



# Newsletter

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*Supporting Alaska's Principals – Advocating for Alaska's Children*

An Affiliate of NAESP

## AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER IS...

By Ruth Michalscheck, AAESP President

It's that time when we simultaneously begin lamenting the speed with which this year has passed and preparing for the next. These plans almost always include the necessity of interviewing and hiring new teachers - one of the most important tasks undertaken each year. New staff members have the potential to impact the entire school climate; socially, instructionally and professionally. While the responsibility for successful hiring rests solely with the principal, the results effect the entire building. Consequently I think that faculty members should be invited to participate, as a team approach results in the most harmonious selection. It ensures diversity of perspectives and provides teachers the opportunity to influence decisions that will directly impact them and the school.



Before the interviewing process can begin it is essential to determine what we are looking for in a new hire. Obviously we want a teacher who will blend into the milieu of the building, who will share our professional goals and most importantly who will be able to most effectively deal with our population. Research consistently shows that student achievement is directly related to effective teaching. However arriving at a definition of an effective teacher is easier said than done.

Each year my staff and I wrestle with the notion of what comprises an effective teacher. We know that the effects of these teachers are long lasting. Who doesn't remember that special teacher?

Words such as caring, humorous, knowledgeable, fair, demanding come to mind, but it is very difficult to produce a specific definition of an effective teacher.

A random sampling of teachers at Government Hill Elementary produced the following definitions of effective teachers:

- \*Someone who combines curriculum and social learning in the classroom and differentiates his/her instruction for all students.
- \*Someone who helps kids make connections.
- \*Someone who can get students to perform to their highest standards.
- \*Someone who is extremely knowledgeable in his/her specific content area and is able to effectively and efficiently communicate this knowledge to his/her students. This teacher must also place emphasis on teaching skills that will assist the students in the social arena.... i.e., effective communication, creative conflict resolution and general manners which the society deems important.
- \*Someone who sets clear & reasonable expectations, is flexible, meets the learning levels of all students, and has a sense of humor.
- \*Someone who is prepared, enthusiastic, caring, knowledgeable about curriculum, is organized and has good classroom management skills.
- \*Effective teaching is the intentional act of creating conditions in the classroom that help students learn. An effective teacher establishes a community of learners where the teacher has an active role in modeling learning and guiding students to discovery.

No doubt as you read these you can think of some wonderful additions. Really it's just further proof of the incredible range of characteristics necessary and the breadth of knowledge that teachers must have to provide a successful educational experience for all students. Although at first read these definitions may appear very daunting I find them comforting and validating in two ways. The first is that it affirms my long held belief that "we are only as good as the people around us". This reflective and articulate group of teachers assures me that a capable and competent staff surrounds me. The second is that I can be assured of a wonderful depth of perspective when the inevitable interviews begin.

In preparing for your task of new teacher selection, I encourage you to ask your staff for their definitions of effective teachers. Listen to them carefully and combine what they tell you with your professional knowledge and experience to help you develop the questions for these all important interviews.

May you all be blessed with the difficulty of choosing between only outstanding teachers during the upcoming hiring season.

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## AAESP TELECONFERENCES

Using a grant from NAESP, the AAESP Board of Directors was able to offer two teleconferences in February with principals in rural or small site districts. While schedules did not allow everyone to participate we did have good discussions on several issues. The AAESP Board will use the information when they participate in the Principals Juneau Fly-In 4/ 23-25.

**PERS/TRS:** It's no surprise that this is a major topic. Unless the legislature settles on an answer that does not have districts paying the indebtedness from their operating budgets, reduction in staff is a given. In small districts this can be devastating. In one district there has been discussion of eliminating the principal position and having head teachers or teacher teams handle administrative duties. Uncertainty and anxiety over this issue is already negatively impacting both large and small districts.

**State Construction Money:** Small city districts reported that with the cost of construction skyrocketing, recent bond votes are no longer adequate to fund badly needed construction and renovation. Even with the 70-30 State split these small communities cannot afford the bonds.

**Early Education Funding:** While we'd all like to see this happen it is understandable that smaller districts are forced to make decisions early that are not easily undone. When staff leave or plan to leave a rural area, they are often not available to return.

**Principal Contracts:** In larger districts there is a collective bargaining agreement that determines salaries. In small districts that is not usually the case. This makes it difficult for individual principals to "negotiate" any salary or raise in salary. The Board is discussing ways to set that up for the future. *All suggestions are welcome.*

**Attendance:** You might assume that in a small village or town, attendance and truancy are not issues. However that is not the case and often solutions are more difficult due to personalities. Rep. Jay Ramas of Fairbanks introduced HB 52 which ties drivers license for those under 18 to enrollment in a program leading to high school graduation (or equivalent) or to graduation itself. This may not be effective in rural areas.

**AS14.30.171 Psychiatric & Behavioral Evaluations:** While larger districts have put together procedures to comply with this new law, it seems that smaller areas without on site Type C certificated folks do have some concerns. Most places provide a list of resources for parents, but these may not be easily accessed.

**Request from the AAESP Board:** If you have any additional ideas or concerns on the topics listed above or on any other topic you would like discussed at the Fly-In, please take a few minutes to contact Ruth Michalscheck, President ([michalscheck\\_ruth@asdk12.org](mailto:michalscheck_ruth@asdk12.org)), Tim Doran, State Rep. ([tdoran@northstar.k12.ak.us](mailto:tdoran@northstar.k12.ak.us)), or [aaesp@alaska.net](mailto:aaesp@alaska.net).

Many, many thanks to those who participated.

## PRINCIPALSHIP INTERVIEWS TOPICS AND HINTS

This is the time of year when new and some experienced principals are interviewing for administrative positions for 2007 - 2008. Recently the AAESP Board of Directors held a teleconference with our Aspiring Principals to discuss their concerns and offer some hints to help their preparation.

We thought we'd share these "points to ponder" from that teleconference:

### **Communicate knowledgeably on the following topics:**

- ~ Ways to build academic achievement,
- ~ Importance of the whole curriculum at each level - know specifics,
- ~ Assessment driven curriculum,
- ~ Title I - impact and responsibilities,
- ~ NCLB and AYP - School status/ implications,
- ~ Working with diverse populations,
- ~ Parent Involvement with diverse populations,
- ~ School Safety,
- ~ School wide discipline plan,

### **Hints for a successful interview:**

- ~ Give a sense of who you are. Articulate your strengths and goals.
- ~ Clearly state your hopes and expectations for the students - use this as a basis for describing any plans or programs you may want to put in place.
- ~ Be able to look at data, understand what it means and clearly communicate that to teachers and parents.
- ~ Know something about the school ahead of time so that your interview answers relate to that reality. Remember each school community has its own culture. What worked in one may need to be modified for another.
- ~ How would you introduce a new program? How would you build consensus among the staff?
- ~ Be familiar with district and community resources. Be able to share how you might use these. (Before beginning in a new school/district it is often helpful to make and appointment to visit with Central Office departments to learn how to work effectively with them for kids.)
- ~ Have questions for the interviewer or interview team to help clarify their expectations.
- ~ **If you can share who you are, your vision and goals, you will have a successful interview.** If you get the job you are most likely a good match for that community. If you do not get the job, you have had a valuable experience from which to learn and move forward.

## FALL PRINCIPALS' CONFERENCE

"CSI : Alaska (Comprehensive School Improvement)  
October 14 - 16 2007

The Conference Committee is now accepting proposals for sectional presentations. These slots fill up quickly.

**DON'T DELAY SUBMIT ON LINE TODAY!**

[www.alaskaprincipal.org/CFP\\_2007.html](http://www.alaskaprincipal.org/CFP_2007.html)

## ARTISTS IN SCHOOLS: CONTINUED LOWER FEES FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR

The Alaska State Council on the Arts' Artists in Schools Program (AIS) is maintaining a decrease in the matching grant funds paid by schools throughout Alaska for the upcoming school year (2007-2008). At the same time, fees paid to professional teaching artists participating in the program have increased. This funding is made possible in part through the Rasmuson Foundation's Arts Education Initiative. The Artists in Schools Program is administered by the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

A goal of lowering fees to schools is to attract new schools to the program that were previously unable to afford the residency costs. The AIS Program makes opportunities possible for students and teachers to work with professional teaching artists through a full-time residency in their school for a minimum of two weeks.

Need more information?

Online grant applications are available at:

<http://alaska.cgweb.org>

●Deadline for applications: April 2, 2007. Applications and backup material **MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE ASCA OFFICE BY 5:00 p.m. April 2, 2007**. Late applications will not be forwarded to the Council or considered for funding.

●For more information about the State Arts Council's **Artists in Schools Program**, call Program Director Susan Olson at (907) 269-6682, email [ais\\_aksca@eed.state.ak.us](mailto:ais_aksca@eed.state.ak.us), or call toll free: 1-888-278-7424.

Did you know?

The arts help develop cognitive skills as well as a number of strengths and capacities that contribute to better educational outcomes. Benefits include:

- Abstract reasoning skill essential to learning
- School attendance and engagement and cognitive involvement in academic work
- Creative thinking and problem-solving
- Communication skills
- Self-confidence, social skills, conflict resolution skills and community-building skills.

## ENTERPRISE HIGH SCHOOL IN ALABAMA – HELP NEEDED

Dr. John Draper, Executive Director, Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS)

John visited Enterprise shortly after the devastating tornado struck damaging the school complex consisting of the high school, elementary school and central office. The television news gave us many details and John has said that the stories of individual heroism by both teachers and students continue to grow. The task of rebuilding is a daunting one.

John writes: " School leaders from around the nation have contacted our office expressing a willingness to help. Many want to offer books, supplies and equipment - but the thing Enterprise school leaders need most is money. Once they secure a temporary school site they will have a multitude of unexpected costs involved in relocation 1200 high school students and 600 elementary students. We have established a fund for Enterprise Schools at the CLAS office. I'm sure that there will be many other equally good ways to contribute to tornado relief, but the funds collected in this account will go directly to the school principal to be used for costs not covered by Red Cross and other funds. **Make your check payable to CLAS and mark it "For Enterprise Schools" . Mail to CLAS , PO Box 428, Montgomery, AL 36101-0428. We'll send it to them right away! Thank you for your generosity."**

## NATIONAL ELEMENTARY HONOR SOCIETY

At a recent NAESP Board of Directors meeting, Dr. Ferrandino reported that efforts are still underway for the launch of the **National Elementary School Honor Society** in collaboration with NASSP. A focus group is scheduled during the NAESP's upcoming annual convention to provide insight into development of criteria that would afford flexibility for participating schools. The National Elementary School Honor Society will hold true to the integrity and high standards that are hallmarks for the National Honor Society and will enhance NAESP's student recognition programs by complementing NAESP's *Dream-Reach-Succeed* program and supplementing the **President's Educational Awards Program** and **American Citizenship Awards**.

More work is needed on this project and the timeline for launch of the new honor society is now scheduled for January 2008. If you are interested in this program you can call Karen Healy at NAESP Ph. 1-800-386-2377

## AUTISM IN THE SCHOOL-AGED CHILD:EXPANDING BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES AND PROMOTING SUCCESS

This book written by both teachers and parents is a practical book of strategies to assist both teachers and parents in the education of the higher functioning child with autism. It is designed for easy implementation in both the general education and special education classroom.

The CDC recent nationwide survey concluded that the incidence of autism in the U.S. **in school aged children alone is now 1 in every 175!** This would be a timely resource in any school or PTA library.

Copies can be obtained for \$10.00 from Autism Family Press, 610 S. Williams St., Denver, CO 80209

Ph. (303) 941-2256, Fax (303) 379-9872

[www.autismschool.com](http://www.autismschool.com) or [cschmidts@comcast.net](mailto:cschmidts@comcast.net)

## NAESP PRESIDENT ELECT CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

### Pat Hould Candidate for President-elect

Dear Fellow Zone VII Alaska NAESP Colleagues,

Welcome to Lewistown Junior High School Pride, where excellence and enthusiasm collide. My name is Pat Hould and I am very proud to be the principal at LJHS. In addition to being the principal of this awesome school in Central Montana, I am thrilled to report that I have been selected by the NAESP nominating committee as one of two candidates for the position of President-Elect. I can't begin to tell you how honored I am to be in the running for this golden opportunity which would enable me to support and work with principals across this great nation.



For the past seven years I have devoted myself to leadership positions within the Montana Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals (MAEMSP) and the National Association of Elementary Principals (NAESP). From 2004 to the present, I have had the privilege of serving on the NAESP Board as the Middle Level Representative. These amazing experiences in concert with the many connections I have made with my Principal colleagues across this land have energized me for the next role I aspire to play, that as your next President-Elect of NAESP. If my aspirations come to fruition then I will work diligently to **build** relationships with my principal colleagues and I will assist this Association in providing the resources principals need to demonstrate a **caring** commitment to our young people. I will work to instill a strong sense of **community** into the ranks of NAESP by wholeheartedly supporting the Vision 2021 process and I will work diligently with NAESP to support and bolster the tradition of meaningful **learning** opportunities for our members.

Words cannot describe how excited and enthusiastic I am about this extraordinary opportunity. I would greatly appreciate your vote and the support of the principals from the great state of Alaska in the upcoming election. I look forward to serving you as your next President-Elect of NAESP. Take care and I look with favor at the possibility of meeting you in Seattle!

Respectfully,

Pat Hould

Editors Note: Ballots for this election will be mailed after the NAESP Convention.

### Nancy M. Davenport, Candidate for President-elect

The most important person in the schools today is the **PRINCIPAL**—the key person who shoulders the final responsibility for school success. I believe that principals **DO** make the significant difference in the quality of education for children in our schools. As a candidate for NAESP President-elect, I would be honored to represent you by emphasizing the multifaceted responsibilities of the principalship, including the importance of being an effective instructional leader and our role in school accountability. It would be my privilege to be your **VOICE** in the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

NAESP is an excellent professional association for elementary and middle-level principals, assistant principals, aspiring principals, and other concerned administrators throughout our nation and internationally. We can work together to be even stronger by encouraging the involvement of all members, developing collaborative relationships, and embracing the great leadership abilities and skills of our members. We need to tap the knowledge and talents of principals, throughout the United States and around the world, so we can share best practices and effectively mentor new school leaders in the upcoming years. Working together, we can positively influence the future of education for all children while leaving a legacy of excellence.

Knowing the importance of our work as principals and having a strong loyalty to NAESP, I pledge to work tirelessly to see that we are highly respected as the **best** professional association of elementary and middle-level principals. Collaboratively working with you, our Board of Directors and headquarters staff, we can enhance our professional development activities, strengthen services and benefits, and increase membership. I would value the opportunity to participate in NAESP initiatives, committees, and activities as President-elect. As an enthusiastic advocate for the principalship and our association, it would be important to me to work with national legislators and educational leaders about the NAESP legislative platform. It would be a great privilege to continue working with the *Vision 2021 Project* to address the future of education and determine the needs of our members; thereby, making our professional organization the absolute **best** it can be!



With your trust and confidence, we can carry the message to community leaders, parents, legislators, and all educators, no matter what their leadership or teaching position, that school principals can and do make a meaningful difference in the education and lives of children. I am passionate about being a principal. It is with a seriousness of purpose that I ask for your vote as the next President-elect of the National Association of Elementary School Principals.