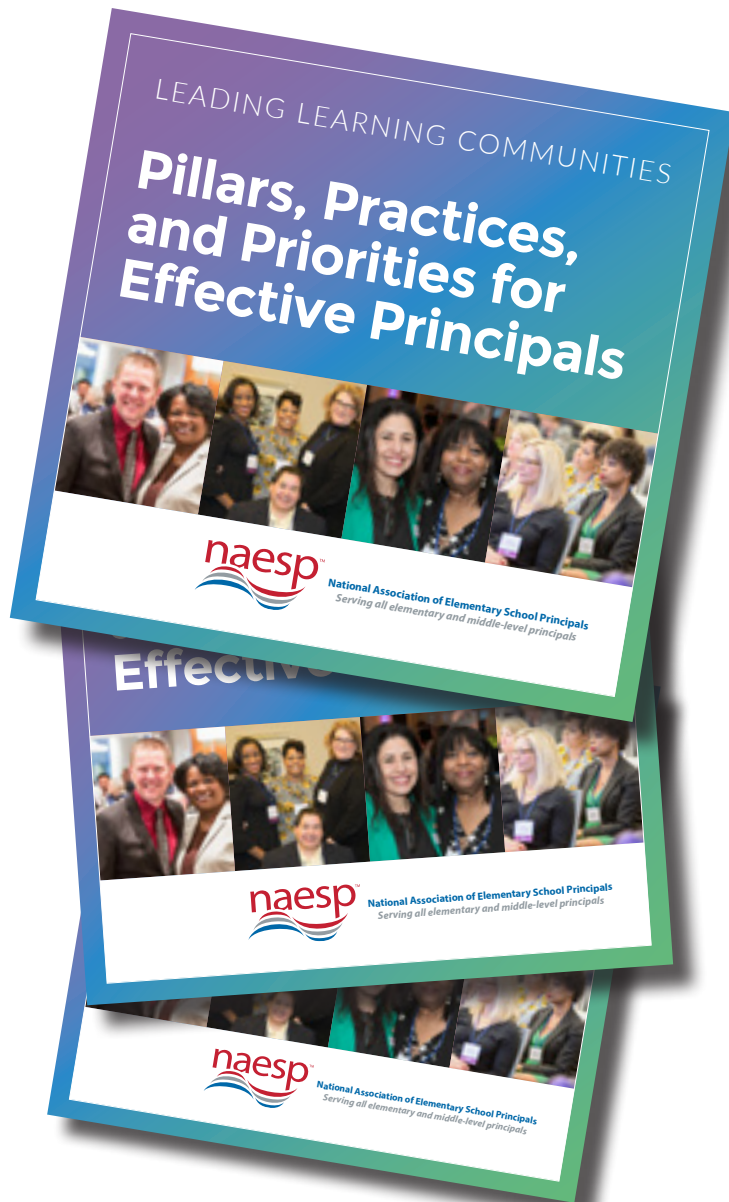


# A Philosophy of the Principalship

The pillars, practices, and priorities of principal leadership

By L. Earl Franks, Ed.D., CAE



In its nearly 100-year history, NAESP has established itself as a leader in many areas, but none so much as in defining the competencies of what principals should know and be able to do. For nearly two decades, *Leading Learning Communities* has been a foundational and essential resource for the nation's elementary and middle-level principals.

In 2001, NAESP set out to define standards for what principals should know and be able to do. The resulting *Leading Learning Communities* document put forth six standards covering how principals should set high expectations for students, create a culture of adult learning, and actively engage communities. NAESP revised the body of work in 2008 with more emphasis on the development of the whole child, the changing global economy, the need to rethink the learning day, and the increasing amounts of data available to school leaders.

Since the 2008 publication, the principal role has become increasingly complex. Findings from NAESP's "Pre-K–8 School Leader in 2018: A 10-Year Study" provide insights into key trends affecting public schools and school leadership. Social-emotional learning, for example, has emerged as a top issue, and addressing the increase of students with emotional problems ranks as a top concern. And with minorities making up the majority of public school students while the majority of teachers and principals are white, leading with an equity lens has become even more crucial as educators strive toward closing the achievement gap in an increasingly racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse society.

The 2019 update is informed by these trends and shaped by experienced principals in diverse schools across the country; it is designed to be a practical resource for principals at every career stage. Our hope is that the pillars, practices, and priorities defined in *Leading Learning Communities*—and explored in this issue of *Principal* magazine—will help principals structure their practice to focus on aspects of school leadership that will have long-lasting impact. □

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*Leading Learning Communities* is intentionally aligned to the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, which NAESP played a pivotal role in developing, and to pre-existing NAESP mentoring standards. The full guide is available for purchase on Amazon and at [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org).