

Snapshots

Fast Fact: One in 10 American students

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Principal Goes “Gaga” to Celebrate Reading

Massachusetts principal Justin Vernon believes in teaching his students about facing challenges. This summer, he tackled a sizable one himself: milking a cow in heels, a tiara, and a flowing blonde wig.

Vernon promised his students at Roget Clap Innovation School that he would dress up as eccentric pop star Lady Gaga and milk a cow if they read 10,000 books over the course of the school year. They didn't just meet the goal—they read 13,000 books instead. So, on a sunny day in June, Vernon donned his Gaga-esque best—a black dress, high heels, and huge sunglasses—and arrived at school in a limousine to hold up his end of the bargain.

“I can't tell you how proud I am of you,” he said to the circle of students

gathered to watch, who began chanting, “Milk the cow!” They fist-bumped Vernon once the bet was successfully completed.

This friendly wager is just one strategy the school has used to energize students about learning. It won a Champion Creatively Alive Children grant for a program exploring local architecture. Read more about the project and the school's arts night—though, sadly, Lady Gaga couldn't make it for that celebration—in “Infusing the Arts into Literacy and Math” in the Champion Creatively Alive Children supplement.

RESEARCH DIGEST

Districts Construct Framework to Develop School Leadership

LEADERS, AS THE saying goes, are not born but made, and the same goes for great principals. The best school leaders will emerge from the strongest support systems—and continued research from The Wallace Foundation is uncovering what those systems should contain.

“Principals in the Pipeline,” a feature article sponsored by Wallace, profiles six districts across the country taking part in a six-year initiative to establish principal “pipelines”—local systems ensuring that a large corps of school leaders is properly trained,

MYTWOCENTS

Speaking to attendees of NAESP's National Leaders Conference in July, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan called principals CEOs of their schools. His comment inspired a flurry of feedback on Twitter, including these tweets:

@DDEMATTHEWS: Time to change principal preparation programs. They aren't prepared for these roles. Oh, don't forget instruction!

@ANGIESULLIVANO: Businesses and schools are NOT run the same way—because they have different purposes.

misses more than a month of school each year. Third and fourth grade have the best rates, which dip sharply once students enter middle school.

SOURCE: EVERYONE GRADUATES CENTER, JOHNS HOPKINS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, MAY 2012

hired, and developed on the job. The key tenets of these pipelines are principal standards, high-quality training, selective hiring, and a combination of solid on-the-job support and performance evaluation, especially for new hires. These may seem like common sense, write the article's authors, but until recently, research or policies supporting each piece of pipeline have been missing or misaligned.

Here are the pipeline's components, along with examples of how

the initiative's six districts—New York City, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina; Denver; Gwinnett County, Georgia; Hillsborough County, Florida; and Prince George's County, Maryland—are grappling with them:

- **Principal Standards: Districts should create clear, rigorous job requirements detailing what principals and assistant principals must know and do.**

Standards for principals set a

strong foundation for school leadership. The New York City Department of Education is updating its principal standards to reflect the changing nature of a principal's job, including, for instance, how principals foster leadership in staff members.

- **High-quality Training: Pre-service principal training programs recruit people who show the potential to become effective principals and give them high-quality training that responds to district needs.**

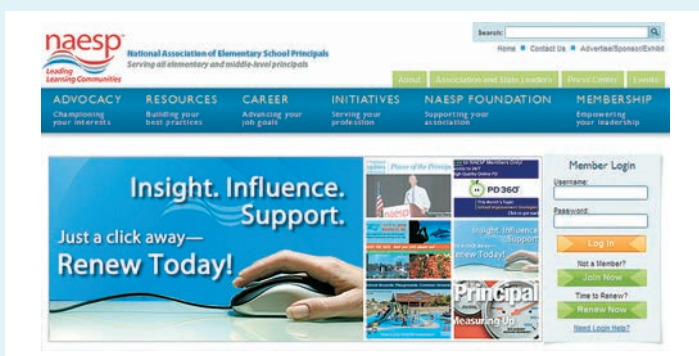
Every district is investing time and energy to improve training for principals. For instance, in Gwinnett County in metro Atlanta, aspiring principals take part in a yearlong program that involves monthly instruction and a residency program. In Denver, the district works closely with the University of Denver's rigorous school leadership program and a nonprofit charter school leadership organization.

- **Selective Hiring: Districts hire well-trained candidates with the right set of characteristics to be strong school leaders.**

In Prince George's County, a new three-stage hiring process takes aspiring principals through a 40-minute online assessment, along with a significant essay assignment. The final step is an interview with three to four principal supervisors.

- **Performance Evaluation and Support: Districts regularly assess the performance of newly hired principals and provide them with the professional development and mentoring they need.**

Evaluation and support go hand in hand, write the report's authors. In the Hillsborough County district, for instance, principals are now assessed on eight points, including schoolwide learning, teacher ratings, and a supervisor's evaluation. The new system has been introduced along with a mentoring program for novice principals.



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While you're there, update your profile in **Principal 2 Principal** (p2p.naesp.org), our new e-community that connects you with principals across the country to share best practices. It's your first stop for discussing the hottest topics in education, and learning tips from your peers.

@GATALONES: Interesting, Arne, that you didn't specify INSTRUCTIONAL leader, as a role for today's principal. #missedopportunity

@SPOLOS: Today's school principal strives to create a culture of learning even in the face of excessive tests & federal mandates.

✦ Should principals be considered CEOs of their schools? Tweet us your thoughts: twitter.com/NAESP

