilities of the school principal.

Principal preparation and mentoring is integral to the success of the principal and their leadership to the school. Principal preparation programs should be grounded in the ISLLC Standards to ensure building capacity of effective school leaders.

NAESP maintains that the instructional leadership role of the principal and assistant principal is vital to sound educational programs in each elementary and middle school. Responsibilities created by state and federal mandates place tremendous demands on the principal; the principal must have sufficient time to plan, coordinate, and provide instructional leadership.

Principals are the primary instructional leaders in the schools and communities in which they serve; and due to the magnitude of this responsibility, it is imperative that principals have authority over the myriad of responsibilities associated with the job including decisions for personnel assignment, staff evaluation, expenditure of funds, discipline, curriculum design, and program/staff development, to mention just a few. Because of the complexity of their work, principals are expected to be lifelong learners and must be provided funding and professional growth opportunities to improve instructional leadership and actively participate in professional organizations.

The recruitment, selection, and retention of staff is an integral component in quality schools and principals are encouraged to include current school staff when selecting new personnel, but the final recommendation must be the responsibility of the principal. In addition, the principal is responsible for the formative and summative evaluation of staff, and observations should utilize established procedures and instruments directed toward improved professional performance with the ultimate goal being improved student learning and academic achievement.

NAESP strongly recommends the employment of a full-time, certified principal for each elementary and middle school and the employment of full-time assistant principals in every school.

With district support, school principals are expected to be active in local and state associations and exert leadership by collaborating with other professional organizations, soliciting the support of business and other community groups, and enlisting legislative support for public education.

Principals play a critical role in communicating and implementing the decisions of policy-makers. Therefore, all federal- or state-funded agencies, committees, and other groups must include practicing principals in the development of education policies, guidelines, rules, and regulations.

Finally, NAESP believes that an important way to strengthen confidence and build public awareness of quality public education is to celebrate school successes by publicizing the interests, activities, and successes of public schools across America being mindful that student confidentiality must be protected.

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LEADING

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

NAESP believes that principals are the primary instructional leaders in the schools and communities they serve. It is imperative that principals have the authority and autonomy for building-level decision making, including but not limited to personnel assignment, staff evaluation, budget and resource allocation, discipline, curriculum design and implementation, student assessment, program and staff development, and other areas of responsibility.

NAESP believes the recruitment, selection, evaluation, and retention of staff are integral components of quality schools. The final recommendation regarding staff selection must remain with the principal.

NAESP believes the principal is responsible for formative and summative evaluation of staff. Observations and evaluations should use established instruments and procedures based on best practices for improved professional performance leading to improved student learning and academic achievement. Principals must have adequate training, resources and time to effectively implement the evaluation process. The evaluation process must be achievable, realistic, and lead to high quality teaching and learning. NAESP believes school principals must be active in local, state, and national associations for access to resources, best practices, advocacy, networking, and professional development.

NAESP believes principals have a critical role in communicating and implementing the decisions of policy-makers. All federal- or state-funded agencies, committees, and other groups must include practicing principals in the development of education policies, guidelines, rules, and regulations. NAESP believes that principals, as instructional leaders, must be calculated risk takers and entrepreneurial reformers of education. As part of that role, NAESP urges principals to investigate and determine the legitimacy of change to ensure that the change is designed according to research-based best practice for student learning.

NAESP believes every elementary and middle school should have a full-time certified principal and a full-time assistant principal. Based on the growing complexity of the role of principals, including increased responsibilities in accountability, teacher evaluation, addressing diverse student needs, and student safety, additional school building administrators should be employed. ('02, '07, '10, '11, '12, '14, '15)

PRINCIPAL PREPARATION

The expanding role of the principal demands a high level of professional preparation and continuing growth. NAESP believes all states should require principals and site-based administrators to be licensed or certified according to the recognized ISLLC standards.

NAESP believes that persons entering the principalship should have at least five years of successful teaching experience and an advanced degree and certification in educational leadership that includes a residency/internship and in-depth study of effective school leadership. The competencies of effective school leadership include but are not limited to:

1. Building a shared vision;
2. Strengthening school culture and a positive school climate;
3. Focusing on goals for student achievement including standards and assessments;
4. Matching leadership knowledge and skills to the school situation/context;
5. Establishing high performance expectations;
6. Providing individualized teacher support and professional development;
7. Evaluating teachers including inter-rater reliability of evaluation models and supporting technologies. ;
8. Providing instructional guidance for effective teaching and learning;
9. Implementing models of best practice;
10. Creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate;
11. Involving stakeholders in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of strategic school improvement plans;
12. Establishing productive relations with families and communities;
13. Developing individual and collective professional capacity staff;
14. Aligning resources to support the instructional program;
15. Managing data and knowledge to make informed decisions;
16. Providing organizational management skills, including personnel and budgetary matters;
17. Ensures the development of an equitable and culturally responsive school;
18. Exhibiting resiliency and adaptability while adhering to ethical principles and professional norms;
19. Recruiting and retaining effective teachers; and
20. Understanding the needs of all students Pre-K - 8.

NAESP acknowledges that other pathways to certification exist and believes any alternative path to principal certification must include a school-based residency/internship under the guidance of an effective mentor principal and in-depth study of the above listed competencies of effective school leadership.

NAESP believes standards for the preparation, certification, selection, and professional development of principals should result from cooperative efforts among state and local principals' associations, state departments of education, higher education institutions, and local school districts. Criteria to assess

aspiring principal candidates for entry into the principalship should be developed collaboratively based on multiple indicators to determine an individual's strengths.

NAESP believes it is the professional responsibility of every principal to identify, encourage, recruit, and nurture educators with outstanding talent, leadership, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to consider the principalship as a career.

Early career principals and administrators changing levels (e.g. high school to elementary) should receive mentoring, professional development opportunities, and be expected to become active members in professional associations. New principals should participate in an induction program for a minimum of three years.

NAESP believes that districts and preparation programs, including higher education partners, provide opportunities for additional internships, peer coaching, job shadowing, networking, and mentorships for assistant and aspiring principals from proven experienced school leaders. Well-prepared assistant principals are essential to achieving the mission of the school.

NAESP supports legislation and national reciprocal agreements among states for certification, full benefits, and retirement for administrators. ('86, '96, '01, '06, '10, '11, 12, '13, '14, '15)

FOCUS ON THE WHOLE CHILD

NAESP believes that children must be the nation's number one priority and the focal point of education. NAESP has always supported the concept of the whole child. As educators, we have consistently addressed the health, safety, social, emotional, and educational needs that are components of every child's success. NAESP urges principals to eagerly partner with all agencies (local, state and federal) to develop transition plans among preschool, elementary, middle, high schools, and colleges.

Quality before and after-school programs can have a positive impact on student achievement, social interaction, and safety. NAESP believes federal, state and local leaders, including principals, should provide vision and support for effective extended-day learning that includes a variety of enrichment opportunities.-

NAESP recognizes the individual accountability and collective responsibility of all school staff, parents, and other community members for the education of the child. NAESP supports the use of public schools as community centers to bring together many partners to offer a range of support and opportunities to children, youth, families, and communities.

NAESP will continue to work in partnership with all involved for the total development of the whole child. ('71, '72, '86, '94, '95, '00, '05, '06 '09, '10 '12, '13, '14, '15)

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

NAESP supports the right of every child to fair and equitable educational opportunities. NAESP believes that the rights of all students should be protected.

Educational opportunities should recognize and respect all people within our local, state, national, and global communities. ('82, '92, '00, '10, '13)

Positive School Climate and Culture

NAESP believes that principals must establish a positive school climate and culture that fosters the emotional, social, and physical safety of each child.

NAESP believes that positive school climate and culture are shared responsibilities of principals, students, parents/guardians, educators, and the community.

NAESP believes each child has the right to learn in school without undue interference from unacceptable behaviors such as bullying, cyber bullying, harassment, intimidation, and hazing.

NAESP believes principals must be inherently involved in the design of developmentally and educationally appropriate code of conduct policies.

NAESP believes all disciplinary measures for students who engage in a pattern of unacceptable behavior should be developmentally appropriate. Alternative options, within the scope of state and local regulations, must be available for students who exhibit unacceptable behavior.

NAESP believes the practice of corporal punishment as a form of discipline must be abolished and supports legislation that would prohibit all forms of corporal punishment in schools. ('73, '75, '77, '90*, '00*, '05, '10 '12, '13, '14, '15)

School Safety

NAESP believes that schools must be safe and secure and that all stakeholders and agencies must be vigilant in the development and implementation of policies, procedures, facilities infrastructure, and plans that foster a safe, secure, and orderly environment.

NAESP advocates the development and dissemination of routine safety practices along with specific contingency plans that are coordinated with district and local authorities for situations that may threaten student and staff safety and welfare during natural, environmental, or man-made disasters.

NAESP believes efforts to improve school climate, safety, and learning are not separate endeavors. They must be designed, funded, and implemented as a comprehensive school-wide approach that facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration and builds on a multitier system of supports.

NAESP believes safe schools offer school-based mental health supports and ensure adequate funding and resources, including school counselors and mental health professionals who infuse prevention and intervention services into the learning process and integrate services provided through school-community partnerships. ('86, '89, '90, '94, '95, '01, '06, '10, '13, '14, '15)

Selection and Use of Instructional Materials

NAESP believes principals must uphold the rights of freedom of responsible expression and free access to information. Principals must affirm the right of the student and the teacher to use a wide variety of curriculum and literary materials and to explore divergent points of view.

NAESP believes each student must have appropriate and equitable access to resources and technology tools. NAESP supports funding for information literacy programs with a full-time certified media/technology specialist in every elementary and middle school.

NAESP believes the selection of instructional materials should be locally controlled. Principals should provide leadership in the selection and adoption of instructional materials, including digital resources.

NAESP believes we must teach the ethical, responsible, and safe use of technology tools and other media resources, especially as they relate to copyright law, the internet, and other social media.

NAESP supports fair procedures for selecting educational materials, including mechanisms for challenge and review.

NAESP believes the full funding of instructional materials is the shared responsibility of federal, state, and local governments. ('82, '92*, '02*, '10)

Retirement Legislation

NAESP believes principals and their spouses should receive full benefits from all retirement systems into which contributions are made on their behalf, and supports legislation that protects full benefits for principals and their spouses.

NAESP believes that all retirement plans should be portable from state to state and include cost-of-living increases. As a minimum, retirement benefits without penalty should be provided after completion of 25 years of service.

NAESP believes that retired educators should be encouraged to continue participation in professional activities of principals' associations and that local, state, and national education organizations should utilize the expertise and talents of retired principals to further their goals. ('80, '86, '89, '99*, '04, '09, '10, '13, '14)

Discriminatory Practices

NAESP believes discrimination must be eliminated in classroom assignments, school admission practices, professional association membership, and appointment or promotion to principalships and other administrative positions.

NAESP values diversity in our culture and the recruitment of ethnically diverse persons for administrative positions in order to establish positive role models for all students. ('70, '71, '72, '73, '75, '90*, '00*, '05, '10)

Contribution of Non-profit Private Schools

NAESP recognizes the contributions of non-profit private schools and believes that all personnel and curriculum must be held to the same levels of accountability and licensure required for public schools. ('72, '75, '85, '95, '05, '10, 14)

Public Schools and the Media

NAESP believes media coverage that celebrates school successes and builds public understanding strengthens confidence in public education. NAESP encourages principals to establish positive relationships with the media to promote the value of public education.

NAESP believes all principals must be assertive and active in publicizing and advocating for the interests, activities, and successes of public schools across America. ('82, '88, '97, '03, '08, '10, '13, '15)

School Construction and Renovation

NAESP believes federal and state legislators must provide adequate funding to assist local communities in the construction and modernization of school facilities.

Construction and/or renovation of school buildings is necessary to ensure safe environments, maintain appropriate school and class sizes, and provide appropriate and functional space with current technology to support instruction.

Principals, teachers, students, parents, and community members must be involved in the design of school buildings. ('00, '05, '10, '13, '15)

Employment Rights of the Principal

NAESP believes job security and protection of rights and personal welfare are essential for a principal to carry out professional responsibilities without fear of reprisal.

NAESP believes all employees have the right to engage in contract negotiations and advocate for all matters affecting conditions of their employment. NAESP strongly supports the right of principals on the local school district level to organize and negotiate.

NAESP believes all public school administrators should be employed under written contracts and a defined hold-harmless clause. Salary and benefits, methods used in determining salary, due process, and length of contract should be included as conditions of employment.

NAESP believes principals have a right to resources and support, as well as compensation, based on multiple indicators including but not limited to professional preparation, size of school, experience, complexity of job requirements, and length of contract year.

NAESP supports incentive pay, also known as pay for assignment, for principals and teachers who commit to working in hard-to-staff schools.

NAESP believes that professional negotiation laws and procedures should protect the due process rights of all employees.

NAESP advocates that impasses in contract negotiations must be resolved through fair mediation and arbitration. NAESP does not support strikes or other work stoppages.

NAESP recognizes that declining enrollment, diminishing financial resources, and other factors may cause reductions or reassignment of administrative personnel. Clear criteria and procedures must be used when making a decision to reduce administrative personnel. Fair and objective criteria must be non-discriminatory and consider job performance and evaluation, seniority, professional preparation, and certification. Procedures must include timely notification, access to all pertinent records and materials, and adequate time and opportunity for the employee to respond to the proposed reduction or reassignment. Reassignment should include the option of moving to a comparable administrative assignment or to a teaching position.

Legislation, regulations, and policies must provide reasonable job security for school principals and must prevent transfer or removal without just cause and due process. ('72, '74, '90*, '96, '01, '06, '11, '12)

Principal Performance and Evaluation

NAESP believes that principal evaluation should be part of a comprehensive system of support, used as a collaborative school improvement tool, and develop the professional capacity of principals. NAESP expects principals to be held accountable for increasing student achievement. NAESP believes rating and ranking based on student test scores should not be the sole or primary criterion in the evaluation, dismissal, reassignment, or compensation of principals. No more than 25% of a principal's evaluation should be based on student standardized test scores since test scores reflect a narrow definition of student success.

NAESP believes an effective principal evaluation process is: created with significant involvement of principals; focused on professional development; flexible enough to accommodate differences in principals' experience; based on accurate, valid and reliable information gathered through multiple measures; fair in that priority is placed on outcomes principals can control ; and useful for informing principals' learning and progress.

The following six key areas of principal influence should be considered in any fair evaluation system informed by research:

1. Professional learning and growth
2. Student growth and achievement
3. School planning and progress
4. School culture
5. Professional qualities
6. Stakeholder support and engagement

NAESP believes a comprehensive principal evaluation system should give balanced consideration to each of the six key domains identified above; yet retain the flexibility to focus on one area, or as many as six areas. The immediate needs of the school, the context of the learning community, the resources available, and the authority and autonomy given to the principal must be considered. ('12, '13, '14, '15)

Principal Health and Wellness

NAESP recognizes the duties and responsibilities of the school principal are increasingly complex and demanding without reciprocal support for the role. Therefore, NAESP recognizes the importance of fitness, nutrition, use of leisure time, and stress management for all principals. The health and well-being of principals is imperative to the school's success.

NAESP believes principals must take care of themselves in order to take care of the intricacies of the school community. NAESP recognizes the amount of time allocated for the demands of the job must be balanced with stress-reducing activities.

NAESP believes the state and local school district must provide principals with the time, support, and resources to effectively meet professional responsibilities. NAESP further believes such support can foster a balance between work, personal life and other responsibilities. This will allow principals to build resiliency, refresh, and rejuvenate themselves in order to perform their duties effectively.

NAESP believes when health, wellness, and job satisfaction are aligned, principal retention increases.

This directly impacts the success of the school. ('15)

United States Department of Education

NAESP believes that the United States Department of Education should strongly support and promote public education as the cornerstone of American democracy. NAESP believes in sustaining the Cabinet-level status of the U.S. Department of Education.

NAESP recognizes that elementary education is the foundation for all formal education and therefore believes educators with experience and training in elementary and middle school administration should staff a representative number of decision-making positions in the U.S. Department of Education. NAESP believes the U.S. department of Education should maintain the Principal-in-Residence program to inform national policy.

NAESP is committed to a reciprocal relationship with the U.S. Department of Education with an increased focus on research and development to collaboratively meet the educational needs of our nation's children and the concerns of school principals. ('80, '84, '94*, '04, '09, '13, '14, '15)

Prayer in Public School

NAESP contends that public schools must respect the rights and religious beliefs of all students, staff, and patrons. In accordance with the law, schools must not initiate or organize religious prayer or practice. ('84, '94*, '04*)

Charter Schools

NAESP believes that in order for a charter school to receive state and/or federal funds, it must:

1. be led by a certified principal who has teaching experience;
2. employ highly qualified and appropriately certified staff;
3. be nonprofit and tuition free;
4. be supported by a funding source that does not divert funds from other public schools;
5. be governed by an elected board;
6. meet the same accountability standards as other public schools which include health and safety, fiscal responsibility, curriculum content, academic achievement, state-mandated testing, and disclosure
7. adhere to the same accreditation standards as other public schools
8. be nondiscriminatory in enrolling students and hiring staff;
9. be required to serve students with disabilities and English Language Learners to the same extent as other public schools;
10. provide the same level of support services required of other public schools; and
11. provide its employees the same state benefits as other public schools.

NAESP believes charter schools should not supplant a comprehensive school reform program. ('00, '05, '14, '15)

Virtual Schools

NAESP recognizes that technological advances are expanding educational options for our students. While definitions of the term “virtual schools” vary, NAESP supports online education programs that maintain strong teacher/student relationships and a high level of accountability without diverting funds from public schools. Schools receiving state and federal funds must maintain proven elements of quality education. These elements include, but are not limited to:

1. Certified principals and certified instructors who support and guide the learning process;
2. Educator-developed curricula based on current research and practice;
3. A focus on developing students’ interpersonal, social, collaboration, problem-solving, and communication skills, as well as global citizenship; and
4. Assessments are valid, reliable, and appropriate to the curricula. ('02, '07, '12, '13, '14, '15)

Home Schooling

NAESP acknowledges the right of parents to choose home schooling. NAESP believes it is the responsibility of the state education agency to be accountable for monitoring the education of the home-schooled child.

NAESP believes the following safeguards should be in place for each child:

1. learning in a healthy and safe environment;
2. participation in appropriate social experiences;
3. interaction with students from other social/racial/ethnic groups;
4. aligning the full range of curricular experiences and materials with state standards;
5. guaranteeing instruction by certified and highly qualified persons; -
6. participation in state-mandated assessments. The results of these assessments should not be included in the local public school scores; and
7. compliance with state and federal laws addressing children with special needs. ('93, '03, '04, '09, '13)

Privatization and Outsourcing

NAESP acknowledges that private, for-profit corporations may be contracted to provide educational programs and school services for children attending public schools. When privatization occurs, local, state, and federal laws and guidelines must be followed. Supplemental service providers must be held to the same level of accountability as public schools. ('95, '05, '06, '13)

Programs of Choice

NAESP believes public schools are the cornerstone of American democracy. In order to guarantee an enlightened electorate capable of governing itself, the American people must ensure quality education for each citizen. NAESP believes that students learn most effectively in a school setting that reflects American society and culture.

NAESP believes that programs of choice should not be federally mandated nor draw resources away from public education funding.

Programs of choice should:

1. be locally developed, locally controlled, and carefully constructed;
2. have a clear statement of guidelines, procedures, and academic goals;
3. be held to the same accountability measures as all public schools in the state;
4. include parent involvement in the planning and development of local programs;
5. be an opportunity for local schools, given sufficient and equitable funding, to provide unique programs;
6. take into account "equal access" for all students such as gifted, special education, English Language Learners, students with social emotional challenges or behavior concerns.
7. not exceed state and local determinations of class size;
8. not negatively impact racial or socioeconomic balance;
9. not divert money from public schools to private schools;
10. have as their foundation the approval of the state and local boards of education and be staffed by certified teachers and principals who are highly qualified; and
11. be subject to the same laws and regulations as are all public schools in the state. ('93, '97, '02, '07, '14, 15)

Tuition Tax Credits and Vouchers

NAESP believes that the welfare of this nation is dependent on a strong public education system. Tuition tax credits reduce gross tax revenues designed to support public education for all. Both vouchers and tuition tax credits adversely affect financial support for public education.

NAESP strongly opposes tuition tax credits and education voucher plans that divert public monies to private institutions, including private for-profit schools and programs of choice.

While recognizing the contribution and unique value of private schools, NAESP rejects all proposals that would reduce financial support, and consequently the potential for achieving a high quality of education, in public schools. ('82, '92*, '94, '04*, '14)

Legal Protection for School Personnel

NAESP acknowledges that lawsuits are filed against school personnel as they carry out their assigned responsibilities as agents of the state or school district in interpreting and implementing policies and regulations.

NAESP believes school districts must provide adequate liability protection, financial support, and legal representation for school personnel.

NAESP supports legislation to penalize those who file frivolous lawsuits. ('79, '90*, '96, '06, '12, '15)

Government Support and Accountability for Education

NAESP believes that each child must receive a free and appropriate public education.

NAESP believes federal, state, and local governments must assume accountability and take aggressive action to address social and economic issues arising from such factors as unemployment, immigration, poverty, drugs and alcohol, and other challenges facing the American family.

NAESP believes sufficient and equitable funding for public education is necessary to support an educated, skilled workforce that can compete in a global economy. NAESP opposes referenda, initiatives, and other governing actions that reduce funding for public education. Federal funding should be dispersed through targeted formula grants, not competitive grants. Formula grants ensure that federal funds are spent on the most disadvantaged students, and constitute a reliable source of funds for schools.

NAESP believes principals, national, state, and local leaders, and other interested groups must promote public awareness of the detrimental effects of reducing public education funding.

NAESP believes any federal or state legislation requiring schools to provide programs, services, and/or facilities must provide full funding for those mandates and guarantee funding at the school level.

NAESP believes a system of coordinated services, in which health and human services agencies work to support schools, students, and parents should be established in every state and funded by state and federal resources.

NAESP believes legislative bodies should work with local, state, and national associations to provide information regarding requisite funding.

NAESP believes financial support for public education must be shared by local, state, and federal governments. NAESP recommends increasing financial support that is predictable and continuous with greater building-level authority in the initial allocation, distribution and use of funds at the school level. District administration must include principals in the determination of how state and federal funds will be allocated.

NAESP strongly opposes any reduction of public school funding. However, NAESP understands the need for financial educational expenditure reform. NAESP believes local, state, and federal governments should reexamine tax structures and revise allotment formulas to equalize and increase financial support for education among school districts. ('82, '92, '94, '96, '01, '06, '12, '13, '14, '15)

LEARNING

Curriculum Content and Standards

NAESP believes that elementary and middle school curricula, standards, and instruction must be aligned with research-based best practices. NAESP believes principals and teachers must be involved in the creation and development of curriculum content and standards. ('10, '13)

Student Disabilities

NAESP endorses and supports the basic concepts embodied in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, with emphasis in early identification beginning at birth, guaranteeing that all youngsters, irrespective of disabilities and/or other health impairments, are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. NAESP believes IDEA must be fully funded to meet the needs of all students with disabilities.

When appropriate, NAESP supports inclusion of students with disabilities in classrooms with their peers in their neighborhood schools. To facilitate the successful inclusion of students with disabilities, NAESP believes that appropriate financial resources, professional learning, and support services must follow the child with disabilities.

NAESP also recognizes that compliance with legal mandates presents additional managerial and administrative duties that can impede the orderly and efficient delivery of educational services to all students. NAESP believes that the rights of students with disabilities to an appropriate education are commensurate to those of other students.

NAESP supports continuation and expansion of related services to local districts by appropriate state and community service agencies. Full and expedient funding from the state and federal levels is imperative for local school districts to be able to comply with the provisions of these laws. ('76, '77, '79, '90, '91, '93, '94, '99, '01, '02, '07, '10, '13, '15)

Principal Professional Growth and Learning

NAESP believes all principals must have access to a wide range of relevant, high-quality, and capacity building professional learning opportunities. Professional learning experiences must be aligned with the necessary core competencies of instructional leadership, and based on research-supported standards of practice to effectively lead schools.

NAESP advocates for programs and funding that provide high-quality professional learning opportunities for principals. NAESP believes district must provide sufficient time and resources for principal professional learning opportunities.

NAESP believes federal and state governments and school districts must allocate funds and resources specifically for principal professional learning opportunities, including but not limited to job-embedded learning, utilization of technology (including online learning, networking and productivity tools), and access to mentoring and coaching, and professionally-delivered content outside their schools. Further, school districts must provide principals the time, support, resources and discretion needed for collaboration, networking and participation in professional organizations. ('02, '07, '10, '11, '12, '13, '14, '15)

Early Childhood Education and Care

NAESP recognizes families are the primary caregivers for their children. NAESP also recognizes the increasing need for quality education and child care services outside the home.

Quality early childhood experiences provide the foundation for higher levels of student achievement, future success in school, and economic benefits to society. NAESP believes that early childhood programs should be school-connected and available for all children. NAESP recommends, supports, and encourages schools to implement developmentally appropriate programs that provide social, physical, emotional, and academic experiences for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children.

NAESP supports a continuum of learning from early childhood through grade 3. Principals have a unique opportunity to facilitate the collaboration with community early learning programs in the areas of professional learning, standards alignment, curriculum, and developmentally appropriate assessments. Principals must be provided appropriate individualized professional learning to strengthen their knowledge of early childhood education.

NAESP believes full-day kindergarten programs are essential and should be mandatory. NAESP believes that federal and state funding for school-connected early childhood programs must be a legislative priority and supports collaboration between entities to promote a seamless continuum of services from pre-K to grade 3 without impinging on current funding for public education. ('60, '62, '67, '68, '84 '85, '88, '90, '93, '98, '01, '05, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13, '14, '15)

School and Class Size

NAESP recognizes the research that indicates small schools are more likely to foster a sense of nurturing, belonging, and school community. NAESP endorses elementary school populations of not more than 400.

NAESP advocates that appropriate state agencies and school districts develop plans to facilitate the implementation of a class-size ratio of not more than 15:1 in the elementary grades. ('90, '98, '01, '06)

Drug and Substance Abuse

NAESP recognizes the serious effects of substance abuse by students and others who influence those students.

NAESP recommends increased efforts to improve existing drug and substance abuse prevention programs in schools that provide information about the harmful effects of drugs, including performance-enhancing drugs, tobacco products, alcohol, and other substances.

NAESP recommends cooperative action by appropriate groups to prevent access to and use of these substances by students. NAESP strongly encourages the media and entertainment industry to eliminate any glorification of substance use and abuse portrayed in programming and advertising. ('78, '86, '88, '93, '98, '03, '08, '15)

Student Health and Wellness

NAESP believes that health and wellness are lifelong pursuits that contribute to overall well-being. NAESP recognizes the importance of instruction on fitness, nutrition, use of leisure time, and stress management.

NAESP believes that parents, educators, social agencies, community groups, and health professionals should address students' health and wellness issues to minimize disruptions to their education.

NAESP recognizes the importance of good nutrition. The school meal program should provide nutritious, well-balanced breakfasts and lunches in accordance with state and federal regulations. NAESP believes the sale of snack foods and beverages in schools should reinforce proper nutrition habits and should not be in competition with the school meal programs. Principals should take an active role in promoting participation in federal free or reduced meal programs for eligible participants, but should not be responsible for determining eligibility. NAESP believes that sufficient state and federal monies must be provided for school meal programs.

NAESP believes that students should participate in supervised structured and unstructured physical activities. Daily physical education and recess are important components of a child's physical and social development. NAESP recognizes that the amount of time allocated for physical activity must be developmentally appropriate.

NAESP believes every school should have a full-time certified school counselor or other qualified personnel to ensure age-appropriate guidance for students' emotional and social needs. Every school should have a certified school nurse to attend to students' medical, health, and wellness needs. ('93, '97, '02, '07, '08, '09, '13, 14)

Retention and Social Promotion

NAESP believes that retention and promotion should be based on individual student needs. NAESP believes that the decision to promote or retain students should be based on multiple measures and opposes the use of standardized test scores as the sole criterion. Multiple criteria must take into consideration the social, emotional, behavioral, and physical needs, as well as the academic progress, of the child. NAESP recommends a collaborative approach that includes families and school personnel when making a retention decision. ('91, '92, '00, '01, '06, '11, '15)

Assessment

NAESP recognizes children have diverse abilities, learning potential, and language proficiency that should be identified and developed. In order to determine the individualized needs of students, multiple measures, including fair, valid and reliable formative and summative assessments must be utilized.

NAESP believes before assessment procedures are developed, and for assessment information to be valid and useful, educational standards specifying what students are expected to know and be able to do must be clearly defined through broad-based consensus.

NAESP believes it is necessary to reduce the number of annual assessments required by the federal accountability system. States and local systems should reduce the number of assessments and ensure they are developmentally appropriate.

NAESP believes educators should be involved in the design and use of assessments. Data must be reported in an understandable, timely manner within the context of other relevant school information. Assessment data should inform instruction, be fair, flexible, authentic, and reflect students' academic growth over time. Global language learners should not be required to take state assessments until they are proficient in English.

Prior to the implementation of any technology-based assessments, students must be able to effectively use the technology to ensure that content knowledge rather than proficiency with technology tools is assessed. Adequate and equitable support and resources, including infrastructure, must be provided to staff and students before and during the administration of any assessment.

NAESP opposes the use of standardized assessments as the sole or primary criterion to measure student performance; to rate, grade or rank principal, teacher, student or school effectiveness; to allocate funds; or to take punitive measures against schools and/or school personnel. ('72, '76, '85, '89, '97, '01, '02, '07, '11, '12, '14, 15)

COMMUNITY

American and Global Citizenship

NAESP believes public schools are the cornerstone of American democracy. In order to guarantee an enlightened electorate capable of governing itself, the American people must ensure quality education for each citizen. NAESP believes that students learn most effectively in a school setting that reflects American society and culture.

NAESP believes public schools must work to assure that every child understands good character, problem solving, and compassion, as well as democracy, citizenship, and the significance of living in a global society.

NAESP encourages principals to foster an environment that honors and respects diversity by exerting leadership in the development of instructional programs. NAESP believes schools play a key role in encouraging students to participate in programs that foster good citizenship and develop a sense of responsibility to the community. NAESP endorses the principles of democracy found in strong and active elementary and middle school student leadership opportunities.

NAESP recommends strong home-school partnership programs be developed that encourage positive citizenship and good character.

NAESP believes all schools should embrace curriculum-linked service learning and character education to promote academic achievement, character development, and global citizenship.

NAESP encourages building a strong American and global identity by promoting children's understanding of our nation's shared culture and how we interact with other people throughout the world. ('02, '03, '08, '10, '13, '14)

Relationships with Other Educational Groups

NAESP is a leader in the advocacy and support for elementary and middle-level principals and other national and international education leaders in their commitment to all children.

NAESP believes it is essential to enlist support from, and to work consistently with, other education groups. NAESP encourages the development of processes and structures that will ensure continued collaboration among professional organizations. NAESP believes the autonomy of each association must be preserved. ('73, '74, '90*, '00*, '05, '10, '14)

Changing Demographics

NAESP recognizes that changing demographics have a critical impact on the delivery of educational programs and the ability of schools to meet state and federal standards.

NAESP believes the federal government should provide adequate financial assistance for programs and services to meet the changing demographics of schools and the needs of each student. Special consideration should be given to those districts and schools with the highest density of disadvantaged and high need students. This increased federal funding is needed, with flexibility, for individual districts and schools to design appropriate programs.

NAESP believes that principals should be involved in careful planning with boards of education, staff, parents, and members of the community to meet the challenges of changing enrollments and the resulting budget implications. Principals should exercise a leadership role in devising alternative ways of utilizing staff and maintaining local school programs to meet the needs of students, regardless of family patterns. ('74, '75, '84, '94*, '04, '09, '10, '13, '14, '15)

Community Involvement in Schools

NAESP believes principals should actively support coordinated local efforts for community involvement to strengthen educational opportunities for students.

Schools are community centers and should be utilized for instructional, child care, civic, social and recreational programs as deemed acceptable by individual school district policies and procedures. NAESP believes that schools should promote the use of volunteers to support school programs. Background checks must be required for volunteers working in schools. Principals should ensure that volunteers work under the direct supervision of appropriate school personnel, but not diagnose, prescribe, or formally evaluate the work of children. ('85, '95, '02, '07, '12, '14, '15)

National Special Observance Days

NAESP encourages principals to support the planning of programs and curricular experiences commemorating people and events of historical and cultural significance to the United States. These may include but are not limited to:

1. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
2. Presidents' Day
3. Memorial Day
4. Independence Day
5. Labor Day
6. Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance (September 11)
7. Constitution Day
8. Columbus Day
9. Veterans' Day
10. Thanksgiving Day ('78, '84, '94*, '02, '07, '13)

Parent/Guardian Involvement

NAESP believes parents/guardians bear the primary responsibility to assist children in developing their full potential.

NAESP maintains that principals should take an active role in assisting parents/guardians with the acquisition of skills and knowledge of resources that support children's intellectual reasoning abilities and personal, social, and emotional development.

NAESP advocates that parents/guardians be active participants in the education of their children at home and at school. Parents/guardians and school personnel must work cooperatively in fostering a deep respect for achievement and learning.

NAESP commends the efforts of volunteers and parent/teacher groups and alliances within U.S. schools. These individuals and groups serve as child advocates and provide valuable support to the success of all learners. ('84, '92, '95, '05, '08)

