

My Two Cents

What's the most difficult part of closing out the school year and what do you most look forward to as the school year comes to an end?

One of my two schools of which I am the principal is closing due to budget issues. The children whose school is closing are all coming to my other school, which is 10 minutes away. Therefore, I am looking forward to having all of my students together on one campus. The difficult part of closing will be not having a place for all of the outstanding teachers and staff who will be placed in other schools. Some staff will make little money and have a long drive from where they live. Tough times call for tough decisions and my heart goes out to all that are losing an integral part of their community.

*Susan Summers Persis
Principal
W. F. Burns Oak Hill Elementary
Indian River Elementary
Edgewater and Oak Hill, Florida*

The most difficult part of closing out the school year is that everything begins to “snowball” at once: end-of-year testing, benchmarks, field trips, awards assemblies, paperwork, purchase orders, etc. None of it can be done earlier due to the nature of the task; therefore, it gets rather overwhelming. But what I most look forward to as the school year comes to an end is seeing the growth of the students and the progress they have made throughout the year. And then, of course—summer vacation!

*Tammy D. Condren
Principal
Marion C. Early Elementary
Morrisville, Missouri*

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

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); 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.



Legislative Dispatch

U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, U-Hawaii, and Amy Asselbaye, his chief of staff, met with me recently. He is in full agreement with the changes in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), currently No Child Left Behind (NCLB), proposed by NAESP.

NCLB is an authorization bill—one that does not require monies but allows the expenditure of funds if any are appropriated. When NCLB was enacted, funding to support its provisions was promised. Unfortunately, that promise was not kept and the law has remained underfunded.

Abercrombie is against any version of NCLB in the ESEA reauthorization because:

- We are now bound to the NCLB bill with no entitlement to funding, no matter how many changes are made.

- We are also under the umbrella of its coerciveness when it was first introduced—namely, the punishment that schools and staff face if adequate yearly progress is not made.

Abercrombie would support the creation of a new version of the ESEA that is fully funded and does not include the negative consequences (sanctions) of NCLB. A new reauthorization bill must be created, and this will take some time to achieve.

The congressman suggested that all schools resort to what is and has been working until new legislation can be written. Abercrombie told me he would like to see funding increased and sent directly to districts or schools so that schools can manage their own changes and monitor their own growth until the new reauthorization bill comes out.

Abercrombie said that he does not mean to shock anyone with his stance. He will continue to support the efforts of public schools in whatever he can do. We spent some time talking about English-language learners and their educational challenges. Abercrombie was delighted to find that funding for smaller learning communities is working and he stated that he will continue to support its efforts.

It was a most interesting and informative visit for both sides and another visit will take place again later this year. □

*Ruth Silberstein
Principal
Palolo Elementary School
Honolulu, Hawaii*

Ruth Silberstein serves as an NAESP Key Contact. Learn more about NAESP's advocacy program and how you can participate at <http://capwiz.com/naesp>.