

## All Means All

A look back and into the future of NAESP and school leadership

BY L. EARL FRANKS, ED.D., CAE



Everything we do at NAESP revolves around our mission: to lead in the advocacy and support for elementary and middle-level principals and other education leaders in their commitment to all children.

In our schools, the most important responsibility for a principal is to ensure that every student has the opportunity to receive a high-quality education. Too often, however, “all students” means some or most.

As NAESP celebrates its 100th year of service to the nation’s pre-K–8 principals and other education leaders, I turn our attention to the preamble in the NAESP Bylaws. This preamble states our purpose, aims, and justification—why our organization was created. It is just as relevant—possibly more so—in 2021 as it was a century ago.

### Preamble

*We, the members of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, believe that the focal point of the school is the education of the child and that the educational program must help all children achieve their potential as contributing members of society.*

*We believe that in providing the foundation for the formal education young Americans receive, our elementary and middle schools must strive for excellence. Further, we accept the finding—and the challenge that goes with it—that the primary responsibility for the development of an effective educational program in each school is vested in the principal.*

*We are dedicated to ensuring that every child in America receives a quality education. We care about our country by caring deeply about children.*

*We believe that no barrier should separate a child from the best education a school can offer; that race, sex, ethnic heritage, geography, social or economic status may not be used to deny a child the opportunity to acquire a solid foundation in reading, writing, mathematics, critical thinking, and the values of friendship, compassion, honesty, and self-esteem.*

*We are committed to instructional excellence. We support the aspirations of teachers everywhere to give each child a quality*

*school experience. We accept the challenge of the research showing that quality education in every school depends on the expertise, dedication, and leadership of the principal.*

How do we actually help all students? It won’t happen in a silo, and it doesn’t fall solely on the shoulders of principals. In the most literal sense, it takes a *community*—and NAESP is a big part of that community. Our role as an association is to provide school leaders with a solid support system as they work with their stakeholders—everyone from district-level administrators and the school faculty to community partners and school families—to determine what *all* of their students need for a quality education.

As we look to the future of education and of our association, the goal is clear: We’ll go beyond striving for equality alone to give our nation’s students—all of them—a truly equitable school experience, no matter their race, gender, ethnicity, learning level, physical capabilities, or socioeconomic status. Reaching some or most of our students isn’t good enough.

Together, by continuing to advocate for principals and students and serving as a support system, we will make sure that “all” means *all*. ●

---

L. Earl Franks, Ed.D., CAE, is executive director of NAESP.



Connect with him on Twitter at @efranksnaesp