



NASS

News

March 2020 Issue

a publication of the National Association of School Superintendents | #NASS

A Word from the Executive Director



Dear NASS Members: We share this newsletter knowing you are doing all you can to keep your colleagues, students, families and communities informed and safe in light of

Covid-19. During these challenging times my advice is to think clearly, be transparent with information, engage your communities especially students in solutions and strategies, and act in the best interests of children. Remember, adversity reveals character, and as superintendents and leaders we don't get to pick the issues and moments when we must lead. And please remember to take care of yourself during these tumultuous times. Practice self-care (listen to my audios for some tips).

You will see in this newsletter we've created a special section to provide information on Covid-19. We share an update on an innovative approach to

feeding children while schools are closed. Also, under Professional Learning, we share information on how PBLWorks is supporting teachers to deliver project-based learning to their students through online learning.

Is there additional information you need? Would you like to know what other school districts and states are doing to support their students, families and staff during this time? Would you like a space to post notes and questions for colleagues to view and respond? Do you have information and PDFs you'd like to share? NASS wants to be a resource for you. Please email me your thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and any information you think we should share with other members to jraymond@NASS.us. If we can better support you during these unprecedented and complex times, please let us know.

Also, in this issue of NASS News, you'll learn more about Envision Learning Partners and the powerful work they are doing to shift focus away from punitive accountability models to redefining how we can define and measure learning and life success for students.

In my piece on **Learning vs. Winning**, I share thoughts on the roles leaders play in building culture and climate in their schools and communities.

Finally, it's worth re-emphasizing the importance of relationships and making connections with people. A great way to do this is through telling our stories. As leaders, our story shows we are vulnerable, human, and have experiences and ideas to share. We all have time now to reflect and write down our story. Is it through a journal or blog post? A poem or that book we wanted to start but never had the time? As I shared last month, I'm pleased to introduce you to my book *Wildflowers: A School Superintendent's Challenge to America*, which I wrote while traveling back and forth from San Francisco to Boston over the course of three years. I hope it will inspire you to share your story. And while it's my story, it is also a manifesto on the power of Whole Child/Whole Community education, which is needed now more than ever. I encourage you to order a copy here on [Amazon](#), and contact me directly for bulk orders.

In service,

Jonathan Raymond

Thoughts From the Executive Director

Learning vs. Winning: What is School Really Teaching Our Kids?

"This is honors English," she told my daughter, "you go figure it out." My daughter isn't in college; she's a sophomore in a public high school and had gone to her teacher for some extra help on an assignment. When I first heard this, I was furious. Really, "you go figure it out?" And then I thought, this must be the culture that's been intentionally set at

her school. Competition, high pressure, only the strong survive?

When I was superintendent in Sacramento, California, I always said that the folks with a harder job than mine were our principals. At least I could go hide in my office if I choose. But not our principals. I remember visiting with Nancy Purcell, principal at Fern Bacon Middle School, one day when she told me she usually wasn't in her office much before 10:30 a.m. That's because she was out on the school campus at the crack of dawn checking in with the plant manager, visiting with her cafeteria staff on the day's meals, greeting teachers as they arrived and eventually her students. "How's your little sister doing, Maria?" "Did you get that project finished, James?" "Don't be late for band!" she reminded another. And this is what she expected of her staff. Be visible. Engage with students. Show up with a smile and be grateful you get to teach kids. The culture of her school was welcoming, engaging, collaborative and focused on two things: Excellence and student and student learning. Doing this requires discipline. Principals set the tone in their buildings. Is it warm and welcoming? Is collaboration among staff expected? Are students and parents and families given a voice and engaged in the learning process?

We were fortunate in Sacramento to have many great leaders like Nancy. Visiting their campuses, you'd find similar attention to detail, focus and discipline. These leaders understand the importance of setting the culture and owning it at their schools.

As the superintendent, and the school...

[Read the full article](#)

Featured NASS Partner



The Value of Challenging Graduates to Make Their Case

By Justin Wells,
Executive
Director of
Envision Learning
Partners

"How do you know when you are ready to graduate from this school?"

When I ask this of students at schools around the country, the answers I typically get seem either arbitrary or abstract. "I am ready after I have been here for four years." "I need one hundred and [fill in the blank here] credits." Or simply, "When I get my diploma."

Students at some schools give a different kind of answer: "In order to graduate, I have to argue my case. I know I am ready when I can prove to a panel that I have gained the skills I need to move on." Then they rattle off the list of skills that their school has challenged them to master.

That is how students answer the question at Kamaile Academy in Waianae, Hawaii, or Envision Academy, in Oakland, California, or Los Angeles High School of the Arts (LAHSA). They and a growing group of schools all over the country are tying graduation to a powerful...

[Read the full article](#)

Members Spotlight



Creating Opportunity Through Purposeful Visibility

Lisa M. Harrod is currently the Superintendent of Manteno Community School District No. 5 in Manteno, Illinois.

Lisa grew up on the South Side of Chicago, and her passion for education and desire to make a difference was ignited by her parents, who were both educators. Her father was a high school football coach in the Chicago Catholic and Public Leagues. Her mom was an administrator in the field of special education. She understood her parents' belief that every student whom you are fortunate to teach brings the ability to make a lasting impression and difference in that students' life. That is something to consistently build upon each day.

Lisa lives in Manteno with her husband, Jason, and her three children, ages 13, 12 and 6. She loves working in the district her children are in and finding purpose in being a mom. She loves attending activities and watching all of the students in her district shine. She credits them for helping her find a balance that is meaningful and full of appreciation for all life has to offer.

Walking the Walk and Talking the Talk: Manteno School District prides itself in...

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Update



Getting Kids Fed While School is Out: The Critical Role of Affordable Housing Partners

By Jennifer Peck,
President & CEO,
Partnership for
Children and Youth

It goes without saying that our school system is dealing with enormous and daunting challenges right now with the pandemic we are experiencing. I am watching this intently both as a parent of a high school student, and as a nonprofit leader in the public education world figuring on how to pivot our work to support our most vulnerable kids and families.

As a parent, I see how challenged my own district is with keeping kids connected to learning and how carefully they have to manage things like uneven access to technology for online learning. They also have to figure out how to manage access to the wide range of services schools provide beyond instruction – such as health and mental health care through our school-based health centers and community schools and of course, school meals on which so many kids depend.

I have been incredibly impressed with how quickly our district got a number of school sites opened as meal distribution sites and consistent communication about how and where to pick up those meals. However, districts don't have to tackle this particular task completely on their...

[Read the full article](#)

“MMM”

Members Mentoring Members

These are challenging and lonely times to be leading school districts which is why we are reaching out to members willing to serve as or be supported by a mentor. Our community needs all of us to lean in during challenging times. Can we please count on you to step forward?

Members Mentoring Members (MMM) allows NASS members to contribute and give back in a time-bound capacity, using their expertise and experience to support colleagues. This is a chance for members to gain insight, get objective feedback, and seek valuable support to learn and...

[Read the full article](#)

Professional Learning

Please check out this recent piece from the PBLWorks blog on delivering PBL through remote learning and share it with your educators:
<https://www.pblworks.org/blog/school-closures-using-pbl-remote-learning>

PBLWorks is committed to supporting teachers to provide powerful learning for students while working in new and unfamiliar ways.

Project-based learning equips learners to understand and adapt to the demands of a volatile and uncertain world.