

## My Two Cents

*If you had an extra \$100,000 added to your budget, what would you do with it?*

I would provide daily, regularly scheduled collaboration time for every grade-level team by making our part-time art, music, and PE teachers, and library intern full time. Students would benefit from the additional time spent in educating the whole child. Teachers would have additional professional learning time to plan, create, share, observe, analyze, evaluate, celebrate, and refine their instructional practices; to build their capacity; to ensure fidelity of instruction and implementation; and to help all students successfully achieve our high expectations and goals.

*Rosie O'Brien Vojtek  
Principal  
Ivy Drive Elementary School  
Bristol, Connecticut*

If I had an extra \$100,000, I would establish a Global Studies Institute as a school within a school. We would focus on developing 21st century skills of collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity for all students. We would use a problem-based learning philosophy to create authentic learning environments. Tapping technology, we would be able to create classrooms without borders, working with schools around the globe.

*Mai-Lon Wong  
Principal  
Gavilan Peak School  
Anthem, Arizona*

I would use extra money to enhance our school and help lighten the load. For kids, I would buy new playground equipment, new software and licenses for labs, new books, new electronics, etc. For staff, I would I buy some fun new electronics, new equipment, and supplies, and try to find ways

**New to *Principal*.** This new section gives our readers an opportunity to voice their thoughts and experiences with us and fellow NAESP members.

This page will feature your letters to the editor (e-mail your letter to [publications@naesp.org](mailto:publications@naesp.org)); a Legislative Dispatch, which will offer first-hand accounts from Federal Relations Coordinators about their interactions with their local legislators; and responses to My Two Cents, in which principals offer their thoughts on a particular question.



to get extra help in classrooms.

*Dwight Liddiard  
East Meadows Elementary  
Spanish Fork, Utah*

Read more responses and submit your own by visiting NAESP's blog, the Principals' Office, at <http://naesp.typepad.com>.

## Legislative Dispatch

I had heard all of the messages imploring me to become involved in the political process, and consistently avoided this important duty to my students, school, and community.

Thank goodness for NAESP and the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association for their cajoling and encouragement. Because of them, I did become involved in the legislative process and it has been a wonderful experience that I continue to enjoy.

My journey in advocating for children and school leaders began with several visits to Washington, D.C. With information and encouragement from NAESP, I was able to sound intelligent when discussing important positions regarding education with federal legislators. Here are some important points I have learned along the way that could serve you well on your advocacy journey.

Your representative or senator has a staff that will be your first point of contact. The interns or legislative aides who answer the phone will usually be college students or recent graduates. More than likely, they may be from your hometown or region, have parents who know someone you know, or you may have contacts at their colleges or high schools. I always try to make some type of connection with the folks in the legislative offices.

One intern was from my hometown and knew many of the same townspeople as me.

Public relations is important, so I always offer to take a picture of our legislator visiting with a constituent. You would be amazed at how many local papers will publish the photo. Hang those pictures on your office wall.

Invite your senator or representative and his or her aides to visit your school. Use your proximity to airports or connections to newspapers to your advantage. I was able to secure several visits to my school by my congressman and one of my senator's aides because I am minutes from a large airport.

Finally, avail yourself of the information and tips provided by NAESP. They will lead you toward becoming an effective advocate for children. □

*Mark Terry  
Principal  
Eubanks Intermediate School  
Southlake, Texas*

Learn more about NAESP's advocacy program and how you can participate at <http://capwiz.com/naesp>.