



NASS

News

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A Word from the Executive Director



Dear NASS Members: I hope this finds you and your families, friends and colleagues well and safe. We know this crisis is horrific in so many ways, and we applaud the courageous

efforts so many of you and our essential workers and first responders, to name a few, are doing to help children, families and residents in our communities.

ACSA continues to add resources for schools in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Go [here](#) to read the latest guidance and news pertaining to public education.

We again underscore the importance and opportunity of taking Whole Child approaches to educating and developing children.

And finally, I've given my editorial space to a colleague I was fortunate to serve with while I was superintendent. Her

impassioned push for a systems approach to educating children is both courageous and long overdue.

In closing, I want to underscore that the current crisis is once again exposing the inequities in our public education system. They are raw, shameful and unforgivable! So what can we do? For starters, do whatever we need to in the short-term to feed children, provide them with engaging learning experiences and support their physical, emotional and spiritual needs with whatever it takes. Second, and equally important — when this crisis subsides, we must never allow things to go back to the way they were. We must reimagine and reinvent the system that educates and develops children. Shame on us — adults — if we lose this moment to do what is necessary for the futures of all our children.

In service,

Jonathan Raymond

Thoughts From the Executive Director



Rise Above: Reimagining What Education & Developing Children Can and Must Be

By Teresa
Cummings, Ph.D.

CEO, Cummings and Associates

Here we are, over four weeks into California's lockdown with no end in sight. I'm worried. I'm worried for 13,000 socio-economically disadvantaged students in my son's school district who still do not have Internet access or computers, and for the teachers who have no training in distance learning — not to mention the parents who feel unequipped and overwhelmed.

Yet, we are told not to worry — a hybrid rollout is happening. What does that mean? If it's anything like the initial efforts, I'm really worried. "Get Ready for Distance Learning, Starting Tomorrow." As a parent, I received that email four weeks after the school district closed due to COVID-19. During the four weeks prior, I received no resources for teaching my 11-year-old son at home — just links to online learning opportunities, requiring expert-level navigation skills to find grade-level aligned and appropriate content. As an education consultant, I'm one of the lucky parents with the experience and resources needed for at-home distance learning.

COVID-19 has shined a light on the access gaps in public education with the

opportunity to determine why they exist. With more than 27 years of experience, I have seen that most public education systems have a narrow focus — a reactive mode, rather than a proactive preventative approach. Failure in the reactive mode leads to excuses: This is new, we were not prepared. We didn't know it would be this bad. Our unions are creating barriers and stalling progress.

I can imagine a superintendent asking me, "What should I do? Can you help us manage the lack of computer and Internet access for our students and provide training for teachers and parents around distance learning?"

I would answer, "Sure; however, that is not your biggest problem. These are symptoms of a much larger issue." It would be easy to react to these gaps by implementing the work through the current system. But the current system is dysfunctional and unhealthy — we need to get at the root cause of the inequities we see.

Let's look at the bright spots that do exist. Across the country, some districts are knocking it out of the park and seamlessly providing for their students. For example, one district first delivered hard-copy packets of grade-level content, then transitioned to distance learning.

Why can some districts seamlessly transition to alternative implementation, while others tragically falter? It is not because faltering districts don't have enough computers, or their teachers are not trained to provide distance learning. And it absolutely is not because teachers or their bargaining units create barriers to distance learning. The root cause of the...

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Featured NASS Partner



Current circumstances make the case for educating the whole child

*By Roman Stearns,
Founder & Executive
Director,
Scaling Student
Success*

How many times have you heard the chorus: “We need to educate the whole child?”

That is the call from scientists and researchers who have studied child development, the science of learning, the history of education, and labor market projections. It is the plea of counselors and school psychologists who attend daily to students suffering from the ill-effects of bullying, academic pressure, racial violence and schoolyard shootings. It is the advice of educational leaders who are concerned that an overemphasis on standardized tests and admissions to elite colleges has narrowed the curriculum.

Parents and teachers see and experience the whole child on a daily basis and inherently know that one cannot separate intellectual advancement from social, emotional and physical development.

In fact, few argue with the benefits of, and need for, educating the whole child...

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Members Spotlight



“So why did you want to become a superintendent?”

Dr. Kevin R. Fitzgerald is the superintendent of Caesar Rodney School District in Delaware.

Dr. Fitzgerald began his career in education in Maryland in 1978 as a social studies and English teacher. After 13 years in the classroom, Dr. Fitzgerald moved to Delaware, becoming Caesar Rodney High School’s assistant principal until 1998, then principal until 2007 when he was selected as superintendent.

Dr. Fitzgerald and his wife, Linda, reside in Camden. They have three daughters, all graduates of Caesar Rodney High School.

“So why did you want to become a superintendent?” I guess I should’ve expected that question. After all, it was Career Day at one of my elementary schools. Still, the question surprised me. I had gotten used to trying to explain to eight-year-olds what a superintendent did, or why it was important to get an education, and that it really was my voice on the phone giving them a snow day! I responded, without giving it much thought, by saying I had become a superintendent to help them. Needless to say, the quizzical look on his face and on the other children’s faces led me to...

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