



My Two Cents

What's the No. 1 reason why you've chosen to attend NAESP's convention over the years?

The No. 1 reason is to continue on my quest to be a life-long learner. NAESP affords me the opportunity to explore new topics, learn more about cutting-edge technology, and meet others in my field to learn from and share my knowledge with.

*Andrea Campo, Principal
Leo Bernabi Elementary School
Spencerport, New York*

Attending NAESP convention every year is one of the best things I do for myself! I look forward to the inspiring keynote addresses, and the multitude of sectional presentations offers plenty of choices that help me enhance my professional practice.

*Barbara Nagengast, Principal
Homestead Elementary School
Eagle River, Alaska*

The convention reaffirms the important work that principals do each and every day for the future of our children. I always leave feeling refreshed and ready to continue the good fight for children and their education.

*Donna T. Fagerholm, Principal
Sinclair Elementary School
Manassas, Virginia*

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

Research Digest

Progress for Students With Disabilities?

A report by the Center on Education Policy (CEP) analyzes the progress states have made in raising academic achievement for students with disabilities. CEP analyzed results from state reading and mathematics tests from 2006 through 2008 to discern if academic achievement has been raised for students with disabilities.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act mandates that by 2014 all public school students who receive special education services due to an identified disability must perform at the “proficient” level on state tests. NCLB also requires schools to close achievement gaps between students with disabilities and nondisabled students.

The report's main conclusion is that states lack reliable data to get a full picture of academic achievement for students with disabilities. This problem stems from the fact that states administer multiple types of assessments, including the tests given to all students and alternate tests, to students with disabilities, and each test carries a different definition of proficient performance. The number of students with disabilities who take alternate assessments also varies greatly from state to state and from year to year, making it difficult to track progress over time.

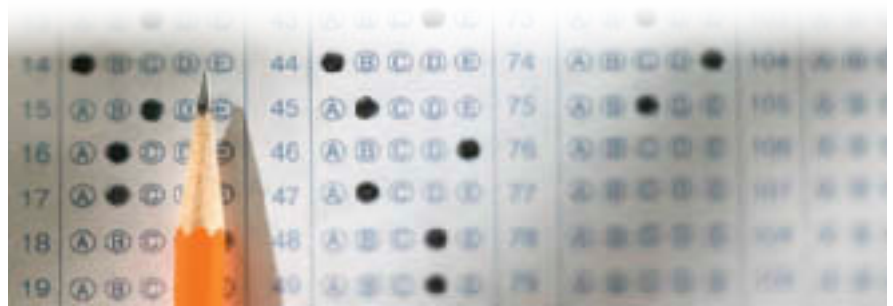
The report does conclude, however, that students with disabilities in grade 4 have improved in reading and math at all measured levels of achievement. The report also concludes that academic performance between disabled students and non-disabled students often exceeds 30 percentage points on both reading and math assessments. Read the full report at www.cep-dc.org.

Charter School Performance

A recent report by Stanford University's Center for Research on Education Outcomes concludes that charter school students are not learning as well as students enrolled in traditional public schools and that the academic quality of charter schools varies greatly across the country.

Using data collected from 15 states and the District of Columbia, the report's authors paired 84 percent of charter school students from these states with a virtual twin from a noncharter school. The pairings were based on demographics, English-language proficiency, and participation in special education or subsidized lunch programs. The pairs' improvements on state reading and math achievement tests were then examined using a pooled nationwide analysis of charter school impacts, a state-by-state analysis of charter school results, and an examination of the performance of charter schools against their local alternatives.

According to the report, the results of this three-pronged analysis indicate that charter school students do notably worse than their peers who are enrolled in the traditional public school system. But while the overall conclusion argues that charter schools are not as beneficial as some education reformers claim, some positive aspects can be attributed to charter school education. For example, students who live in poverty and students who are English-language learners fare better in charter schools than traditional public schools. Students also tend to fare better in charter schools over time. First-year charter students often suffer a decline in learning that could be attributed to other factors, while students in their second and third years at charter schools tend to see a significant reversal in academic achievement that often results in positive learning gains. Download the full report at <http://credo.stanford.edu>.



Schools and the 2010 Census

With billions of dollars of federal and local funding at stake, it is important for principals to recognize the importance of the 2010 census. Many schools are actively involved in teaching lessons and conducting projects that urge census participation. Take the following five steps to activate your school's participation.

Review your principal's kit. Last August, principals received kits containing promotional materials about the Census in Schools (CIS) program, indicating the availability of materials and encouraging teacher participation.

View CIS lessons online. K-2, 3-4, and 5-8 lessons are available online at www.census.gov/schools. All lessons include cross-curricular references, reproducible student worksheets, printable assessment activities, and skill pages.

Sign up for the CIS online educator newsletter. The monthly newsletter published by CIS during the school year contains timely information about CIS activities and creative suggestions for integrating Census Bureau-produced data into the classroom setting.

Include CIS as an agenda item for teacher in-service and faculty meetings. Be certain that faculty know the importance of census participation and encourage teachers to use the online resources available.

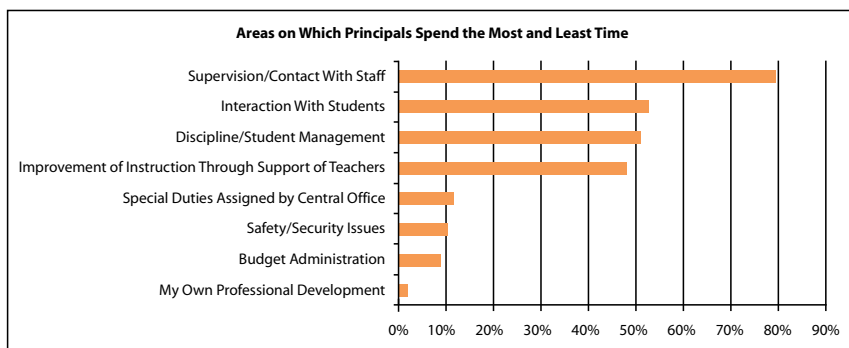
Choose a date now for your school's Census in Schools week. Select a special calendar week during February or March at a time that best enables your school to focus on learning about the census and sharing the information with the community. Plan a variety of activities focused on a complete and accurate count in your community.



Source: Census Bureau's Census in Schools program (www.census.gov/schools)

The Principalship at a Glance

Respondents to NAESP's 2008 survey of K-8 principals were asked to select areas on which they spend the most time. Nearly 80 percent indicated that supervision/contact with staff is a priority. However, fewer than 2 percent identified "my own professional development" as a priority for his or her time.



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

Promising Practices

One Wednesday a month, I take K-8 students for 90 minutes and lead them through a mini-thematic unit of study. Middle school students serve as team leaders and assist in planning and preparing activities. Teachers meet in another classroom to review and revise curriculum maps, identifying gaps and overlaps to improve the school's academic program. Teachers appreciate having the time to work together, and students get an opportunity to develop management and leadership skills.

*Gail J. Holzer, Principal
Redeemer Lutheran School
Oakmont, Pennsylvania*

We obtained a grant to establish a computer lab that parents and students could use after school. They can work together to research assignments, write papers, or work on skills using the Internet. On Thursdays, the lab is open to parents all day so they can improve their own computer skills. We offer workshops to support their learning efforts. A certified teacher is available each afternoon to provide assistance. This is a very good resource for our ELL learners.

*Janice O. Barton, Principal
Oak Grove Central Elementary School
Hernando, Mississippi*

Staff meetings begin with a time for accolades. I begin by recognizing individuals for anything ranging from volunteering to help with bus duty to answering the phone when the secretary was busy. We then give staff time to recognize each other. Such recognition boosts morale and creates a climate of appreciation.

*Diane L. Kittelberger, Principal
Genoa Elementary School
Massillon, Ohio*

Read more promising practices at www.naesp.org/promisingpractices.aspx.