NDAESP PRESIDENT- Stacy Murschel (Beulah)

Here we are at the start of a new school year once again. It never ceases to amaze me how quickly time passes and it seems to speed up the older I get! As I sit down to write this article the day after I moved my daughter to college and begin my life as an “empty nester,” I can’t help but think about the words of a family friend who will also be beginning life without children at home this month. He said, “At least with your job, you have 200 kids to take care of every day.” He couldn’t be more right! I consider myself fortunate to be a principal where I can make a difference in the lives of many children each and every day.

This year marks the beginning of my 11th year as a school principal along with my term as president of your North Dakota Association of Elementary School Principals. It is quite an honor to serve all of you and I sincerely hope that I can fulfill this role as successfully as my predecessor, Mrs. Audrey Faul. The Executive Board works diligently throughout the year to support North Dakota principals. I encourage all of you to consider becoming more involved in this valuable organization, either through serving your region as a representative or running for open positions on the board. It has been one of the most valuable professional learning opportunities I have participated in throughout my years as an administrator and it is a LOT of fun too!

Several board members spent an afternoon in July holding a question and answer panel with a group of principals at the DPI Administrators conference. It was wonderful to see so many principals eager to begin their new positions this fall. It can be an overwhelming time with the overabundance of tasks that need completion and the vast amount of preparations that need to be made. Please know that you are not alone and that there are principals all across the state that are more than willing to support and mentor you throughout your journey. Never hesitate to contact any board member at any time. We will answer your questions or help connect you with the resources needed to assist you. This is a big job and we are all in it together!

In closing, I would like to leave you with the words of Annette Breaux, “Remember: everyone in the classroom has a story that leads to misbehavior or defiance. 9 times out of 10, the story behind the misbehavior won’t make you angry. It will break your heart.” Knowing the high quality of the principals in North Dakota, I have no doubt that you all will take time to learn each of your students’ stories.

Have a wonderful start to your year! I look forward to seeing everyone in Bismarck in October for Fall Conference. Please contact me if there is anything I can do for you. stacy.murschel@k12.nd.us
NDAESP State Rep- John Alstad (Bismarck)

Welcome Back to School!

I hope your year is off to a great start. Mine sure has, and to top it off - I have this fantastic opportunity to represent all of you to our national organization. Thank you for the honor!

One big duty I have is connecting new principals to the organization. I am excited to do just that, but sometimes a personal relationship makes a difference in choosing how to spend professional dollars. If you know someone new to the principal role, please take a minute to let them know what is available to them through NAESP. Sometimes we even forget about these benefits:

- Professional Liability Coverage
- Advocacy in Washington
- The Principal’s Helpline
- Principal Magazine
- Ongoing professional development
- Topical handouts for parents
- The Center for New Principals
- And MUCH MORE

These and other benefits are explained in more detail at: http://www.naesp.org/membership/membership-benefits

NAESP is currently looking for first and second year principals to join the National Panel of New Principals. These members will participate in surveys that connect our profession directly with our leaders in Washington. It also helps principals understand how their first year experiences compare with those in the same role across the country and provides ideas to help make those first years a success. Why not get rewarded for making a difference in your profession? http://www.newprincipal.org/about/
Well, they’ve done it! Both the Senate and the House have passed versions of the updated ESEA law. Now comes more work – conference committee work to hammer out a single piece of legislation that is acceptable to both the Senate and the House.

The two bills passed in the respective chambers have differences that need to be addressed:

**Testing:** The House bill requires testing in grades 3-8 in reading and math and once in high school plus science in certain grade spans. Districts have the option to develop local assessments if they can prove the results are compatible to state tests. The 95% rule still applies. The Senate bill is essentially the same, however, five states could try out new forms of assessment – for example competency-based or performance based assessments. The bill also encourages states to take a look at the number of tests that are required and eliminate duplicative or low-quality assessments.

**Accountability:** The House bill allows states to get out of AYP and the 2013-14 proficiency goals and develop their own systems of accountability. States would also have more room when it comes to what the accountability systems would look like, including whether or not to include student growth on standardized tests as a factor. The Senate bill would allow states to get out of AYP and develop their own accountability systems. State test results would figure into the systems, but states could decide on how much weight to give the tests. High School graduation rates and ELL proficiency rates would also have to figured into the accountability systems. States would need to set goals for student achievement, but, there wouldn’t be preset mandates from the Department of Education.

**Standards:** House bill: States must set challenging standards in reading and math. The Department of ED secretary is prohibited from coercing a state to adopt a particular set of standards. States will also be able to drop the Common Core standards with no penalty. The Senate bill: Essentially the same as the House indicating states must set challenging standards in reading and math and prohibiting the Secretary from using federal funds to entice states to adopt a particular set of standards.

**Teacher Quality:** States can use federal teacher quality funding to set up teacher evaluation systems, but it is not a requirement. The bill removes the Highley Qualified requirements and consolidates teacher quality programs. Essentially the same as the House, however, states would have to ensure equitable teacher distribution – I’m not sure what that means.

**Low Performing Schools:** House: Eliminate School Improvement Grant program – instead, states are to set aside 7% of their Title I money for school improvement. States would have to intervene in low performing schools, but, the bill does not address how this is to be done. Senate: Eliminates SIG program., but includes other federal funding directed at low performing schools. The Department of Education would be prohibited from telling states or districts on how to fix struggling schools.

**School Choice:** States can choose how to offer school choice programs using Title I funds and includes Title I portability meaning federal funds for poor students could follow students to any public school, but not a private school. State would have to set aside 3% of the Title I funds for a competitive grant program that would allow districts to offer free tutoring. Senate: Allows students in low preforming schools to transfer to a better performing school, but it is not mandated.

**Funding Provisions:** House: Repeals the maintenance of effort, but, keeps in place the supplement not supplant rule. Essentially keeps in place the current law when it comes to school wide Title I programs and makes a small adjustment in the Title I funding formula. Senate: Changes the formula for distributing Title I funds for disadvantaged children so there is less emphasis on population and more on poverty although this portion of the bill doesn’t take effect until the Title I funding reaches $17 billion (it’s currently at $14 billion) and this could be a while. It requires states to maintain the maintenance of effort, but gives states and districts more flexibility in how the required level of funding is met.

**Federal Programs and Preschool:** House: Merges programs for migrant, ELL and neglected and delinquent children with Title I. The bill eliminates 70 programs, for example Early State Family Literacy program. Many of these programs haven’t been funded for several years. Senate: Maintains separate programs for disadvantaged, migrant, ELL and other special populations, but establishes for the first time a new preschool program as part of ESEA. The program is said to look a lot like the preschool development grants being proposed by the Obama administration.

There is still a lot of work to be done – and as always, a lot of political bickering to listen to – and remember, the campaigning has begun and there is only 13 months until Election Day!
I am excited to be starting another year as the Elementary Principal (Wyndmere Elementary) and the NDAESP State Editor. I have three new classroom instructors this year (almost half my staff) and all the work getting them oriented to their new position has been time consuming but also reinvigorating. There is a very positive vibe in our hallways and of course it was great to have the kids back in school. (I get a little tired of my summer quiet busy)

This will the be second year that I will be using the Marshall Evaluation Model. I have some advice, which I am not quick to offer very often as I am still in the learning and growing phase of my career. (so it appears that will always be the case…) One of the parts of the Marshall plan (and I believe it to be similar with the other state approved plans as well) is what I call the classroom pop-ins. Over the past many years I have had good intentions of getting into each classroom several times a year. I say intentions because too often I let the other parts of my position (K-12 Tech Coordinator / Elementary Principal) get in the way of these visits. It seems our responsibilities have not been reduced but have rather become more challenging. It would be easy to say that there isn’t time for all these classroom visits.

I am here to tell you there is nothing more important that you can do in a given day then to be in classrooms watching staff and students in the act of learning. (Ok, the safety of your staff and students would be one..) Creating an environment where staff feel comfortable having you in their rooms is not always an easy one. I think it is equally if not more important that I affirm what I see them doing well. One of the speakers I heard at the national convention in Long Beach said…”Engaged and affirmed Teachers will create affirmed and engaged students”. I think that everyone one agree that this would be an awesome outcome for both staff and students.

The kids love to see me in the classroom. I am showing them that what they are doing is important. I can follow up with students on an individual basis. “I thought you did a great job of reading aloud today in class. You have become an excellent reader!” I am a much more productive member of the RTI and IEP team when I can speak about what I have seen or am able to back my teacher up when they share their concerns and insights about a child.

So, I started by saying I was going to share some advice and it appears this has become a sales pitch instead. My advice is to schedule your classroom visits. Be very intentional about the way you go about making the visits. Tell your secretary your schedule. You are more likely to follow through. (helps me) Because I use to be blonde, and am over 50, I have an app on my iPhone that I am able to put in reminders. My pop-ins are one of the first things I put in for the coming week. It is so easy to have a hundred things come up. My reminder app helps me stay on task. I can have three people need something on a way to a visit. It is hard to say “I am sorry but I have a visit in a classroom and will have to get back to you later”. There are of course emergency situations that come up but by in large your classroom visits can happen if you make them a priority.

There are several new Elementary Principals that have joined our ranks again this year. If you are aware of a new person in your area I would like to ask that you reach out to them, welcome them and let them know they are NOT on their own. NDAESP is the BEST organization I have ever had the good fortune to be a part of. The help that I have and continue to get from my peers is the cornerstone of our organization. The NDAESP Executive Board is ready and willing to assist and to serve. Their contact information follows this report. Let them know if there is anything they (I) can do to be of service.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming NDCEL Conference to be held in Bismarck in October. Until then have a great start to your school year and get out into the classrooms and show your staff and students that you do care about what they are doing!
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Meet this upcoming school year head-on with these game-changing strategies, culled from NAESP’s annual conference in Long Beach, California.

1. **Hold a Ten-Minute Meeting**
   Todd Whitaker and Annette Breaux presented a session titled “The Ten-Minute In-service,” based on their recent book. If you’ve seen these two present before, you know that they bring a level of honesty and frankness to everything they do. Some of the most relevant ideas from their session include the idea of limiting staff meetings to only 10 minutes (hence the title). If the meeting concept is clear and engaging, you shouldn’t need any more time than that. Whitaker and Breaux also explained that principals should aim to be models for their teachers, not just executives. Read more https://www.naesp.org/blog/7-sure-fire-ways-level-your-instructional-leadership.

2. **Ignite Student Health and Wellness**
   Through leadership and innovative programs, Wendy Ellen Starwalt moved her school in northern Illinois toward a healthier culture focused on wellness and exercise. One bright idea from her presentation: Add health and wellness activities to the school calendar. Ideas like these are becoming more and more important as schools take the approach that a healthier child, more often than not, results in a more successful student. Read more https://www.naesp.org/blog/all-hands-approach-implementing-schoolwide-change-wellness.

3. **Get Creative With Improving School Climate**
   In perhaps the fastest-paced session of the conference, principals Becky Roth and Abi Van Regenmorter from South Dakota shared a treasure trove list of ideas for improving school climate—everything from providing opportunities for teachers to visit each other’s classes to book studies to making a video that celebrates your school to sharing staff baby pictures on a bulletin board—and everything in between. Read more http://www.naesp.org/blog/school-climate-student-empowerment-relationships-oh-my.

4. **Learn to Manage Your Twitter Stream**
   Leveraging Twitter was a big topic throughout the conference, but one particular session focused on how principals can extend their professional learning communities using the social network. Attendees learning about the best tools for Twitter, like as well as how to participate in chats using hashtags. Read more https://www.naesp.org/blog/leveraging-your-pln-twitter.

5. **Bring a Maker Space to Your School**
   With the nation abuzz about STEM and STEAM initiatives, principal Kimberlie Linz from Manhattan Beach, California, actually brought a maker space to her school as an extracurricular activity. In this lab, students are encouraged to experiment with common items in a series of projects that explore creativity, engineering, and problem-solving skills. The program was so popular that over 40 students were willing to come in at 6 a.m. to take part!

These are all concepts that require few resources. Mainly they just need a leader willing to think outside the box in an effort to improve schools. Read more https://www.naesp.org/blog/beyond-box-creating-innovators-tomorrow.
5 Elements of Cultural Proficiency

By Reyes Quezada, Delores Lindsey, and Randall Lindsey

“There’s nothing wrong with the kids.” Those words, spoken by New York University sociologist Pedro Noguera, encapsulate the belief that educators must embrace to effectively educate English-learning students. For far too long, English-learning students have existed in the margins. Educators must value students’ diverse backgrounds, instead of perceiving their language background as a troublesome obstacle.

The 2010 U.S. census reported that English learners comprise 10 percent of the total K-12 student enrollment in U.S. schools. In California alone, the English learner enrollment for 2010 was reported at more than 1.5 million, representing 24.7 percent of the total student enrollment for that state.

Given the growing numbers of English-learning students, school principals, educators, and district officials must strengthen their cultural proficiency knowledge and skills.

Culturally proficient principals take into account the five essential elements of cultural proficiency for including and supporting English-learning students. They further implement specific culturally proficient practices for each element.

1. **Assess Cultural Knowledge**—Principals initiate learning about their own and others’ culture(s) as assets for making changes that benefit underserved students.
Practices: Culturally proficient principals advocate for linguistically and culturally diverse students’ success by engaging with families, communities, and agencies as partners in the education of all students.

2. Value Diversity—Principals are inclusive of people and cultures with viewpoints and experiences different from their own for the benefit of their school and community.

Practices: Principals promote and develop mechanisms for creating a socially just school, with particular emphasis on linguistically and culturally diverse students. They continuously engage educators and parents in all aspects of their school community to collaborate on common goals and share resources.

For example, they hold school and community meetings in neighborhoods where English-learning students live. They also enhance access of opportunity and eliminate achievement gaps. This can be accomplished by hosting afterschool and weekend programs with local institutions, such as libraries, and paying particular attention to linguistically and culturally diverse students.

3. Manage the Dynamics of Difference—Principals use problem-solving and conflict resolution strategies as ways to include multiple perspectives and to teach others about the dynamics of cultural interactions.

Practices: Principals resolve issues that occur between cultures, both within the school and between the school and its diverse communities, such as misunderstandings about school procedures and expectations. Principals also deepen school and community knowledge of educational challenges experienced by linguistically and culturally diverse students and their families. These include translation needs and migrant family work schedules.

Finally, principals actively address and resolve issues English-learning students confront, just as they would any other student group.

4. Adapt to Diversity—Principals use their cultural knowledge to guide school policies that achieve equitable educational and socially just outcomes.

Practices: Culturally proficient leaders find ways to meet the needs of all students, paying particular attention to linguistically and culturally diverse students. These principals help parents—and the school community—understand opportunity and achievement data. They consider divergent and often conflicting points of view regarding topics such as student grouping for instruction and using curricular materials that represent students. They also challenge local practices, such as length of time students are in language development classrooms and lack of qualified instructional staff.

5. Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge—Principals’ cultural knowledge is evident in their behavior, as well as and in school policies that address educational inequities and close access, opportunity, and achievement gaps.

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