



NASS

News

August 2020 Issue

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

A Word from the Executive Director



Dear NASS Members:

In this newsletter, we continue to shine the light on equity and the power of collaboration.

We've reprinted the piece from

Marc Johnson, former superintendent from Sanger Unified in California. Given the realities of distance learning, there are unique opportunities to build and strengthen collaboration in our school districts and communities.

We also offer another resource from the Parabola Project — [here](#) — to minimize health risks while maximizing learning when considering reopening schools.

Finally, in my editorial space, I offer an historical perspective of how and when our country confronted pressing challenges, and the opportunity we have to address many of them if we engage our young people.

I wish all of you a successful school year. If we continue to approach this work with “honesty, integrity, and follow-through” as featured NASS member Paul Gausman suggests, we’ll make the most of this challenging time.

Stay well and safe!

In service,

Jonathan Raymond

Thoughts From the Executive Director

Beyond Truths That Are Self-Evident

“An army, that purported to liberate the world for freedom and democracy, that was not integrated, was a fallacy.” Wow! These are powerful words spoken by our African American guide at the Rosie the Riveter National Park Museum in Richmond, California, who had experienced extensive job and housing discrimination during the war years and beyond. I was there with 20 high school students from the UC Berkeley “History Makers” summer seminar, an intensive four-week summer U.S. History and Civics teaching and learning experience. For

these students, many first and second generation Americans, it was a chance to dive deeply into the monumental struggles America faced during World War II.

I asked our real life “Rosie,” 95 years young: Given her perspective, how much in our country has changed and how much remains the same? “I’ve been fortunate in my life to live long enough to now see certain patterns that I might have thought and reacted to differently when I was younger,” she said. “We’ve had many crises in my lifetime, each spiral more intense than the last one, and we are in another right now. And we manage to use those experiences to somehow find a way through. It’s ironic,” she concluded. “Given all we are facing, that I’ve never been more optimistic.”

We sat silent. How could she be so optimistic considering the seemingly overwhelming challenges America and the world are facing today? Perhaps because she had seen younger generations before overcome intractable obstacles. Or maybe, that day in Richmond, she saw high school students transfixed by her personal story. Whatever it was, her spirit was uplifting.

So I ponder — where in history could our young people look for inspiration? Obviously, the spirit exemplified by the workers honored in the Rosie the Riveter Museum is one such place. But there are many other valuable examples from even further back in our history. It could be the Delegates of the Second Continental Congress, who courageously declared their independence from the King of England and set forth the compelling principle that “all men are created equal...

[Read the full article](#)

Featured NASS Partner

Distance Learning: An Opportunity To Strengthen Our Collaboration!



*By Marc Johnson,
Superintendent of
the Year and former
Superintendent
Sanger Unified
School District in
California*

These are times unlike any we have faced in our careers, but they also provide us a profound leadership growth opportunity. It is important that we embrace the concept of distributed leadership as well.

Teacher leadership within grade level and subject matter teams during this time is essential. Effective and focused team collaboration is needed to generate the learning opportunities for our students and support them through difficult changes. Now is the time to deepen our collaborative culture, not abandon it.

Have we reminded ourselves what real collaboration is, and do we see this as an opportunity to grow? Collaboration is a systematic process, in which we work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practices.

Collaboration is not a meeting; it is a process. If we embrace that concept, we then understand that powerful collaboration can occur even in a time of shelter-in-place and social distancing. Teachers are having Zoom meetings with their students, and districts are staying

connected with site leaders in the same way, but have we set the same expectations that our teams will stay connected?

Here are some thoughts and reminders I have been pondering as I have connected with superintendents and principals during this time:

- How often are our teams actually connecting to develop a collective commitment to engaging our students in learning each week?...

[Read the full article](#)

Members Spotlight

“Honesty, Integrity, Follow-through”



*Dr. Paul Gausman,
Superintendent of
the Sioux City
Community School
District
Sioux City, IA*

The Sioux City Community School District is a public school district serving over 15,000 students nestled in the Loess Hills of the Northwest corner of Iowa. We serve our students and families with a population of nearly 2,500 staff members in over 20 student attendance centers. Seventy percent of our student population qualifies for Free and Reduced Meals, and nearly 20 percent English Learners represent about 40

home languages. Our metropolitan area exceeds 100,000 residents.

We are a proud member of the Urban Education Network in the state of Iowa, where some may consider the words “urban” and “Iowa” when used in the same sentence to be an oxymoron. Still, noting that our 17 Urban Education Network Districts serve nearly 40 percent of Iowa’s public school enrollment, we serve our students with common approaches with respect to our common characteristics.

As an educational leader, I focus on the core values of honesty and integrity and actions exhibiting comprehensive follow-through. Instructional leaders will consistently serve any organization to perform at higher levels, so long as their formula for success includes being honest with people, making decisions with integrity and follow-through with thorough communication and implementation of action.

Honesty in the educational environment is paramount for success. Communication that focuses on honest statements of a situation or detail, thorough specifics of the plan of action and truthful feedback about areas of success and challenge will bring about student-centered accomplishment.

Integrity begins with appropriate data acquisition and decision-making procedures, including involvement and communication with those affected. I derive integrity and strong moral values from my own life and education, faith and family. As a leader, I firmly believe...

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