



# NASS

# News

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## A Word from the Executive Director



Dear NASS family: I'm excited and honored to serve as the association's new Executive Director. This is a critical and opportune time to be working in public education. The

work you are doing to serve children, families and communities is hard and often thankless. Know that we are grateful for all you are doing to change the lives and the odds of our young people.

Your voice is important. Whether it's using your voice to influence policy at the federal and state levels or in your own community, our elected officials need to hear from you. We all have a story and we all can be storytellers. Stories are a powerful way of building relationships and sharing ideas. Are you ready to share your voice and your story?

At NASS, serving superintendents, and by extension, your students, is our passion. I

am committed to ensuring NASS is meeting your professional needs. With this inaugural monthly newsletter, you will be exposed to a range of partners that are advancing aspects of whole child education in school districts throughout the country (i.e., equity, social justice, social and emotional learning, family and community engagement, and creativity). Feel free to reach out to them directly if you are interested in learning more.

In the coming weeks, you will learn more about opportunities to meet, learn, and work with fellow NASS members. You will gain access to teaching and learning practices that are inspiring fellow educators and children. You will be inspired by members' stories of hope and courage. You will be challenged to hone your leadership skills and capabilities to think systemically, design locally, and lead with humility.

I'm thrilled to join the NASS family and look forward to working and learning with you. Here is to a great school year!

In service,

Jonathan Raymond

## Thoughts From the Executive Director

### Home visits are key to kids' success

This has been back-to-school night season, and in auditoriums across the country, too often the seats that are left empty are for the parents and guardians of children whom the school rarely sees. This phenomenon should set off alarms at a time when in states like California the Local Control Funding Formula and Local Control Accountability Plans put parents, families and communities at the center; but is it?

When the majority of urban and rural public school families live at or below the federal poverty level, and with parents working two or three jobs just to make ends meet, why do most schools still require parents to “take the first step”?

As Sacramento County Teacher of the Year Stephanie Smith recalls: “We ask them to come to back-to-school nights and teacher conferences without having tried to understand their reality. What if we, educators, took the first step? It’s time for school districts to rethink the approach of inviting parents into a prescribed time period and place and instead reach families and parents where they are.”

[Read the full article](#)

## Featured NASS Partner

### Parent Teacher Home Visits: Strengthening family-school relationships



*Gina Martinez-Keddy is the Executive Director of Parent Teacher Home Visits, a national nonprofit that trains educators to meet with families to build relationships between home and school.*

Growing up, Carmen had a terrible experience with school. Later diagnosed with ADHD, her teachers in the 1980s knew little about it and Carmen felt labeled as “the dumb kid,” so she dropped out. When her children were old enough for school, she was disengaged and had few academic expectations for them. The last thing she wanted was to set foot in their school or talk to a teacher or principal.

She reluctantly agreed to let two teachers visit her home in suburban Denver and within 10 minutes of their arrival, everything changed for her. Her daughter’s teachers asked her: “What are your hopes and dreams for your child?” Nobody had asked her that before. No teacher had sought her input on the education of her children. She did not even know that her daughter’s teachers cared. After that home visit, Carmen felt more comfortable getting involved in her children’s education. She is now a regular at their school. She seeks out the teachers, and has made clear to both of her ...

[Read the full article](#)

## Members Spotlight

### Accountability Meets Equity



Most people and organizations will say they support equity—even when they don't really understand what it is. But the National Association of

School Superintendents is bold and inclusive in its approach to support equity in education.

I have great respect and admiration for my colleague, Dr. Rod Paige, whom I have associated mostly with being the U.S. Secretary of Education and the architect of No Child Left Behind, as a part of his lifelong work to improve the quality of education for all students. I personally believe that No Child Left Behind has been the most impactful force in defining what has happened in public schools during my very long career.

The overall goals of both No Child Left Behind—and now the Every Student Succeeds Act—to raise national standards, address academic improvements and accountability, and incorporate school reform in an effort to raise educational excellence for all students, were far overdue at the time...

View Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart's [bio](#) and [video](#)

[Read the full article](#)

## Advocacy at the Core of NASS Values

This past September, NASS and the Association of California School Administrators convened for our annual federal advocacy conference. Participants heard from former Secretary for Education, Rod Paige, and several LGBTQ students on their experience matriculating through our K12 schools. This year we lobbied on the Equality Act, special education funding for infants and toddlers, STEM education and federal spending on education.

Paige shared insightful information regarding his time as Superintendent of Houston Independent School District, as well as shared his vast experience of building a team that was aligned to his values and principles. He shared his process for developing team members who focused on the best interest of students, as well as how to change behavior around the goals and the expectations established by the board trustees. Paige's stories of building and managing different stakeholders provided conference participants a clear example of the dedication and hard work that is needed to lead a successful district.

NASS partnered with the Human Rights Campaign to provide a student voice to the experience of LGBTQ students in our public education system. The students, who hailed from several different states articulated the ongoing necessity and impact of providing equity in the school environment.

[Read the full article](#)

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