



My Two Cents

How has the recession affected students and staff in your school?

We have noticed a significant number of students moving out of state or leaving our school zone for one reason or another. And our projected enrollment for the fall is down nearly 75 students from this past fall. We were close to 700 students when we opened in August 2008. For the upcoming school year, our projection is 622. We believe this is due to parents losing jobs, taking other jobs in other states, or moving in with family members.

*Barbara Buys, Principal
Kimball Wiles Elementary
Gainesville, Florida*

Recession impacts everyone—schools as well as businesses. As one would expect, we see more multifamily homes and increases in free and reduced-price lunches. Enrichment activities, such as field trips, are being limited or eliminated. Teachers are also impacted, as teaching positions have been eliminated due to budget cuts resulting in class-size increases, which impacts student achievement.

*Phyllis Jones, Principal
Baker Elementary School
Acworth, Georgia*

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

Research Digest

K-8 Students Make Gains

A report by the Center for Education Policy (CEP), a national independent advocate for public education, reveals that elementary and middle schools performed better on assessment tests and had greater achievement gains across the board compared with high school students. CEP studied 50 states' reading and math assessments between 2002 and 2008, and found that NCLB's focus on proficiency has not shortchanged higher and lower achieving students.

CEP revealed that, even though NCLB creates incentives for schools to focus on ensuring students reach the proficient level, states posted gains at the advanced and basic-and-above levels as well. At the basic-and-above level, 73 percent of the trend lines analyzed across various subjects and grades showed gains. At the advanced level, 71 percent of the trend lines analyzed showed improvement.

Gains were somewhat more prevalent at the proficient-and-above level than at the other two achievement levels. Of the trend lines analyzed at the proficient-and-above level, 83 percent displayed gains, while 15 percent showed declines.

At the advanced level, the size of the gains in elementary and middle school math were close or equal to those at the proficient level and there were more upward trends than downward. These findings generally point to a significant movement of students from proficient to advanced. At the basic level, too, there were more gains than declines. Although some states posted declines at the basic level, most were slight.

More gains have been made in math than in reading, according to the report. The size of the percentage gains across all states was greater in math than in reading, data that are confirmed by the results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

To read the report, go to www.cep-dc.org.



Early Math Spells Success

Opportunities for preschoolers to learn mathematics are currently inadequate, particularly for those in low-income groups, according to a report from the National Research Council, which is intended to inform the efforts of Head Start, state-funded preschool programs, curriculum developers, and teachers.

The amount of time devoted to and focused on mathematics needs to be increased in all public and private preschool settings, the report recommends. Currently mathematics activities are often embedded in other lessons and secondary to other learning goals. But emerging research indicates that learning experiences in which mathematics is the secondary rather than the primary goal are less effective for promoting math learning.

The report indicates that any serious effort to improve early childhood math instruction will need to include licensure and accreditation processes that assess teachers' and programs' competence in teaching math.

Opportunities to receive high-quality math instruction are especially important for low-income children, the committee said. Children from low-income families, on average, demonstrate lower levels of competence in math prior to entering school, and these gaps persist or widen as schooling continues. Providing these children with high-quality mathematics instruction early on can provide a foundation for future learning and can help address long-term systematic inequities in educational outcomes.

Visit www.nap.edu to download the report.

Members in the Spotlight

Congratulations are in order for the following NAESP members, who were honored by *The Washington Post* with the 2008–2009 Distinguished Educational Leadership Award. Each year, The Washington Post Company Educational Foundation calls for nominations and recognizes those principals who go beyond the day-to-day demands of their position to create an exceptional educational environment.

Cynthia H. Hanklin, Deep Run Elementary School, Howard County, MD

Virginia R. McGraw, J.P. Ryon Elementary School, Charles County, MD

Gayle J. Thyrring, Falmouth Elementary School, Stafford County, VA

Paul Vickers, Mill Run Elementary School, Loudon County, VA

Marypat Warter, Claude Thompson Elementary School, Fauquier County, VA

Patricia Zissio, Lyles Crouch Traditional Academy, Alexandria City, VA

Promising Practices

Our school receives tremendous support from the community because we seek, invite, involve, and accommodate community functions with our school. Once they are inside, our school becomes home for numerous community groups, including town committees, historical society, Scouts, town recreation program, and numerous adult programs. Our school has become a community center and receives the support it needs to be successful. Yours can too, if you invite, involve, and accommodate the community.

*Wayne T. Cooke, Principal
Fair Haven Grade School
Fair Haven, Vermont*

Anytime we can recognize students for their efforts, they are more likely to respond positively. We have entered into several community partnerships with local businesses to provide student incentives. Teachers use certificates to recognize students for various achievements, such as perfect attendance, honor roll, student of the month, or general class improvement. We use assemblies, local newspapers, school board reports, and principal's luncheons to reinforce the honors.

*Norman C. Graham, Principal
Sturgis Elementary School
Sturgis, South Dakota*

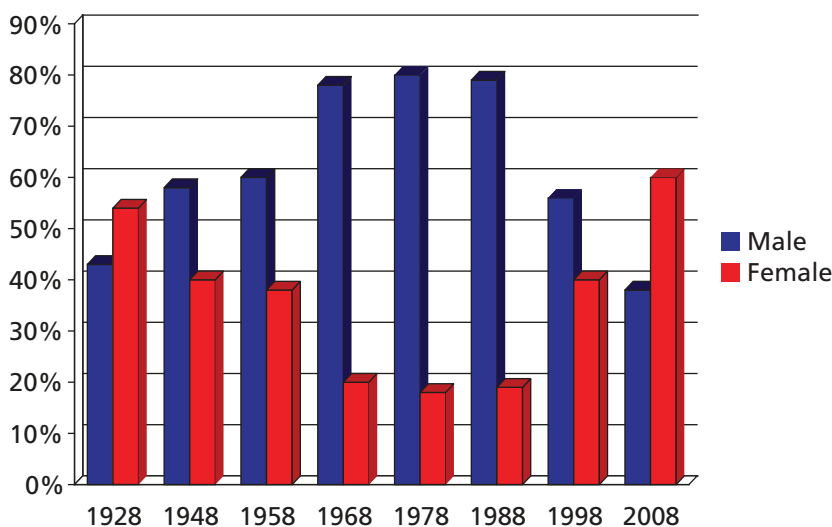
How can a parent say “no” after receiving a personal phone call from a teacher or another parent about volunteering in their child’s school? It is difficult! Our School Improvement Council decided that, rather than sending letters to parents asking them to volunteer at school, the council would take the time to call parents personally and ask for assistance. The number of volunteers increased tremendously!

*Michelle A. Wilson
St James-Gaillard Elementary School
Eutawville, South Carolina*

The Principalship at a Glance

For about 40 years, male elementary principals significantly outnumbered their female counterparts. Then 1998 data showed a more even distribution of men and women in the field. However, in most recent years, there has been a significant shift toward more female elementary school principals.

Gender of Elementary Principals, 1928-2008*



* A study was not conducted in 1938.

Source: *The K-8 Principal in 2008: A 10-Year Study* (NAESP, 2009)