

Fall
2021

A

l a b a m a

Elementary Administrator

Vol. 70 No. 1



Dilhani Uswatte

Alabama's NAESP

2020 National

Distinguished Principal

AAESA President



Judith Ross
L.M. Smith Middle
Birmingham City

What an honor and privilege it is to serve as President of the Alabama Association of Elementary Administrators (AAESA). We have completed a school year like none other. It is certainly one that will be recorded in history. I know many of you are heading back to school to start the 2021-2022 school year. I am praying that we all will stay safe and well as we head into this school year.

I would like to give a shout out to my good friend Dr. Charlie Gardner for his leadership as our past AAESA President. He did an outstanding job leading our organization. Did I tell you he did this in the middle of a pandemic? I am sure that Charlie will continue his work with AAESA. He is truly an asset to our organization.

I want to welcome all new administrators to AAESA. You will not find a more supportive professional organization to be a part of. CLAS will have a New Principals' Institute in September. I strongly encourage you to register for this enlightening professional development opportunity. There you will meet some of our state's seasoned administrators and learn valuable information to take back to your building and implement. Even if you don't attend this institute, I encourage you to seek guidance from seasoned administrators in your district or county. Don't be afraid to ask questions or seek assistance. My mother told us growing up: *The only stupid question, is the one you don't ask.* You don't know everything, nor are you expected to. With any new position there is a learning curve. Seek support from others who have walked before you. Are you going to make mistakes? Yes, you are. Are you going to do some things wrong? Yes, you are. Don't beat yourself up about it. Know that CLAS and

AAESA is here to support you in your professional and personal growth. I am about to begin my thirty-fifth year as an educator and my twenty-fourth as an administrator. I still mess up! But also have a network of administrators who I can rely on to support me. I encourage all of you to do the same.

During this time I know professional growth is essential to our profession. I have been an active member of AAESA since 1998. Being a member of this organization has afforded me that pleasure of developing friendships and networking with administrators across the state of Alabama. One of my main goals is to increase our organization's membership. I would also like for us to take advantage of all the professional development opportunities given by CLAS. This organization provides excellent opportunities not just to gain PLUs for certification, but opportunities for professional growth.

Our Fall Conference will be November 14-17 at the Period Beach Resort. Make plans now to be there. I look forward to seeing you there. In the meantime, if you need to contact me, please email me: jross@bhm.k12.al.us.



Executive Director's Report



Vic Wilson
AAESA
Executive Director

“Did you miss the CLAS convention or the NAESP convention? If you did, you missed two great events. CLAS celebrated the 50th Anniversary Conven-

tion in Birmingham, and NAESP celebrated the 100th Anniversary in Chicago. Both events were well attended and very successful, and both events showcased the great things happening with AAESA. We have a summary of all the major happenings from both conventions for you below!

The CLAS convention was held in San Antonio, Texas, no wait, it was in Birmingham. This year's theme was “Emerge 2021: Reshaping Education” which focused on how we can lead more effectively by focusing our efforts on student success. There were many great speakers including Saneé Bell who inspired everyone with her story of success. Attendees also had opportunities to network with other educators as well as take part in breakouts led by experts from around the state and nation.

The event was well attended with 850 people coming in person, and another 150 people attending virtually. We were able to have a large-scale face to face event for the first time since June of 2019, and based on the early results, everyone had a fabulous time engaging and learning with and from each other. Kudos to the CLAS staff for a GREAT event!

The NAESP Leaders conference highlighted the 100 years of growth of this wonderful organization. AAESA was well represented at the conference with at least 20 attendees from our great state. Also, Alabama has

played a key role in the history of NAESP as our very own Jill Eaton was recognized for her service to NAESP as the national president during the 1998-1999 school year. Jill is the only Alabamian to hold this prestigious position, and I hope you join me in thanking her for her service and congratulating her for the recognition shown during the 100th Anniversary. Jill, we appreciate all you have done and continue to do for AAESA and NAESP. You are a wonderful ambassador!



Additionally, Dr. Earl Franks was recognized for his exemplary leadership as well. He is the current executive director for NAESP. He has just started his 5th year in this position after serving for 9 years as the executive director of CLAS. We are fortunate to have an Alabamian leading our national organization.

I hope that all of you have an opportunity to relax before we begin our 2021 school year. Taking care of yourself is essential if you want to maximize the learning for those under your care. Please do not overlook your mental health as you meet the needs of everyone under your care.

As always let us know if we can help you in any way during your leadership journey.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

COVID and a Century Later...the School Bells Still Ring for NDP



Dilhani Uswatte
Rocky Ridge Elementary
Hoover City

Could you hear the bells?

On Friday, February 28th, 2020 a surprise school assembly was

held at Rocky Ridge Elementary in Hoover where yours truly, Dr. Dilhani Marian Jayamanne Uswatte (aka Dil), was named the 2020 National Distinguished Principal (NDP). Exactly two weeks later, the world shut down. Thank you, COVID-19! At that time, a voice in my head said, “Ok little Miss NDP...let’s see what you can really do. It’s time to lead like never before. You are going to continue to earn this title, ‘Lil Dil!’” [Note: Based on a visit to the doctor last week, this educator has shrunk to be under 5 ft now. Seriously?!!! What a year!]

Previous NDP winners and CLAS staff told me how amazing the NDP award ceremony would be in October 2020. I was told to find a ball gown and get ready for a red-carpet banquet in Washington, DC, complete with a visit to the White House. Alas, like most things during the height of the pandemic, the event was cancelled. Cue the “Wah, wah, wah” sad music...

However, shortly thereafter, NAESP announced that they would honor the 2020 NDPs at the national NAESP conference in Chicago, July 7-10th, 2021. Although there was not a black-tie banquet, making it a much less formal event overall, it still was magical.

On the first evening, 43 NDPs from around the country gathered to hear each other’s two-minute speech. I shared information about my wonderful school, including our efforts to recognize the inspiration of oth-

ers around us (go to [www. Powerofapenny.com](http://www.Powerofapenny.com) for more information.) These inspirational leaders talked about the importance of us being “lead learners”, the power of WE, the need to lead with courage, and that we are here FOR and BECAUSE of our kids. One of my favorite speeches, came from Eric Pederson from Alaska. He recounted how his mother, who does not usually get excited by awards, was thrilled when he told her he was America’s second-best principal. Then he realized that we were being featured in alphabetically order by state. Guess who comes first alphabetically? Needless to say, this number one girl and Alaska had the best time together!



On the following day, we exchanged gifts from each state. Wow! Stickers, honey, pins, candy, nuts, motivational signs, and magnets were just some of the items I received. As an Alabama fan and person of Sri Lankan heritage, I gave each person a hand-painted elephant from Sri Lanka to recognize that we were a special and strong herd. Did you know that elephants are a symbol of wisdom, patience, calmness, strength, and good luck....all the things we need as educators? One NDP already sent me a picture of where he

COVID and a Century Later...the School Bells Still Ring for NDP

placed his elephant in his office. I also gave each person a shiny new penny as part of our school effort to recognize their inspiration and “penny power.”

In addition to the conference workshop sessions, NDPs had an opportunity to attend some special PD sessions where we got to know each other a little bit better. At one session, we were presented with real orchid leis all the way from Hawaii! Needless to say, we felt pretty special walking around with flowers around our neck all day long.

Our last official NDP event was the actual awards ceremony. As the first state, I had to lead all of us across the stage. My inner voice once again chimed in, “Smile and wave, Dil...smile and wave. And whatever you do, don’t trip.” Guess what? I tripped in rehearsal due to a hole in the floor. Thankfully, I was able to protect my fellow NDP. The actual ceremony was



simply beautiful. As we walked across the stage, our beaming smiles were projected on the screens. We were each given a beautiful framed certificate and an engraved golden bell. Once we were all seated, it happened. Imagine 43 bells being chimed in unison. Did you hear the bells in Alabama? After all the hardships of COVID, those bells could not sound any

sweeter. We rang in the conclusion of one of the hardest years in education. We rang in the completion of 100 years of NAESP. What a day!

As crazy as it may sound, one of the things I thought we would not experience (and was secretly wishing to see) was the famous NDP ice carving usually on display at the banquet in Washington. However, to my great surprise, there it was at our final reception. Although we did not have a formal banquet, it was so much fun having dinner with all of the folks from Alabama at Gino's East Pizzeria where I had my first deep dish pizza. Thanks, Vic Wilson and Alabama delegates for a memorable evening. If you happen to visit this eatery, you may find a few messages on the walls left by our group (Yes, graffiti was encouraged, if you can believe it!)

But wait....there's more!

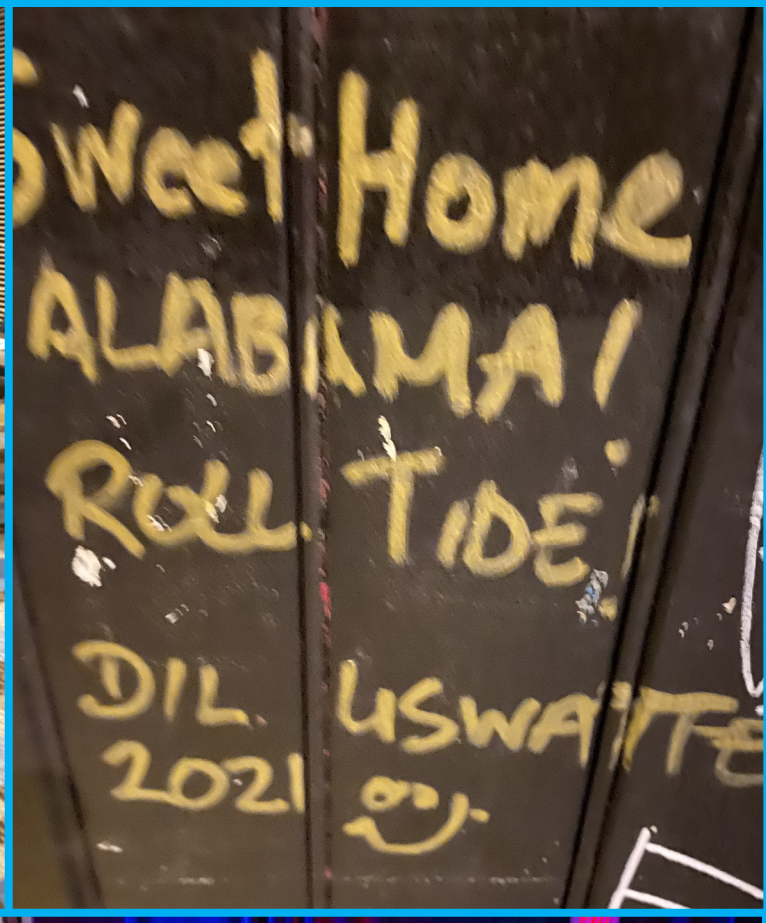
Do you believe everything happens for a reason? In the spring of 2021, we found out that Mrs. Aqila Malpass, Rocky Ridge's assistant principal, was named National Distinguished Assistant Principal! She too was being recognized at the NAESP conference on the last day. Needless to say, it was a very proud moment for me to see Aqila walk across that stage. I could not be prouder to celebrate our successes together. If the event had occurred in October, we may have never had this celebration together.

It has been quite a journey, my fellow educators. Thank you for being outstanding leaders who demonstrate excellence every single day. Thank you for being my colleagues and giving me a chance to grow and glow. I am so excited for my dear friend, Amy Mason, the 2021 NDP, to experience this wonderful journey. The bells still ring for all of us- do you hear them? Have a great school year!

COVID and a Century Later...the School Bells Still Ring for NDP



COVID and a Century Later...the School Bells Still Ring for NDP



COVID and a Century Later...the School Bells Still Ring for NDP



Do YOU Know the Next Alabama NDP?



Dilhani Uswatte
NAESP 2020 NDP
Rocky Ridge Elementary

Red Carpet Trivia, anyone? Who was this year’s best supporting actor/actress for the Oscars? Who won the best recording artist at the Grammys for country music? If anyone knows, it is Dr. Vic Wilson,

Director of CLAS, who knows all kinds of trivia about major awards as he often shares in his CLAS Friday Updates. However, what even Dr. Wilson does not know is, “Who will be the next National Distinguished Principal (NDP)?” But... perhaps YOU know the next NDP!

The NDP awards, hosted by the National Association of Elementary School Principal (NAESP), seeks to recognize one elementary or middle school principal from each state who meets the following criteria:

- On-line principal for ***at least five years***
- Is a ***member of NAESP*** and has been for ***at least three consecutive years***

- Demonstrates ***strong commitment*** to principalship by active membership in professional organizations
- Actively ***participates in community activities***
- Gives of ***outstanding leadership skills*** that benefit a local school program
- Provides service or **achievements beyond what is expected** in the usual school program

As the 2020 NDP and the current chairperson of the NDP committee, I cannot wait to meet this year’s finalists from each of our ten districts. This award not only highlights the great leaders in our state, but provides an opportunity to learn about best practices and the numerous reasons why we chose to serve the students of Alabama. There are simply too many amazing principals in our state for even one district to go unnoticed. Please take the time at your first district meeting to select a district finalist.

So, who will walk the carpet as the next NDP and bring pride to our great state? Will they be from your district? It starts with a nomination....

If you have questions about the process, please do not hesitate to contact me at duswatte@hoover.k12.al.us

Date(s)	Actions
August-October, 2021	During the district meeting – select district Distinguished Principal Nominee
November 1, 2021	Name of District’s Distinguished Principal nominee is due to Rickey Darby, Assistant Executive Director at CLAS
November 15, 2021	NDP application packets will be emailed by Rickey Darby to each district’s nominee
November 16, 2021	District nominees are recognized at AAESA Conference Awards Luncheon in Perdido, AL
January 4, 2022	Application packets are due and must be sent to the CLAS office
January-February, 2022	The Alabama NDP committee will select three finalists and complete a site visit at the school of
March 2022	Name of NDP final winner is announced at the AAESA Spring Planning Meeting
June 2022	NDP is recognized at the CLAS Summer Conference in Birmingham, AL
October 2022	NDP is recognized at NAESP Awards Program in Washington, DC

Membership Matters



Matt Scott
Creekside Primary
Limestone County

Greetings Alabama administrators! My name is Matt Scott and I am the AAESA membership chair and our NAESP representative. I hope everyone had a great summer and you had a chance to relax. I also

hope you were able to attend a summer conference or professional seminar. Summer conferences are a great way to grow professionally and recharge your principal batteries while school is out.

It was great to be back in person at CLAS and NAESP and see so many of you this summer. I hope the 2021-22 school year is a great one! If you are a current AAESA member, thank you for renewing your membership again this year and if you know a new administrator in your area, please encourage them to join as well.

The benefits of an AAESA membership are many and can help school leaders maximize their unique leadership potential. Belonging to your professional organization is something everyone should consider. AAESA is a professional group which focuses on positive educational leadership. Being a member of AAESA also strengthens our voice as a professional group in our state. AAESA members also have access to professional publications, conventions, conferences, research, state and federal regulations, individual counseling, and other services. AAESA members are also provided legal defense through CLAS. Lastly, by joining AAESA you will have the opportunity to grow professionally by networking with your fellow administrators across our great state of Alabama.

One of the best reasons to join AAESA has to be the great people you will meet along the way. Over the last several years, I have really made some lasting friendships and made great contacts with fellow principals from all over our great state of Alabama. Had I not joined AAESA, I would not have grown my professional contact list but also missed out on knowing so many great people.

A great way to network is to attend your AAESA District

meetings. This past year in District 1 virtual meetings and it was great to meet, hear a guest speaker, network for a few minutes and then log off and get back to school business. This year we will hopefully be able to have a blended approach with some in-person meetings and some virtual meetings.

In addition to AAESA membership, school leaders also have the opportunity to join our national organization, NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals). NAESP membership gives members a wealth of professional development options: the national summer conference, monthly webinars, "Principal" magazine mailed to us bi-monthly, "Communicator" a monthly email newsletter, a monthly "Report to Parents" sent by email which gives us professional bulletins to help us help parents, and many more professional development aspects. Not only does NAESP provide us with access to a wealth of professional development options, but it also provides us with member benefits like our "Legal Benefits Program". We are covered with \$2,000,000 professional liability reimbursement for legal services and job-protection related services. Along with the above benefits, NAESP provides its members with great discounts with the following companies: Office Depot, Hertz, Wyndham Hotels, discounts on insurance programs through Forrest T. Jones, and FTD floral discounts.

Both organizations provide members with dynamic professional learning opportunities, networking opportunities, and professional connections across the state and the country. It is worth noting that members of AAESA are on the front lines of networking and advocacy with legislators at the state and national levels. Our advocacy efforts are critical to ensuring that schools in Alabama, and across the country, are represented in legislative processes. Registration packets have been mailed out and it is time to make sure you are taking advantage of all of the wonderful opportunities membership in these organizations can bring.

I have been a proud member of AAESA and NAESP since 2004. Over the years I have made professional connections through both organizations which have helped guide me through my career as an elementary school administrator. I have been fortunate to attend our AAESA fall conference and NAESP summer conference several times and I am looking forward to another great year with each organization. If you have any questions or I can help you in any way, please contact me. I hope you have a great school year!



AAESA District Map

Assistant Executive Director's Report



Rickey Darby
AAESA Assistant
Executive Director

I hope each of you have enjoyed a well-deserved vacation and some time away from the school. Although most of you have been involved in some form of a Literacy Camp, I hope you found a few

days to get away and enjoy family and non-school activities.

Each of you have the exciting and awesome responsibility to lead a school family this school year. As you interact with the students, staff, parents, and community you will have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of each individual student. Recently while at Epcot in line to ride Living with The Land, I saw a quote from a ten year old Bowling Green, Kentucky student. "I may be only one person, but I can be one person who makes a difference." Vandra Franeene Grace

Summer is always a valuable time for educators to take part in professional learning. Many of you attended the CLAS Summer Conference, twenty-five of you attended the NAESP Convention in Chicago, and a few of you attended the Mega Conference in Mobile. Several administrators presented at the CLAS Convention or NAESP Conference. **Dr. Dil Uswatte, Dr. Datie Priest, and Ms. Emily Paschall** presented sessions at the CLAS Convention in Birmingham. **Dr. Margaret Jones** and **Ms. Amy Mason** presented at the NAESP Conference in Chicago. Congratulations to these women for their extra efforts in sharing their experiences as an elementary administrator. Others enjoyed local opportunities for professional learning. This time of year is a valuable time to rejuvenate and enjoy a time of growth and networking with other administrators.

Membership

This is the time of year that our membership in CLAS and AAESA renews each year. You will be receiving your membership information from CLAS soon. This is also the time that we look to encourage new administrators and non-members to join our professional organization. Remember the incentives that CLAS offers members for referring new members. For every new member (make sure your name is on his/her enrollment form as referring person) that joins,

you will receive \$25, and your name will go into a drawing for \$1,000 for each new member you referred.

We still have elementary principals who are CLAS members but are members of other affiliates. We need to remind elementary principals to join the elementary affiliate. You need to make sure that they know that they do not have to join NAESP like they did for several years. They can make the change on their membership form that they receive from CLAS or they can call the office at 1 (800) 239-3616 to make the change or addition to their affiliate membership. I encourage you to consider membership in NAESP, particularly if your system pays for your membership. NAESP is also a valuable professional organization with great publications and conferences.

Networking is an important part of any professional organization. I can remember my days as a principal and the vital role that attending conferences and meetings played in my growth as an administrator. A great place to start are the three district meetings held throughout the year and attending the Fall Conference and CLAS Summer Convention. You have the opportunity to sit and chat with other peers from across the state. This strengthens our organization.

Fall Instructional Leadership Conference – November 14-17, 2021

The annual AAESA Fall Instructional Leadership Conference will return to the beautifully renovated Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, AL. The theme of this year's conference is **The 3 R's of Leadership: Recovery, Resiliency, and Revitalization**. The conference will be offered in-person and virtually. I encourage all members to attend this year. After the last sixteen months, this will be a great time to revitalize yourself and network with fellow administrators from across the state. The on-line registration and hotel reservations are now available. So, register early to save money and make your hotel reservations to make sure that you get in the conference block at the Perdido Beach Resort.

Have a great year

I hope each of you has a great beginning of the school year. As you begin the school year working with students, staff, parents, and the community remember this anonymous quote, "Whatever we accomplish belongs to our entire group, a tribute to our combined effort."

Creekside: Two Schools with One Heart



Dana Rhinehart
Creekside Elementary
Limestone County

Creekside Primary and Creekside Elementary are two schools with one heart, a heart for everyone that walks through our doors. This was never more evident than during the 2020-2021 school year. We started the year with many emotions, and like many schools, we had more questions than we had answers. We were not sure what everything was going to look like but continued the mantra that we repeat every year. Love your students. Love each other. Love what you do. We believe that if you do these three things well, everything else will fall into place. So, what happens when a school lives by this? You grow a community that loves and takes care of each other in good times and bad. This is apparent in so many ways at Creekside.

August 2020 was a scary time, but we made it through it. Emotions varied from tears and questions about why we were starting back to school to determination and grit that we could do anything. The grit and determination quickly won everyone over. We wore masks, checked temperatures, adhered to constantly changing guidelines, and did all the things that marked COVID. We quarantined a few students but had no serious illnesses. We knew that together we could make things work. We didn't allow COVID to limit us. We found ways to continue to make every day the best. We enjoyed treating our teachers and staff to little surprise treats and Food Truck Fridays became a huge hit. Love your students. Love each other. Love what you do.

On August 25, 2020, everything changed for this administrator. My first grandchild was born at 22 weeks. She weighed 1lb 2.5 oz. My Creekside family journeyed with me for the next 145 days through the peaks and valleys as Maisy stayed in Huntsville Hospi-

tal's NICU and then Children's of Birmingham. At one point a teacher commented, "There's just something about Maisy" and that phrase stuck, was repeated often, and was added to t-shirts. On January 8th I walked out to two schools lining the sidewalks with posters, banners, and shirts in support of Maisy. The prayers, gifts, love, and support shown to us during this journey was indescribable. Not being able to be with our children during their greatest time of need was horrible and my Creekside family lifted us up throughout the journey. After 3 brain surgeries, Maisy continues to amaze everyone, including her doctors. The cards and banners that students made saying they were praying for Maisy or telling us how they were a premie too are precious keepsakes. There is nothing more precious than the love and prayers from children. Love each other.



In September a parent notified me that she would be taking her daughter to Vanderbilt for a heart transplant evaluation. Even with COVID, this spunky little 5th grader came to school as much as possible to learn with her friends and teachers. Her absences were easy because her friends had learned the previous year how to include her using our special "Bella Bot". In April, the call came. Our sweet Bella got a new heart. Her classmates and teachers cheered her on through surgery and recovery. On the day she arrived back home, her driveway was lined with teachers and friends welcoming her. home. Love your kids.

Creekside: Two Schools with One Heart Cont'd



our visit was completed and on April 30th both schools were named 2021 Blue Ribbon Lighthouse Schools. We feel this is a direct reflection of what goes on in our classrooms every day. Our teachers and staff create lasting relationships with parents and people within our community. Because of these things, we have a tremendous support system. Love what you do.

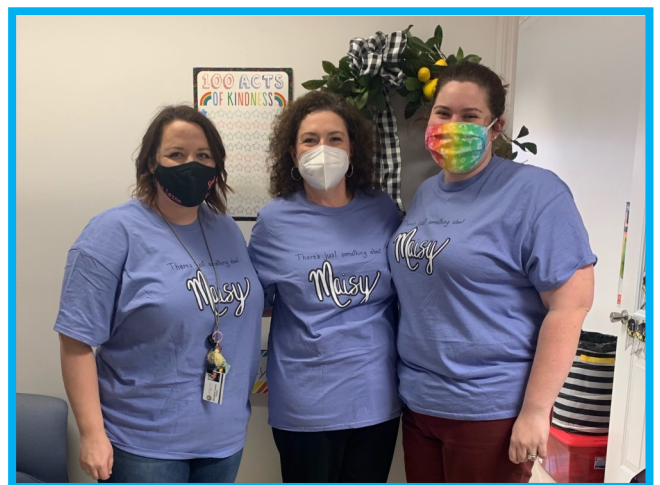
Planning a new school year is always exciting. This year, more than ever, teachers are putting extra effort into creating special learning places for their students. We cannot wait to see the faces of students who continued virtual learning all year. We have new faces joining our classes every day. We can't wait to learn their stories and teach them new things.

For 2021-2022, we are launching Creekside CARES: Creating Authentic Relationships with Every Student. With all the growth in our area, we want to make sure that every student has the best opportunities for learning. This starts with knowing their social and emotional needs as much as their academic needs. We'll learn those needs by building authentic relationships with every student. We have over 1100 students in the two schools so this will be quite an undertaking but so worth the effort to ensure every child's happiness and success at Creekside.

Creekside Primary and Creekside Elementary are in eastern Limestone County. We have fun every day and hope everyone that enters our school feels the excitement of learning in our schools.



I am quite sure our teachers thought insanity had struck all their administrators when we announced that we would be continuing our journey to become a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. We had begun the process before COVID and after several discussions we decided to move forward as soon as travel bans would allow for the visit. We wanted everyone to see what us four administrators were seeing. Even during a pandemic, Creekside teachers were teaching and making learning fun even with a lot of restrictions. In January

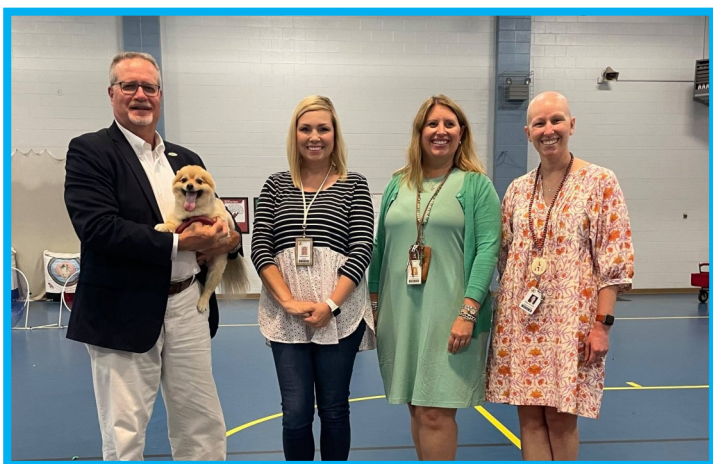




Michelle Moore
Foley Elementary
Baldwin County

Foley Elementary School, part of the Baldwin County School System, has found an exciting way to keep students engaged in reading and writing while increasing communication skills, learning world geography, and building character education! What started as a 2nd grade teacher's vision of engaging her 2nd grade students in writing and valuing differences in others, quickly blossomed into a schoolwide Pet Pals program with pals from all across the globe.

Mrs. Joanna Worch started the Pet Pals program to encourage her students to value differences in others and have a real-world reason to write and communicate. Piglet, a blind and deaf pink puppy, was the first Pet Pal for Mrs. Worch and her 2nd graders. Piglet's owner, Melissa Shapiro,



teaches students how to have a "Piglet Mindset" and began writing to the 2nd graders. After others expressed interest in participating, the program

exploded.

How does the program work? The students adopt a Pet Pal and write pets. All the letters are written from the child to the pet. In return, the pet writes back! They share information about their school day, school work, bullying, and even ask about friendship advice. This is a great way to learn to be patient because letters are sent by mail. Students eagerly wait to hear back from their Pet Pal. Many students receive books, pet pictures, and small gift boxes from their adopted pet. There is even a student mailman who delivers the Pet Pal letters to students! Even the 6th grade students eagerly await letters and get emotional when receiving letters.



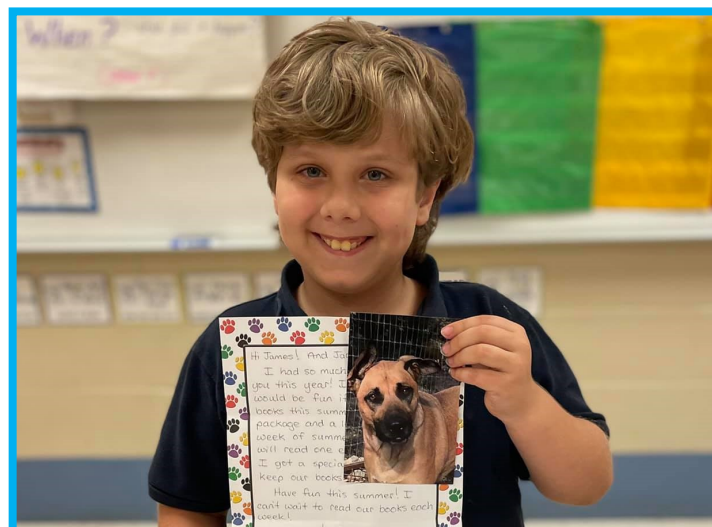
Students also learn geography by graphing on a map where the Pet Pals live. Pet Pals are located all around the United States. Pet Pals also write from Canada, England, Jerusalem, Brazil, and many other countries. The program has grown so much that a Pet Pal Team has been established.

Many pets participating in the program include pets with special needs. There are several blind pets, deaf pets, and even a pet in a wheelchair.

Pet Pals Cont'd

These pets are unique and teach children how to be accept differences and include others. Many of the pets travel from across the country and bring their pet to meet students.

The program grew tremendously during the COVID Pandemic. Many of the Pet Pal participants live alone and enjoy having their pet write to students. They, too, eagerly await the arrival of letters from their student Pet Pal. Teachers vet all letters and packages. No personal information is ever shared. For more information, follow Foley Elementary School on Facebook or visit www.bcbe.org.



Summer Break and the Science of Reading



Tim Dollar
Wilmer Elementary
Mobile County

As a Principal I have always enjoyed summer break. Teachers, students, and staff leave the building, (except the stragglers who have nothing else to do).

Once they are all gone, I walk the darkened halls and contemplate the past year and the changes that need to be made for the coming year. It usually takes me a couple of weeks to wind down, close out the past year, review the data, and begin to develop a plan for the new school year. The process invigorates me and makes me excited for all the possibilities a new school year holds.

In early March I received an email from our district offices concerning Summer Reading Camp (SRC). Along with numerous attachments, the email noted that I would be able to find more information on Summer Reading Camps in my Literacy ACT Implementation Guide in Section 7 on pages 84-91.

I knew summer break was not going to be the same this year.



We were highly encouraged to begin immediately meeting with our planning team to devise next steps

and develop questions we had concerning SRC. We were asked to consider the following when we met:

1. Determine which students need to attend. If your student needs outweigh your budget, first invite your lowest performing students, and those with an SRIP.
2. On the sample letter you will notice that parents are being asked to either accept the invitation to SRC or decline. From these initial responses you will then be able to determine how many slots you have remaining and can send a second round of invites to the next group of students with deficiencies.
3. You may consider calling parents (or having teachers call parents) as a follow up to the letter that you send. We want students to attend! Reach out to them any way you can.
4. You may consider adding details, like transportation, to your parent communication, as this will assist parents in making their decisions.
5. You may consider a full day program (half-day at the least) for four weeks. The AL Literacy Act requires that you offer 70 hours of literacy instruction. It is not feasible to expect K-3 students to be able to maintain concentration and focus on literacy all day. Therefore, 3.5 - 4 hours per day for 4-weeks is ideal in meeting the letter of the law.
6. You may consider enrichment activities (possibly supported by community-based resources) with full day programs.

Did I mention that this was in early March? We began vigorously reviewing K-3 literacy data, selecting students, contacting parents, hiring personnel, and planning for a minimum of 70 hours of literacy instruction based on the Science of Reading. With three months left in an already stressful year it was a whirlwind of activity.

As we delved deeper and deeper into the data and began planning specific intervention for each student, I began to be excited for all the possibilities SRC held

Summer Break and the Science of Reading Cont'd

for our students in need. I realized I did not need to walk the darkened halls and contemplate the past year to become invigorated for the future. All I needed was being able to envision the positive changes in my student's literacy skills after participating in a month of targeted literacy instruction by gifted teachers.

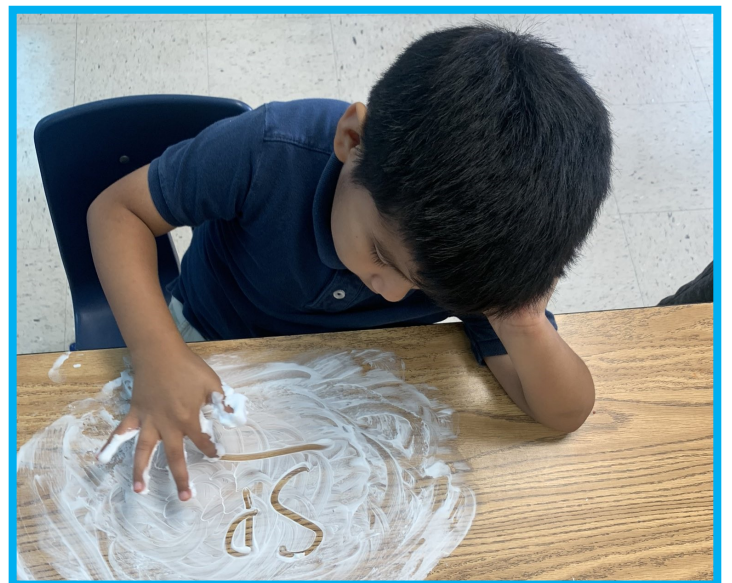
This was the first time in my educational career that I felt we as educators could really make a difference in our students' ability to read. No grading involved, no pass or fail, only extended periods of research-based, fun filled, literacy intervention and instruction by highly skilled, passionate teachers.

It took the entire three months to prep, plan, and train for Summer Reading Camp, but it was worth it. Students and staff came in excited and ready to have fun. It was not school, it was camp. We made s'mores, played games, had crafts, ate watermelon, and learned.

After a short four weeks, it was over. Everyone was exhausted but happy. As for the results? Over 80% of the students involved showed an increase in reading achievement from the pre- to post-assessment. Students recognized themselves as readers and were proud of their accomplishments.

I have spoken to colleagues throughout the district and the state about their experiences with Summer Reading Camp. I was encouraged to learn what we experienced at Wilmer Elementary in Mobile County was repeated over and over, with much the same success.

I am excited to see what the new school year holds. There are good things happening in Alabama!



CLAS Leadership Award Winner



Bonnie Sullivan
Pike Road Intermediate
Pike Road City

Congratulations to Dr. Stan Stokley, AAESA nominee, who was selected as the recipient for the CLAS Leadership award.

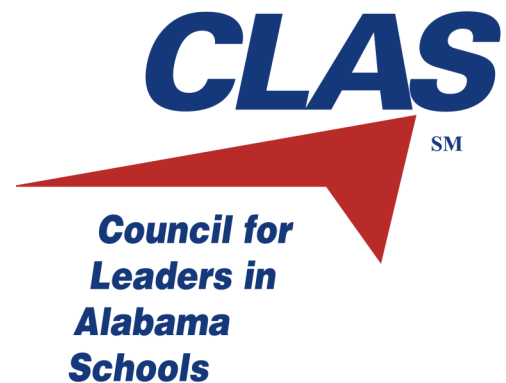
This award is given to an elementary administrator who is currently a CLAS member, works for the unity in the teaching profession, achieves concepts underlying the leadership team approach to local school administration, secures better local understanding in the school system, and provides leadership in a CLAS affiliate organization.

Dr. Stokley is completing his 27th year in education. He has earned a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Master of Education in Mathematics from the University of West Alabama, and Educational Specialist and Doctor of Education in Instructional Leadership from University of South Alabama. He has served as a high school teacher, high school assistant principal, Programs Coordinator for Marengo County Public Schools, Principal at Sweet Water High School and Elementary School in Marengo County Public Schools.

Dr. Stokley is currently the Principal at Saraland Elementary School, in the Saraland City School System. He has been selected as one of the three finalists for the National Distinguished Elementary Principal Award for Alabama (2021), AAESA Board Member for CLAS, led Saraland Elementary School to earn an A on the school report card and selected as a National Blue-Ribbon School. He also obtained several grants such as the 21st Century grant, Alabama K-4 Initiative Grant, and Enhancing Education Through Technology Grant.

Dr. Stokley is also involved in the community by hosting and presenting workshops. He has produced 40 episodes of Good Morning Saraland Morning Announcements, which has been recognized by local and state news.

ASESA would like to recognize Dr. Stokley for his accomplishments, honors, and dedication in educational leadership that have significantly impacted educators and students. It is with great pleasure that Dr. Stan Stokley has been selected as the recipient for the *CLAS Leadership Award*.



Federal Relations



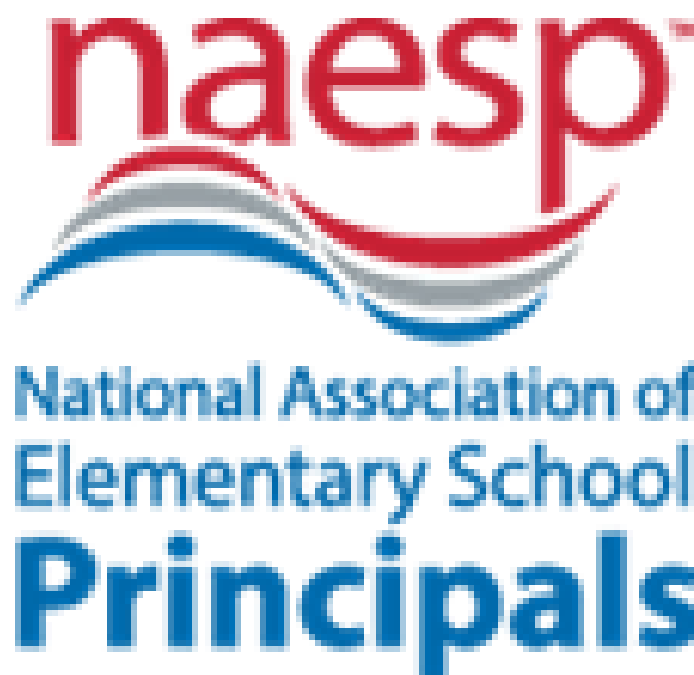
David Fancher
Federal Relations Chair
Retired

School is starting back! Nationally, by the end of the first week of August, 10% of the student population will be back

in school. Last year was unlike any year before, but everyone knows there will still be challenges in the coming year. Hopefully, the large influx of federal funds will help you and your school deal with these challenges. The Department of Education has already released \$81 billion or two thirds of the Rescue America funding to states. The other one third of the funding will be released when the department has approved the States' plans for the use of the funds. So far, 11 states have had their plan approved. The remaining state plans must be submitted by early August. The budgeting process for the upcoming fiscal year is underway with committees developing their proposals. The current proposal for education would see education changing from being 2% of the total federal budget to 3.7% -almost doubling the funding available. The Department of Education's funding is proposed to be 102.8 billion dollars, up by 29 billion dollars. This funding increase will no doubt face a stiff challenge when it comes to a vote in Congress. Be sure to have done your part by letting your congressman and Senator know your feelings. It is a large increase, but still a small part of the overall federal budget. President Biden's original infrastructure proposal included funding for schools. The bipartisan agreement he reached with Senators did not include this funding. It does provide funding for electric school buses, replacing lead water pipes so students can have safe drinking water and for broadband internet. A separate package that addresses some of his other educational priorities could be passed through budget reconciliation. The FCC is also making 7 billion dollars available to provide reliable internet service to homes.

The Biden administration has also announced a review of Title IX. Under the former Secretary of Education, changes were made in the regulations of Title IX. Many of these changes were on the protection LBGQT+ students would have under title IX. The Biden administration has stated that all students have Title IX rights. The policy will not produce sweeping changes immediately but carries the possibility of federal sanctions against schools and colleges that fail to protect LBGQT+ students. This would also have an impact on states that have recently passed laws concerning transgender students. The Attorney Generals of 21 conservative states have already sent a letter to the president stating that this is not an interpretation of Title IX, but a rewriting of it.

Mark November 8, 2022 on your calendar! This will be the date of the midterm elections. Senator Shelby has announced his retirement from the Senate and so far, 11 Republicans have declared their candidacy for the seat. No Democrats have announced yet. The race could already be heating up a little. Senator Shelby has announced his support for his former aide, Katie Boyd Britt and made some remarks about Mo Brooks, who is also running for the position. Former President Trump is reported to have made radio ads in support of Congressman Brooks.



2021 Fall Instructional Leadership Conference



Rickey Darby
AAESA Assistant
Executive Director

The annual AAESA Fall Instructional Leadership Conference will be held November 14-17, 2021. This year the conference will return to the beautifully

renovated Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, AL. The theme of this year's conference is **The 3 R's of Leadership: Recovery, Resiliency, and Revitalization**. The conference will be held in-person and virtually. Whether you are in Orange Beach or back at your school, you will be able to view each speaker until the end of the week. There will be eight breakout sessions on Monday. You will be able to attend 4 of the sessions at the conference. You will be able to view the other 4 during the week or re-watch a speaker you enjoyed again.

The keynote speakers will include **Dr. Edgar Finn**, a child psychologist who will speak on Child Mental Health in the Age of the Pandemic. He will discuss the issues that children are dealing with on returning to the school setting and other issues that are affecting students' mental health. On Tuesday, we will have educator and learning specialist, **Sue Mitchell**. She was portrayed by Kathy Bates as "Miss Sue" in the best-selling book and Oscar nominated movie **The Blind Side**, Sue Mitchell famously tutored NFL Ravens #74 Michael Oher from a .6 GPA to a 2.05 in high school, and finally to a 3.75 Dean's List student in college. On Wednesday morning, we will have **Mr. Aubrey Miller**, retired Senior Vice-President of YMCA of Greater Birmingham, lead pastor at Faith Church, current President of the Shelby County School Board, and husband of a retired elementary school principal. His topic will be the 3 C's of Recovery: Collaboration, Confidence and Caring.

In addition, the State Department will be conducting general sessions on updates that are timely for all elementary administrators. Some of the topics include

Recovery Plans, Remediation, Transition, High-Quality Instruction, Using ESSR 2 and ARP Funds. Another session will look at new legislation, Kindergarten Bill, Textbook Law, MTSS-Multi-tier Systems of Support, and updates on the Literacy Act.

This year there will be a pre-conference session on Sunday on The Literacy Act designed for new principals and new central office supervisors. Encourage any new administrators in your system to attend the conference this year.

Information on registration and housing is included in this issue of the AAESA Magazine. All registration this year will be on-line. Billing for any unpaid registrations will be billed after the conference. This may help you take advantage of the early-bird registration pricing.

Hope to see each of you at the conference on November 14-17, 2021.

New Pre-Conference Session on The Literacy Act for New Administrators and Central Office Supervisors

This year there will be a pre-conference session developed for new principals, assistant principals, and central office supervisors. The topic will be introduction to the Literacy Act and all the requirements. This session focuses on implementing the Alabama Literacy Act, its impact on schools, LEAs, and communities and a discussion of effective literacy practices aligned with Alabama Achieves. The State Department of Education staff will be presenting this two hour session on Sunday, November 14, 2021, from 3:00 till 5:00.

If you are registered for the conference, the cost will be \$50. If you only want to attend the Sunday pre-conference session, the cost will be \$75. You must pre-register for the pre-conference with the conference registration on-line form found in this issue of the AAESA Magazine and the link will be <https://www.clasleaders.org/aaesa21>.

Encourage any new administrators in your system to attend this session and the conference this year. If you have any questions, please call or email Rickey Darby at rickey@clasleaders.org or (205) 616-7645.

2021 Fall Instructional Leadership Conference



The 3 R's of Leadership: *Recovery, Resiliency & Revitalize*

Sunday, November 14, 2021

2:00-3:00 Nominating Committee

3:00-5:00 Board Meeting

3:00-5:00 Pre-conference Session: Literacy Act for New Administrators and Central Office Supervisors

Dr. Elisabeth Davis, Assistant State Superintendent of Student Learning

Ms. Bonnie Short, Program Coordinator with the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and

Ms. Karen Rutledge-Bell, Alabama Reading Initiative

This preconference session focuses on implementing the Alabama Literacy Act, its impact on schools, LEAs, and communities and a discussion of effective literacy practices aligned with Alabama Achieves.

6:00-8:00 Board Dinner

Monday, November 15, 2021

7:30 – 8:30 **Breakfast and visit partners**

8:30 –9:45 General Session - Moving Forward in the New Normal: The Challenges of Deferred Development”

Dr. Edgar Finn, Training Director for the Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship Training Program, University of South Alabama College of Medicine
The COVID-19 pandemic has altered so many aspects of our lives, affecting the way we work, the way we socialize, and the way we learn. While adults have experienced many stresses associated with COVID-19-related changes to our routines, children and youths have weathered similar stresses while also navigating their own journey of development. In this presentation, we will explore some of the major challenges to normal development brought about by the pandemic and discuss adaptive and maladaptive patterns emerging in this population. It is hoped that this presentation will provide mental health insight which will enable more effective engagement for professionals working with children and youths.



9:45-10:15 **Break and visit partners**

10:20-11:05 Breakouts **STEAM**

Dr. Dil Uswatte, Principal of Rocky Ridge Elementary

This session will focus on how to be a STEAM (Science-Tech-Engineering-Arts-Math) empowered school. Ideas on how to incorporate STEAM into everything you do at school will be discussed, as well as how to become a COG-NIA-STEM internationally recognized school

2021 Fall Instructional Leadership Conference

Dyslexia Learning Lab Schools – Year 1 Lessons

Year 2 Implementation, & Continued Efforts to Increase Reading Achievement in Alabama’s Schools

Ms. Bonnie Short, Program Coordinator with ARI and former Learning Lab principal and
Dr. Phyllis Faust, Principal of Magnolia Elementary

Whether you have just purchased an approved intervention program or if you already have experience with one, learn how Dyslexia Learning Lab Schools bring programs to life through important structures and collaborative leadership. Join Dr. Phyllis Faust, Principal of Magnolia Elementary School with Trussville City Schools, alongside Bonnie Short, former PreK through sixth grade principal and ARI Educational Administrator, to share of their experiences with the Dyslexia Learning Lab opportunity leading to the growth of their own schools, as well as the growth of their neighboring schools. Take advantage of their missteps and their successes to better support the children you serve.

AMSTI – Pilot Teacher in Residency – Year 1 Lessons

Year 2 Implementation, & Continued Efforts to Increase Math Achievement in Alabama’s Schools

Dr. Sandy Lidwell, Program Coordinator for AMSTI,
Dr. Audrey Chatman, Principal of Stemley Road Elementary,
Emily Harris, Coordinator of Instruction for Talladega County Schools
Robin Blair, AMSTI Director at the University of Montevallo, and
Melia Brashear, Principal of B.B. Comer Elementary

Hear the outcomes illustrating how the AMSTI Teacher-in-Residence pilot, along with a PLU for district leaders, led to impressive student growth in two rural elementary schools. The district's work with AMSTI provided guidance to school administrators, building-based math coaches, and teachers in advocating for the Math Teaching Practices and collaboratively developing a shared vision for mathematics teaching and learning while using high-leverage coaching practices to make instructional shifts that impact all students."

Multilingual Updates – Alabama’s New Multilingual Framework; WIDA Early Years Partnership and Resources

Ms. Maria Franco, Education Administrator for Multilingual Programs

This session will provide updates on the creation and implementation of the Multilingual Framework. Improving multilingual teaching and learning and increasing graduation rates. The Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education recently partnered with WIDA Early Years. This partnership provides support to multilingual children and their families. It includes access to resources, integration of WIDA standards with state standards, and best practices to teach and support multilingual learners.

11:15-12:00

Breakouts – morning sessions repeated

12:00-1:15

Lunch and visit partners in the Exhibit Hall

1:20-2:05

Breakouts

Blue Ribbon School

Mrs. Tanya Clark, Principal of John S. Jones Elementary and
Mrs. Barbara Johnson, Retired Principal of Cleburne County Elementary

This presentation will help you to know what it means to be a National Blue Ribbon School. The principals from two 2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools will share their experiences as well as the application process. They will also share best practices from their prospective schools that have contributed to their schools’ success.

2021 Fall Instructional Leadership Conference

Engaging and Empowering Students Through Technology and Project-Based Learning Inside and Outside the Elementary Classroom

Dr. Angela Robinson, Talladega County Literacy Coordinator and former Principal of Munford Elementary,
Mrs. Amanda Watts, Assistant Principal of Munford Elementary

Mrs. Kimberly Murray, Science Resource Teacher

Munford Elementary School inspires creativity and self-directed learning through a variety of innovative approaches that include personalized learning opportunities, an interactive school environment with outdoor classrooms, STEM programs, project-based learning, and purposeful use of technology integration. Learn how teachers at this National Green Ribbon and Cognia STEM Certified School are closing the achievement gap for students by providing opportunities for innovative learning strategies during school hours and beyond.

Early Childhood-Birth to Age 5

Dr. Michael South, Principal of W.C. Handy Early Childhood Development Center

The Birth To 5 Preschool Development Grant (PDG B-5), also known as the First Class Foundations Program, seeks to inspire, support, and deliver a cohesive, comprehensive, mixed delivery system of high-quality education and care so that all Alabama children thrive and learn. The PDG-% grant builds upon the successes of the nationally recognized First Class Pre-K, First Teacher Home Visiting, and Pre-K-3rd Grade Integrated Approach to Early Learning (P-3) programs as well as promote Alabama's **Born Ready** movement, to inspire and empower every parent and to ensure every child reaches their greatest potential. W. C. Handy Early Childhood Development Center in Florence City Schools was selected as one of the first school systems to receive the PDG B-5 Grant. Dr. South works with the Alabama department of Early Childhood Education and his school faculty and staff on implementing an Infant and Toddler program that builds upon the First Class Pre-K at his school.

Success with Schoology Learning as a School Administrator

Dr. Gina Hartman, Director of Professional Services

District and school administrators play a crucial role in ensuring that their faculty and staff have a thorough understanding of Schoology and the impact it has on student learning. In this session, participants will: gain a foundational understanding of navigating your district's powerful online learning platform (Schoology); understand the difference between Schoology Courses, Groups, and Resources; explore Schoology as a platform for school and district leaders; and strategize how to incorporate thoughtful practices across the organization using digital tools (Schoology).

2:05-2:35

Break and visit partners

2:40-3:25

Breakouts – Afternoon sessions repeated

3:30-4:30

Share Tables

Aversion Strategies to Prevent School Violence - Dr. Charles Gardner and Dr. Waller Martin

Arts Integration in Core Content Areas - Ms. Amy Mason

Divided Day and Check-in/out Schedules for Most Difficult Students - Mr. David Carpenter

Charter Schools - Dr. Michael Wilson

Pre-K and Early Learning Questions - Dr. Michael South

Diversity PLU -

Math Course of Study and AMSTI Math Intervention Supports– Dr. Sandy Ledwell

Power School Professional Learning – Dr. Gina Hartman

2021 Fall Instructional Leadership Conference

PLUs and Certificate Renewal – Ms. Telena Madison

New Alabama Teacher Observation Program – Dr. Elisabeth Davis

Vendor

Vendor

Vendor

Vendor

Vendor

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

7:30-8:30

Breakfast and visit partners

8:30-10:15

General Session – Miss Sue’s Lessons from The Blind Side

Sue Mitchell, Educator and Learning Specialist depicted in *The Blind Side* Miss Sue takes audiences behind-the-scenes of *The Blind Side*, telling the story from her perspective as an educator and learning specialist. A believer that any student can achieve academic success with the right blend of motivation and applied learning, Mitchell inspires students and teachers alike to explore new opportunities in teaching and learning. For educators, Miss Sue draws upon her work with Michael Oher and beyond, highlighting applied teaching techniques and lessons learned from four decades as an educator, from elementary school to college.



10:15-10:45

Break and visit partners

10:50-12:00

General Session – State Department – Unfinished Learning – Recovery Plan, Remediation, Transition, High-Quality Instruction and Professional Development, Using ESSR 2 and ARP ESSER Funds

Dr. Elisabeth Davis, Assistant State Superintendent of Student Learning and
Dr. Molly Killingsworth, Director of Federal Programs for State Department

Presenters will discuss development and implementation of the LEA recovery plan, as well as leveraging federal funds to best meet the needs of students, focusing on those most vulnerable populations. The session will also include positive practices for addressing students’ learning loss, as well as various examples of innovative practices utilizing both ESSER 2 and ARP ESSER funds.

12:00-1:10

Award Luncheon

1:20-2:40

General Session – State Department Updates – New Alabama Teacher Observation Program (ATOP), Courses of Study Updates, and High-Quality Instructional Materials, Impact of New Legislation, MTSS- Multi-Tier Systems of Support, Literacy Act Update, Updates on EL (Multilingual) Supports and Alabama’s Coaching Framework
Dr. Elisabeth Davis, Assistant State Superintendent of Student Learning

Mr. Sean Stevens, Program Coordinator of Instructional Services for the State Department and

Mrs. Bonnie Short, Program Coordinator of the Alabama Reading Initiative Preparing for initial Implementation of ATOP in January 2022 and find out more about optional components of the program as you fully implement.

Team members from the Office of Student Learning will provide updates on the following ALSDE initiatives that have a direct or indirect impact on elementary educators: spring 2021 Legislative session laws passed that impact elementary schools; math textbooks adoption updates; other implications for future courses of study and textbook adoption cycles; Early Years assessments (grades K – 3 math and reading); AL-Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) rollout including pilot LEAs and general overview information; Alabama Literacy Act updates; and

2021 Fall Instructional Leadership Conference

the ALSDE’s Road to Recovery Toolkit updates related to ESSER I, II, and the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Participants will also have time to ask questions and network with ALSDE staff. A resource document will be provided that will include hyperlinks to all the information provided during the general session so that participants can easily access and share the resources with their districts.

2:40-2:50

Break

2:50-3:20

General Session – Lessons Learned in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Dr. Demica Sanders, CLAS Director of Professional Learning and

Mr. Nathan Wilson, Assistant Principal Heritage Elementary

Leaders play a pivotal role when laying the groundwork that influences the school/district culture, guiding the focus toward identifying and addressing opportunity gaps. What do leaders need to consider and do to create a culture focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion? Join us for an overview of the lessons learned from this informative book study and hear how one administrator is putting what he learned into practice at his school.

3:30-4:00

Business Meeting

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

7:30-8:00

Breakfast General Session

8:00-8:30

State Department Updates – **Mr. Terry Roller**, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services

8:30-10:00

Speaker – **Mr. Aubrey Miller** – **The 4 “C’s” of Recovery: Collaboration, Confidence, Competence and Caring**

In his book, Good to Great, Jim Collins talks about facing brutal facts while remaining optimistic. As education leaders, we must hold those two tensions. We are keenly aware of the time that we've lost, and all of the challenges that we've had, and how hard it has been, and how hard it's going to be to get back on board. So, we're going to be honest about that, but we have to be perennially optimistic about our collaborative ability to get this problem solved for the sake of an entire generation of children.

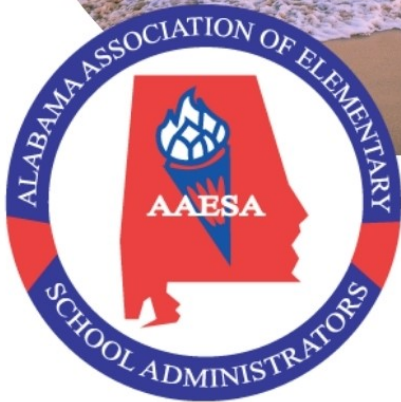




The 3 R's of Leadership:
Recovery, Resiliency & Revitalize



**Online
Registration
Now Available!**
clasleaders.org/aaesa21



AAESA Fall Instructional Leadership Conference

November 14-17, 2021

Perdido Beach Resort



NAESP Celebrates 100 Years of Leadership



Matt Scott
Alabama's NAESP
Representative

The 2021 National Association of Elementary School Principals Conference was held in Chicago, Illinois this year. The conference was held Wednesday, July 8th through Saturday, July 10th.

The 2021 conference marked the 100th year anniversary of NAESP!

It was an amazing week highlighted by keynote speakers, well-planned sessions and making new connections with principals from across the nation. This year NAESP provided us with options for our professional development. We had general sessions, inspirational keynote speaker sessions, thought leader sessions, lecture style and interactive sessions categorized by focus areas, breakout sessions, and the Center for Advanced Leadership which focused on today's hot topics in education and facilitated interactive discussions held in the exhibit hall.

Dr. Earl Franks opened our conference wishing all participants well and welcoming us to Chicago. Dr. Franks unveiled NAESP's 100th year commemorative artwork, "100 Years of Service". NAESP has provided an interactive website to view the commemorative artwork @ <https://www.naesp.org/sites/naesp-100>. All NAESP Past-Presidents are listed on the artwork and if you zoom in close enough you can see Alabama's own Jill Eaton who was NAESP President from 1998-99!

Our keynote speakers this year were Ruby Payne, Baruti Kafele, and Dan Heath. Baruti Kafele started us off on Thursday morning with a message about one person being able to alter the trajectory of a student and how we should all know our "why" of why we are doing our job as administrators. Ruby Payne led a

great general session on Friday helping us understand the "why" behind student behaviors and provided us with some great day to day strategies of de-escalating certain behaviors. Our last general session keynote was led by Dan Heath. Dan is an innovative business leader and the author of a recent book titled *Upstream*. Dan challenged us to think upstream about problems and issues. By thinking upstream hopefully we can identify problems and solve them before they become bigger in the future.

Many leaders from the great state of Alabama attended the conference in Chicago. It was a great conference to network and learn best practices in a variety of educational areas. Targeted conference topics this year were: Instructional Leadership Development, Best Practices in Social Emotional Learning, Optimizing Systems for Effective Learning Communities, and Innovative Leadership Approaches.

The conference provided school leaders with natural outlets for networking and collaboration. There were many vendor options and opportunities to form relationships with these individuals. It was a pleasure to attend the NAESP national conference. The event always provides leaders with an outlet to disconnect while plugging in with leaders from across the country.

To follow the conference after the conference, check out the hashtag [#NAESP21](https://twitter.com/NAESP21) on Twitter for inspiring tweets from principals across the county as they promoted speakers and gave their timely feedback on sessions from the conference. You can also gain a lot of insight from the conference by reading the conference blog @ <https://www.naesp.org/conference-blog/>.

Next year's conference will be in the South! NAESP is excited to host the 2022 Pre-K-8 Principals Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, July 15-17, 2022. Mark your calendars and start making your plans for next summer!

We look forward to seeing you next year in Louisville, Kentucky!

NAESP Celebrates 100 Years of Leadership



NAESP Celebrates 100 Years of Leadership



NAESP Celebrates 100 Years of Leadership



It was Amazing!



Veronica Bayles
G. W. Trenholm Primary
Tuscumbia City

Being an educator during a global pandemic was extremely challenging. As administrators, we had to dig deep into our leadership tool box to manage,

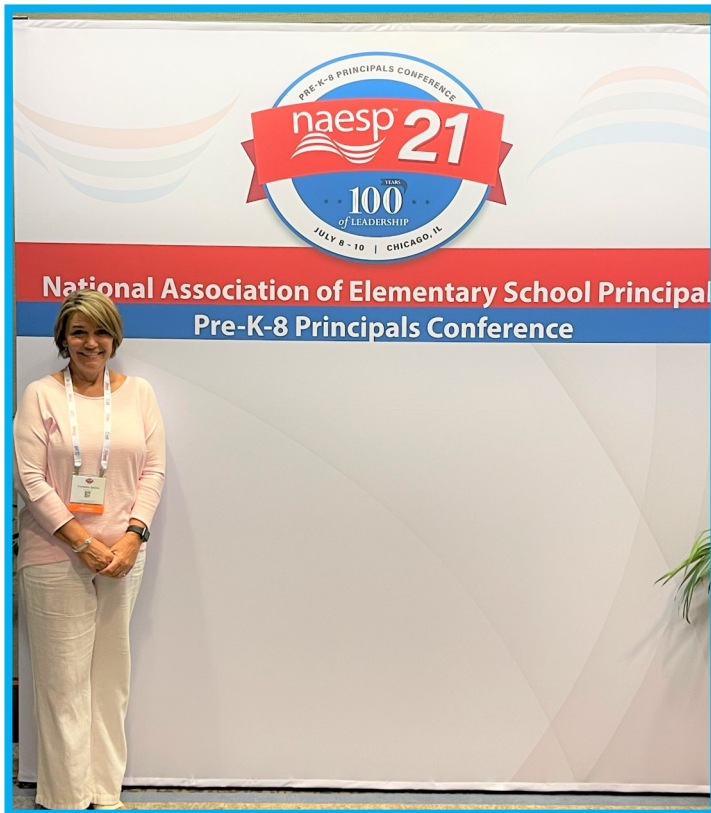
address, and cope with the new challenges. We learned the importance of being flexible, managing stress, and of course contact tracing. But as a relatively new principal, I also learned the importance of networking and having a professional support system. So when I learned I was awarded the AAESA Glenys Mason Scholarship to attend the NAESP convention, I was pumped!!! Not only would I have the opportunity to grow professionally and prepare myself for the upcoming school year, but I also would have a chance to build relationships and learn from administrators across the country. What an opportunity!!

The conference was held in beautiful Chicago, Illinois-home of the Chicago Cubs, Michigan Avenue’s Magnificent Mile, the Bean, and of course, deep dish pizza. The Hyatt-Regency Conference center, host to the NAESP conference, is nestled between the winding Chicago River and Lake Michigan. This beautiful setting was just the beginning of a wonderful four days of professional learning.

I am very passionate about school culture and climate and the role this plays on staff motivation and student achievement. So I chose sessions that aligned with this passion. Like the session led by Mathew Moyer, Principal at Rupert Elementary School in Pottstown Pennsylvania. His session entitled “Tips and Techniques for Using Social Media to Promote Your School”, focused on using social media platforms to engage all stakeholders and how to brand your school. Moyer suggests identifying the main social media platform used by your parents, students, and community and using it to get your message out. To make sure your message is clear and concise, he suggested covering the 5 W’s (who, what, where, when, and why) and adding a photo to capture attention.

Jessica Gomez, Principal of Alice-Birney Elementary School and Allyson Apsey Principal of Quincy Elementary School led a session called “Flipping the Script for Staff Meetings: 10 Strategies to Create a Culture of Collaboration.” This session focused on ways to change boring faculty meetings into times of collaboration, partnership, and community. This dynamic duo suggested that just simply renaming these meetings to something more collaborative can have a positive impact and even energize your faculty. Suggestions such as positive postcards, team wins and staff shout outs, and even reading a portion of an inspirational book can dramatically change the mood of the meeting.

There should always be a little fun at each meeting. Another great session “Happiness at Work: Cultivating a Positive Work Environment” was led by Edward Consentino, Principal of Clemmons Crossings Elementary School in Columbia, Maryland. He demonstrated how little acts of kindness or what he calls



It was Amazing! Cont'd

“happiness actions” can keep the positive vibes going all year long.

And the daily keynote speakers left me inspired and motivated. Ruby Payne, author of *Emotional Poverty in All Demographics* shared strategies to address emotional issues through a closer look at brain science and how this should drive how we manage and prevent discipline problems. And opening keynote speaker Principal Baruti Kafele was “ON FIRE”! His message to all leaders was to bring your fire and passion for the work and for the young people despite the hardships. Principal Kafele gave us 5 things our students need from principals: (1) Believe in me, (2) Get to know me beyond the classroom, (3) Prove to me that you care about me, (4) Challenge me to reach my potential, and (5) Expose me to my history. As principals, we are the number one determinant of the success or failure of our students. Kafele stated “Just one principal can completely alter the trajectory of an entire school community”. We can never forget our impact.

As you can see, this conference had a huge impact on me professionally and personally. I was able to make connections with some of our AAESA leaders during the Zone Four meeting and to network with educational professionals all over the United States. My support system has grown by leaps and bounds. I am very grateful for the opportunity to attend and I would highly encourage others to attend, as well. It was amazing.!



We Have Emerged: What You Missed at the 2021 CLAS Convention



Dilhani Uswatte *Rocky Ridge Elementary* *Hoover City*

After more than 15 months in a COVID-challenged world, Alabama educational leaders had a chance to break out of their cocoons and EMERGE for the 50th CLAS Convention. With almost 1000 attendees

(about 15% virtual), educators from across the state warmly greeted each other, shared COVID challenges, but more importantly, celebrated our opportunity to reshape education.

Held at the Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex (BJCC) in downtown Birmingham, where the first CLAS conference was held, CLAS celebrated its 50th birthday in style from June 14-16, 2021. Attendees were welcomed by several special guests including State Superintendent Dr. Mackey and Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin. Even Alabama Coach Nick Saban and Auburn Coach Bryan Harsin brought greetings and praise for Alabama educators virtually. [Author's note: ROLL TIDE!]

There was no shortage of vibrant local, state, and national speakers who each provided wisdom and strategies for reshaping education. Breakout sessions covered a variety of topics including managing stress, understanding our Hispanic students, how to build future leaders, ways to build community, equity in assessments, and updates from the State Department of Education... just to name a few. The first keynote speaker, Thomas Murray, challenged us to stay personal and authentic amid adversity. Specifically, he reminded us about the power of relationships and the need to understand each person's hidden story. While there may have been F.E.A.R in the past (Forget Everything And Run), Murray proposed a new take on F.E.A.R (Face Everything And Rise). The second keynote speaker, Damon West, talked about his personal struggles that eventually resulted in him being convicted. However, he talked about the sage advice he was given in jail to turn around his life: Be a coffee bean! He shared that the stresses of life are like a pot of boiling water. If you are a carrot, you will turn to mush and not survive. If you are an egg, you will become hard on the outside, full of anger. However, if you are a coffee bean, you will thrive in the hot water. Like coffee, you will only get stronger over time because the power is within you. Damon reminded us of the power of a smile, the need to feed

our brains positive stories and that thinking about doing good is not the same as actually taking action. On the last day, Saneer Bell closed us out with this thought: Elevate our WHY. She inspired us to emerge as leaders with renewed passion and an even greater commitment to those we serve.

Of course, in between all the great sessions, attendees were able to meet over 50 convention sponsors, enjoy the music of the "Uncommon Core Band" led by our very own Dr. Vic Wilson, enjoy breakfast meals together and celebrate our leaders at the Awards Luncheon. Well over 50 people were recognized at the



Awards ceremony including National Distinguished Principals and Assistant Principals from last year and this year, retirees and recipients of various special award. It concluded with AAESA's very own Dr. Stan Stokley receiving the prestigious CLAS Leadership Award.

We emerged. We grew beautiful wings. We are ready to fly into a brighter future. Imagine where CLAS will be another 50 years...



National Association of Elementary School Principals



Matt Scott
Creekside Primary
Limestone County

“100 Years of Service”

Dr. Earl Franks opened our conference wishing all participants well and welcoming us to Chicago. Dr. Franks unveiled NAESP’s 100th year commemorative artwork, “100 Years of Service”. NAESP has provided an interactive website to view the commemorative artwork @ <https://www.naesp.org/sites/naesp-100>. All NAESP Past-Presidents are listed on the artwork and if you zoom in close enough you can see Alabama’s own Jill Eaton who was NAESP President from 1998-99!

Read the NAESP blog to catch up on the happenings at the conference: <https://www.naesp.org/conference-blog/>

You can still follow all the Tweets from NAESP 2021 at [#NAESP21](https://twitter.com/NAESP21)

Keynote Speakers @ NAESP 2021 and 1 key point from each:

Baruti Kafele - A visionary elementary principal can completely alter the trajectory of an entire school community!

Ruby Payne - Genetics cocks the gun but the environment pulls the trigger. Emotional Poverty is a MUST READ for all educators!

Dan Heath - Behavior is contagious. Attitude is contagious. Inaction is contagious.

Membership Snapshot—AL is in Zone 4

By State

AL	351	CT	10	IL	188	ME	171	MO	354	NM	40	OR	157	TX	307	WI	383
AK	162	DE	82	IN	91	MD	496	MT	361	NY	199	PA	1287	UT	495	WY	156
AZ	98	FL	252	IA	285	MA	284	NE	177	NC	0	RI	195	VT	108		
AR	10	GA	10	KS	67	MI	879	NV	63	ND	272	SC	82	VA	938		
CA	180	HI	246	KY	3	MN	749	NH	266	OH	155	SD	82	WA	1866		
CO	19	ID	168	LA	68	MS	81	NJ	597	OK	141	TN	425	WV	233		

By Zone

1	1106	2	2083	3	1822	4	1191	5	282	6	1547	7	1978	8	977	9	3273
---	------	---	------	---	------	---	------	---	-----	---	------	---	------	---	-----	---	------

Service Day – Many volunteers signed up for Service Day but unfortunately NAESP could not hold a traditional playground build this year.

NAESP Member Benefits New Website @ <https://www.naesp.org/>** - If you haven’t noticed NAESP has a new website! All of our resources are now streamlined and easy to find.

Communications – The issue of Principal magazine is available. The issue focuses on A New Direction for SEL.

Report to Parents (July issue) focuses on “The Rewards of Reading”. RtP is a helpful resource for sharing with students and their families. Issues are available in both English and Spanish.

NAESP Advocacy Alerts - The laws that Congress passes, and the funding decisions they make, have an enormous impact on you, your school, and your students. But in order to ensure robust funding for federal education programs like Title II and IDEA, and to advance education policies that rightly recognize the important role of principals, it’s critical to make your voice heard. NAESP is pleased to offer members text message alerts on key legislation and votes impacting principals. To sign up for text alerts, use the button below, or text "NAESP" to 52886.

National Aspiring Principals Academy (NAPA) - Are you a teacher leader, an assistant principal, or an early career principal searching for quality professional learning to take your leadership to the next level? Are you a district leader committed to building a strong, diverse principal pipeline? NAPA will support these goals.

More information about NAPA @ [LINK](#)

Nominating Committee



David Carpenter

Jeter Primary

Opelika City

The Nominating Committee will identify and certify candidates for each of the following positions:

AAESA VICE-PRESIDENT – (two candidates) 4-year term, one year each as Vice President, President-Elect, President and Past President

CLAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 3 positions – 3-year terms

Qualifications for candidacy for AAESA Vice President

Must be a currently practicing elementary/middle school building administrator

Must have had previous service as an elected officer (President, District Representative) in a district

Must have continuous active membership in AAESA while serving in office

Qualifications for candidacy for CLAS Board of

Directors

Previous service as an elected officer (President, District Representative) in a district

Active membership in AAESA for at least two years

Candidates must be an active member in both AAESA and NAESP. The list of candidates will be presented to the CLAS Executive Board on November 14, 2021. Nominations should be received by November 5, 2021, and sent to david.carpenter@opelikaschools.org. or call **334-745-9723**. Please include your name and contact information.

AAESA Business Meeting



Tricia Culpepper
Cullman City Primary
Cullman City

The AAESA Business Meeting was held at the CLAS summer convention on June 14, 2021. Charlie Garner called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. Rickey Darby announced that the winner of the Bill Miller Friend of Education is Dr. Steve Bell. Ms. Paula Reese is the winner of the Truman Pierce Leadership award.

Rickey Darby stressed the importance for district meetings to nominate for National Distinguished Principal and Assistant Principal at the first district meeting. The deadline for these nominations is November 15. Mr. Darby reviewed the AAESA budget and finances. He explained that our membership dues is \$38,766 which is half of our projected membership dues of \$77,532 for the year. He reported that our investments are doing well overall. Susan McRae reported that there was no new business for by-laws changes/ modifications.

The fall AAESA conference will be at the Perdido Beach Resort November 14-17. Everyone is encouraged to attend this event. David Fancher presented the federal relations report to the group.

Matt Scott, NAESP representative, reported that our AAESA membership continues to grow while our NAESP membership is down by approximately 20 members. Mr. Scott encouraged the group to recruit new administrators. The national conference is July 8-10 in Chicago. Karissa Lang, reported that we will need to nominate 2 people for Vice-President and 6 people for CLAS Board positions.

Dr Dil Uswatte reported that Amy Mason, Alabama NDP will be recognized in Washington this fall. Dr. Wilson, CLAS Executive Director noted that our summer CLAS conference is extremely well attended. There are over 800 attendees for our summer convention. He reminded the group to reach out to our legislators often.

Rickey Darby gave the Assistant Directors' Report. Charlie Gardner, Stan Stokley and Veronica Coleman will serve as AAESA Directors on the CLAS board.

The end of the meeting concluded with the installation of officers for the 2021-2022 year. President Elect Waller Martin, President- Judith Ross, Vice President- Karissa Lang, Secretary- Dil Uswatte, NAESP Representative- Matt Scott. Past President- Charlie Gardner.

The meeting was adjourned.

FUTURE EVENTS

AAESA Fall Instructional Leadership Conference

November 15-17, 2021

Perdido Beach Resort
Orange Beach, Alabama

CLAS Convention

June 13-15, 2022

Birmingham-Jefferson
Convention Complex (BJCC)
Birmingham, Alabama

NAESP Pre-K-8 Conference

July 15-17, 2022

Louisville, Kentucky

Meet Your District VIII President



Donnashale Bruister *Pine Grove Elementary* *Baldwin County*

My name is Donnashale Jackson Bruister. I am honored to serve as Baldwin County AAESA District VIII's President the 2021/2022 school year. It is hard to believe that this will be the beginning of my twenty fifth year as a Baldwin County Board of Education employee. While attending Auburn University to earn my Bachelor of Science in Education, I kept hearing about this wonderful school system. I had to find out for myself, so I moved here after graduating in 1996! I am sharing my story from a personal and professional perspective so you can get to know a little more about me.

I was born and raised in Monroeville, Alabama in 1972 to Donald Edmond Jackson, Sr. "Papa Jack" and Shelby Chunn Jackson. Both of my parents were educators for a combined seventy-three years. My dad was a band director for thirty-eight years and my mother was a first-grade teacher for thirty-five years. I always joke that my career path was pre-determined because it runs in the family genes. The truth is making a difference is my purpose and my why! I am passionate about watching people lead successful lives. This the reason I love being an educator.

I attended Monroe County Public Schools kindergarten through twelfth grade. I was blessed with an outgoing personality which led me to be involved in multiple activities/organizations such as dance, band, clubs, class officer and much more. I was honored to receive a performing arts scholarship to attend Alabama Southern after graduating high school. After two years, I then transferred to Auburn University on a leadership scholarship. WAR EAGLE!! I enjoyed tailgating with my family and friends most of all. My par-

ents would bring the motorhome and set up on campus during most home games. It did not take long for me to become a SEC football fanatic with heavy emphasis on my Auburn Tigers!! Did I say WAR EAGLE?? HA HA! There is nothing like being present in Jordan Hare Stadium! As a matter of fact, I have been a season ticket holder since 1996. My husband and I enjoy parking our fifth wheel at University Station with a great group of friends in the fall and attending the football games. Fall is my most favorite season of all!!



When I moved to Baldwin County after graduating from Auburn University, I was honored to become a teacher at Pine Grove Elementary School in Bay Minette, Alabama. This was the beginning to my amazing journey! I taught first grade one year and kindergarten for ten years. In August 2008, I became an Alabama Reading Initiative Specialist for six years. During the sixteen years of teaching, I gained my Masters from the University of South Alabama plus my Educational Specialist in Early Childhood Education from Auburn University of Montgomery.

Throughout my time as an educator, I was repeatedly encouraged to obtain my Educational Leadership Certification from multiple mentors, family members and friends. I received my certification December 2013. I

Meet Your District VIII President Cont'd

was hired with my first administrative position one month later. I was honored to be named Assistant Principal at Perdido School February 2014. Then, after a short-term serving as Assistant Principal, my Superintendent Mr. Eddie Tyler and our BCBE senior staff members invited me to become Pine Grove School's Educational Leader beginning June 2016. I was privileged to return to the campus where I started my career. Making this move meant full circle in more ways than one.

I am entering my twenty fifth year this upcoming school year. I am proud of every single family member at Pine Grove School. It truly is my home away from home. The children and stakeholders hold a very special place in my heart!

I am blessed to have a supportive husband that understands my passion for my profession. He enjoys hearing stories about me over the years and listens to stories that support the difference I have strived to make and have made. God blessed me later in life with my soulmate and we married in 2010. I gained a bonus son, Hunter Bruister, when I married Kirk. We later brought our four legged, spoiled rotten, miniature long haired dachshund, Lily, home. She is our fur baby and is so very loved. Kirk and I are true companions that love deeply. We enjoy everything together from going to football games, concerts, the beach, hunting, ATV riding and traveling. We are so very blessed. He works for CSX railroad as a carman and is an extremely gifted welder. We love family time and time with friends. This past year has taught us not to take anything for granted!

I would like to thank everyone that has encouraged and supported me my entire life. I am proud of my accomplishments! I definitely did not achieve them alone. I look forward to serving as District VIII's President for the 2021-2022 school year! Thanks again for letting me share my story. Prayers for a successful year for you all!



District IX News



Teresa Sims
Troy Elementary
Troy City

Greetings from District 9! If I had to come up with a song title for this past school year, the first that comes to mind is "I Will Survive"... and survive we did! While we may not

know the full impact of these past 18 months on student development and achievement, we do know that we have dedicated, caring professionals in every school who will meet them where they are and provide them with the encouragement and instruction they need to succeed. As leaders we spend a lot of time and effort encouraging and supporting those who support our students - as we should! It is also important for us to support each other through participation in district affiliate and CLAS events. Some of the best "PD" occurs between the wonderful sessions at CLAS and as we meet and collaborate with administrators in our AAESA districts. We have several systems where there is only one elementary school as well as K-12 schools where the assistant principal assumes the leadership of the elementary grades. It is always good to know others who face similar challenges that are a phone call away. I hope you will make every effort to attend district meetings this year. Our "in-person" meetings include great information, food, and fellowship. Our first meeting for the year is scheduled for September 23, 2021, 5:30 p.m. at McLinn's Restaurant in Daleville, AL. Phone a friend and come join us!



CONGRATULATIONS to the following individuals in District 9 as they begin the year in new leadership positions! If your name is not on this list or if hires have not been announced yet, please send the information when available to simst@troyschools.net

- Rodney Drish, Pike County Elementary School principal
- Rochelle McKenney, Pike County Elementary School assistant principal
- Tammy Calhoun, Banks School assistant principal
- Jennifer Lee, Goshen Elementary School principal
- Natalie Mims, Goshen Elementary School assistant principal
- Dr. Erica Hall, Beverley intermediate School principal (Dothan) and new CLAS Certified Instructional Leader
- Tina Richards, Eufaula Primary principal
- Darrell Woods, Eufaula Elementary School assistant principal
- Casey Moore, Brantley School principal
- Jonathan Jordan, Highland Home School assistant principal
- Chancy Smith, Geneva County Elementary principal
- Blakelyn Baker, Girard Intermediate principal
- Beth Bouchard, Highlands Elementary principal
- Christopher Payne, Carver School of Math, Science, and Technology principal
- Kenya Martin, Elba Elementary School principal
- Dawn Tice, Lisenby Primary (Ozark) principal
- Will Cammack, Lisenby Primary (Ozark) assistant principal
- James Blissett, Wicksburg Elementary principal
- Jodi Shelley, Webb Elementary principal
- Paul Strange, Cottonwood Elementary principal
- Sharon Leroy, Ashford Elementary assistant principal
- Megan Driggers, Kinston School principal
- Brendan Dow, Kinston School assistant principal
- Carlos Baggage, Barbour County Primary principal

I would also like to encourage all administrators in Dis-

District IX News Cont'd

trict 9 to keep us informed of exciting things happening in your schools or if you receive any awards. Please email directly to me. They will be featured in our AAESA District 9 report. I'll start....

Until this year the playground at Troy Elementary had not changed much since the school was established in 1990. Over the last couple of years our awesome PTO has worked tirelessly to combine PTO, community, and business resources to raise over \$100,000 for our wonderful new playground. This has been an amazing addition to our campus, especially this year. We received a \$15,000 grant from Kaboom as well as a \$15,000 grant from the Alabama Department of Public Health for a shade structure at the Hank Jones Early Childhood Center. The official ribbon cutting was March 19th, complete with our special guest Dr. Eric Mackey. From the zipline picture you can see why our students thought he was "cool!"

THANK YOU again for everything you do and best wishes for an incredible school year!



Glenys Mason NAESP Convention Scholarship Application

This scholarship is available to AAESA members who have never attended a National Association of Elementary School Principals Convention. The \$1,500 scholarship is awarded to help pay for the expense of attending an NAESP Convention.

The selection will be made at AAESA Spring Executive Committee Meeting and announced at the AAESA General Business Meeting at the CLAS Summer Convention.

APPLICANT INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Cell or other contact number: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

School City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Other Application Materials:

- Attach a vita or résumé
- Attach a 50 word essay stating why attending the national convention will benefit you in your principalship role.

Please email application materials and application to:

Rickey Darby
Assistant Executive Director
rickey@clasleaders.org

The deadline to apply is February 1, 2022.
Please mail documents in time to be received by the deadline.

Alabama Association of Elementary School Administrators
P.O. Box 428
Montgomery, AL 36101-0428
(800) 239-3616 or (334) 265-3610
Fax: (334) 265-3611
www.clasleaders.org



AAESA Officers

President

Judith Ross
Smith Middle
1124 Five Mile Road
Birmingham, AL 35215
Phone: (205) 231-5675
Fax: (205) 231-0231
jross@bhm.k12.al.us

President-Elect

Waller Martin
Enterprise Early Education Center
6500 Boll Weevil Circle
Enterprise, AL 36322
Phone: (334) 393-9542
Fax: (334) 447-6908
wmartin@enterpriseschools.net

Vice-President

Karissa Lang
Crestline Elementary
600 Crestline Drive SW
Hartselle, AL 35640
Phone: (256) 773-9967
FAX: (256) 751-5656
karissa.lang@hartselletigers.org

Secretary

Misty Wilkerson
Loxley Elementary
4999 S Magnolia Street
Loxley, AL 36551
Phone: (251) 964-5334
Fax: (251) 964-7369
mwilkerson@bcbe.org

Immediate Past President

Charles Gardner
Hokes Bluff Elementary
5375 Main Street
Hokes Bluff, AL 35903-4736
Phone: (256) 492-5571
Fax: (256) 492-2513
Charles_Gardner@ecboe.org

NAESP Representative

Matt Scott
Creekside Primary
16049 Sanderson Road
Harvest, AL 35749
Phone: (256) 216-8702
Fax: (256) 2168704
matt.scott@lcsk12.org

Executive Director

Vic Wilson
P.O. Box 428
Montgomery, AL 36101
Phone: (800) 239-3616
Fax: (334) 265-3611
vic@clasleaders.org

Assistant Executive Director

Rickey Darby
P.O. Box 428
Montgomery, AL 36101
Phone: (800) 239-3616
Fax: (334) 265-3611
rickey@clasleaders.org

CLAS Office

P.O. Box 428
Montgomery, AL 36101
Phone: (800) 239-3616
Fax: (334) 265-3611
www.clasleaders.org

CLAS Board of Directors

Tricia Culpepper
Cullman City Primary
900 Hoehn Drive
Cullman, AL 35055
Phone: (256) 775-0234
Fax: (256) 775-0238
tculpepper@cullmancats.net

Veronica Coleman
Chastang-Fournier K-8
2800 Berkley Avenue
Eight Mile, AL 36617
Phone: (251) 221-2081
FAX: (251) 221-2080
vcoleman@mcpss.com

Charles Gardner
Hokes Bluff Elementary
5375 Main Street
Hokes Bluff, AL 35903-4736
Phone: (256) 492-5571
Fax: (256) 492-2513
Charles_Gardner@ecboe.org

Waller Martin
Enterprise Early Education Center
6500 Boll Weevil Circle
Enterprise, AL 36322
Phone: (334) 393-9542
Fax: (334) 393-9547
wmartin@enterpriseschools.net

Rodney Richardson
Horizon Elementary
7855 Old Madison Pike
Madison, AL 35758
Phone: (256) 464-3614
Fax: (256) 464-3689
rkrichardson@madisoncity.k12.al.us

Stan Stokley
Saraland Elementary
229 McKeough Avenue
Saraland, AL 36571
Phone: (251) 679-5739
Fax: (251) 679-5749
stokley@saralandboe.org

Dilhani Uswatte
Rocky Ridge Elementary
2876 Old Rocky Ridge Road
Hoover, AL 35243
Phone: (205) 439-2910
Fax: (205) 439-2901
duswatte@hoover.k12.al.us