



**Principal Leadership: Be Bold and Unapologetic**  
*By Krysia Gabenski*

We've got a saying at NAESP: Once an NDP, always an NDP—an [NAESP National Distinguished Principal](#). Being named an NDP is an honor bestowed upon school leaders who have gone above and beyond for their schools and their students, leading learning communities with a passion for their craft and a love for education. **Once an NDP, Always an NDP**

In 2012, one such NDP was Miguel Cardona, at the time an elementary school principal in Connecticut, but you might know him now as U.S. Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. On the 10th anniversary of becoming an NDP, Cardona joined us during the 2022 NDP celebration in Washington, D.C., during the closing award ceremony and gala on Friday, Oct. 7.

Cardona was nominated to the role of U.S. Secretary of Education after rise through the education field, from on-the-ground experience as a public school teacher and an elementary school principal—the youngest in Connecticut for 10 years—and then an assistant superintendent and, finally, Connecticut Commissioner of Education.

“The job with the closest pace to the pace I have now was the role of the school principal,” said Cardona. “It’s the most demanding job in education, and I would argue, the most rewarding.”

**Supporting the Whole Principal**

A voice and leader for all students and school communities, Cardona spoke with NDPs about the challenges they’ve faced—and overcome—as they led schools through a pandemic. Principals are leading in a time when the pressures of the pandemic shifted but never went away, he said. Cardona

acknowledged he understood the challenges associated with leading during a political divide, the largest achievement gaps than in any other point in education, and a mental health crisis for our nation’s children, offering a strong message of support for school leaders. It was a timely message, as NAESP is focusing on principal wellness all October for National Principals Month. “Take care of yourselves; we need you,” he said. “You won’t be able to serve if you’re not well—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Be OK prioritizing you every once in a while. It’s critical you prioritize yourself to be your best. We didn’t sign up for the pandemic, but we signed up to serve children, and we’re serving at a time when our children need us most.”

**A Path Forward—Together**

NAESP has long advocated for the principal voice to be included in policy discussions on every aspect of public education. As a former principal, Cardona understands this, too.

“We can’t talk about increasing mental health supports in our schools without focusing on the role of the principal,” Cardona said. “Want better parent engagement and student voice? We better focus on having the voice of our principals at our table. Want to talk about staffing shortages? Not without principals, we’re not. As a school principal, you’re at the heart of the ecosystem that serves children.”

“The work ahead is not easy,” Cardona said. “It’s different but just as important as your work the past two years to safely reopen schools. That work might have had you questioning yourself, but it made you stronger and prepared for today.”

Cardona challenged school leaders to set a new goal.

“For the last two years, we gave our all to fight COVID,” he said. “For the next

the next two years, use that same passion and that same urgency to fight complacency—complacency of low expectations, complacency of silos in education that limit our growth, complacency of thinking we can’t change things.”

Cardona believes that together is the way forward in education. Earlier that day, he welcomed the NDP class to the U.S. Department of Education building in Washington, D.C., to hear from leaders in the department about their efforts to support principals and schools. The department leaders also met in small groups with NDPs to listen to these principals’ stories and experiences of struggle and learn from them what they need most in their school communities to support better outcomes for students. To end his speech with the 2022 NAESP NDP class, Cardona offered a bright look toward the future.

“Lead boldly and unapologetically for the students we serve. Together, I am confident that the best days in education are still ahead of us.”

*Krysia Gabenski is the digital communication associate at NAESP. (Via [naesp.org](#).)*

**“The secret of getting ahead is getting started.” —Mark Twain**



**First Year Principals and Assistant Principals:** you receive a free KAESP membership for your first year. Complete a membership application form and send it to the KAESP indicating your first year principalship status.

### Call for 2023 NAESP Pre-K–8 Principals Conference Proposals

The NAESP Pre-K–8 Principals Conference is headed to National Harbor, Maryland, July 10-12, 2023. NAESP is inviting you to submit a proposal by Nov. 30, 2022, to present and join us for three days of networking and amazing professional learning. Educators want to see and hear what strategies their colleagues are implementing to lead successful learning communities. Whether you have presented before or this will be your first time submitting a proposal, we encourage you to share your best practices, strategies and expertise in the following conference strands. In particular, the bolded strands below represent high-need areas:

- ◆ Equitable Outcomes, Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural Responsiveness
- ◆ Family and Community Partnerships\*
- ◆ Share Leadership, Build Capacity, and Promote a Culture of Continuous Improvement\*



- ◆ High-Quality Instruction and Interactions for Pre-K–3rd Grade Leaders
  - ◆ Best Strategies and Practices for Middle-Level Leaders
- \*Sessions applicable to all Pre-K–8 Leaders

NAESP leads in the advocacy and support for elementary and middle-level school leaders in their commitment for all children. Please consider submitting a proposal and help make NAESP's 2023 conference programming a stimulating and engaging professional learning event. Elementary and middle-level leaders have never been more important!

#### Proposal Submission Timeline

- September 2022 – Call for Proposals Opens
- Nov. 30, 2022 – Proposal Submission Deadline
- Late-January 2023 – Notification of Proposal Selection Status



### KAESP is Looking for Board Members!

Do you have an interest in serving on the KAESP Board of Directors? We are looking for principals and assistant principals to serve on the board by representing the principals in their region. The full board only meets about two times a year with most business conducted via email. Regional representatives are asked to recruit members from their region, attend KAESP functions, and provide leadership in KAESP. We are looking to grow the board and involvement of our members in KAESP. We need you!

If you are interested in being a more active member, please contact Rosie Young at [ryoung@bellarmine.edu](mailto:ryoung@bellarmine.edu).



### KAESP Website

The new KAESP website is up and running—check it out at : [kaespsy.org](http://kaespsy.org)

[www.kaespsy.org](http://www.kaespsy.org)



More information about KAESP can be found at <https://kaespsy.org/>

### Destress in 10 Minutes or Less

When you're leading a building with lots of unpredictable moving parts including hundreds of young students, stressful situations can arise in seconds. Nosebleeds and meltdowns, teachers and staff calling in sick, and circumspect parents are just a few of the problems you may handle on any given day. Even if you meet most issues gracefully and decisively, stresses inside and outside the school can mount fast, leaving you feeling irritable, angry, or downtrodden. When you start to hear your inner teakettle coming to a boil, try a quick destressing strategy to calm your mind and bring the temperature back down.

If you have 10 minutes and a quiet space, try one of these ways to destress quickly:

**Take a deep breath (or several).** Deep breathing brings oxygen to the brain and lowers levels of cortisol, the stress

hormone. Simply inhale deeply through the nose for five seconds, then use your diaphragm to exhale completely through the mouth for another five. Repeat until you feel calmness take over.

**Do a few yoga poses.** Just 10 minutes of yoga practice can interrupt the body's stress mechanisms, relax tensed muscles, and ease anxiety, research says. Never done yoga before? No problem—YouTube offers dozens of 10-minute tutorials to target stress.

**Get some fresh air.** Get out of the building for 10 minutes and take a brisk walk. The physical activity will get the blood pumping and help clear your head for the rest of the day. Better still if your building has a nearby natural area to enjoy as you stroll.

**Rock out.** If you have a song that has buoyed your spirits in the past, put your headphones on and punch it up. Or zone out with an internet video that makes you

laugh or takes your mind off the more stressful matters close at hand.

**Vent to a friend.** Part of what makes stress so debilitating is that it makes you feel like it's you against the world. Phone a friend or chat with a trusted colleague to unburden yourself; just make sure it's someone who can listen without escalating the situation.

**Perform a mindless task.** Knitting, fidget spinners, and puzzles can occupy your hands while taking your mind off stressors. Do the dishes in the lounge or tidy up your workspace, and you'll feel like you accomplished while easing your anxiety.

These suggestions are intended to triage sudden bouts of stress on those rare days when it seems like one thing after another—and you need a fast break before tackling another emerging issue. If you find that you're experiencing lingering dissatisfaction, ongoing anxiety, or depression, talk to a professional. But for everyday stresses, 10 minutes may be all you need to bring your best self to the classrooms and hallways. Via [naesp.org](http://naesp.org)



From the Executive Director, Dr. Rosie Young

### News from KAESP:

I want to start by thanking those who attended our Fall Institute. Dr. Ruby Payne was outstanding with her strategies for dealing with student emotional issues.

Next comes the New Year and all the opportunities it can bring. I ask you to think about two resolutions for the New Year.

1. Vow to do something daily to support your well-being—a short walk, phone a friend, read for pleasure, meditate, tc.
2. Vow to bring a fun activity to your school at least once a month— crazy socks, twin day, mismatch day, walk a mile day, - anything that brings joy and fun so everyone can take a break for the intensive work.

Take care, *Rosie*



**KAESP has joined with a number of other state associations to launch the Ed Leaders Network.**

The Ed Leaders Network (ELN) is grounded in the belief that educational leaders impact student performance. With this foundational belief at the ELN's core, multiple state principal associations have partnered together to provide you high quality, on-demand professional development webinars to enhance your leadership growth.

A dynamic professional networking community has also been created to allow you to interact with your peers and leadership experts from across the country. In short, the ELN's mission is to provide you the professional development content and capacity building professional network you need to do what's best for your students and learning community.

Regular ELN pricing will be \$199 annually for Members of State Affiliates/\$399 for non-members once the early bird rate ends.

**Please visit the website at [www.edleadersnetwork.org](http://www.edleadersnetwork.org) to take a tour of the site.**

### Join NAESP!

If you are not familiar with the many benefits of NAESP membership, please visit the website at [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org) to see what our National Association has to offer. Your membership could help us become a Goal Buster Plus award winner again! School funds can be used for the Institutional Active membership category and you will receive a set of publications for you school as well as an active membership. Please join!!!



### Become a Member of KAESP Today!

The drive is on! The KAESP is conducting its membership drive and we need you as a member! Current members will receive an email to notify them of the need to renew their membership. If you do not receive this membership email, you are not a member and we want YOU!

Please contact KAESP at [kaespky@gmail.com](mailto:kaespky@gmail.com) or visit the website ([www.kaespky.org](http://www.kaespky.org)) for the membership application. We hope you become a member of your professional association. The KAESP is the only association dedicated to the needs of elementary and middle level principals. Attend the Fall Institute and receive a free membership!!



## 10 TIPS AND TOOLS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

written by [Emily Hopkins](#)

I am writing this article as a former school leader who loved the work, but who also found it challenging and difficult; who had successes, but also learned from making mistakes. I am writing as a former school leader who absolutely loved being in leadership and who experienced growth, learning, and improvement over time, thanks to her incredible former faculty, staff, school community, and many wonderful mentors who shared their wisdom and provided a listening ear. I am sharing with you some tools that helped me along the way and some important lessons that I learned in the hope that you'll find them beneficial. Some of these I'm still working on today, just in a different setting.

1. Block Off Time to Be Visible
2. Schedule Your Emails to Staff
3. Know When to Disconnect

4. Have Fierce Conversations
5. Use Covey's Time Management Matrix
6. Eliminate the Unnecessary
7. Ask for Feedback Often
8. Set SMART Goals
9. Encourage Your Staff Regularly
10. Communicate with Empathy

To read more about these 10 tips, please visit <https://bit.ly/3W1ycBa>

### Check out the competitive grant opportunities from KDE:

<https://bit.ly/3VnQN4I>

FY23 21st Century Community Learning Centers Cycle 20 RFA  
 FY23 Math Achievement Fund (MAF) mini-grant  
 FY23 Calming Space Mini-grant RFA  
 FY22 Read To Achieve RFA



### Resources for Recruiting Teachers

Finances, family responsibilities, transportation—teacher candidates face many obstacles. The right resources empower you to help people overcome their barriers on the way to leading the classroom.

[AASPA](#) is the association for pre-K–12 human resource professionals, advocating for developing a teacher workforce. Its ["5 Shifts to Address the National Educator Shortage"](#) recommends comprehensive and systematic actions.

Find the extent of your state's GYO efforts in New America's ["Grow Your Own Teachers: A 50-State Scan of Policies and Programs."](#)

[Essential Elements: Recruitment and Retention of High Quality Staff](#), an NAESP Webinar, features Coash-Johnson addressing GYO and other teacher workforce strategies. June 10, 2023 – Conference App Presentation Deadline

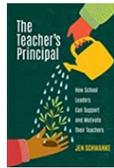
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Louisville KY 40245



Phone: 502-272-8447

### [The Teacher's Principal: How School Leaders Can Support and Motivate Their Teachers](#)

by [Jen Schwanke](#)



This book walks principals of all grade levels through dozens of powerful strategies for supporting teachers in ways that benefit everyone in the school community. Veteran educator Jen Schwanke explains their three key motivators of purpose, priority, and patterns and how principals can impact these motivators.

## Disrupting Education: Unlocking Your School's Potential



The field of public education is about a decade behind the private sector in terms of innovation, said Simon Sinek, author of *Start With Why*, to a room full of leaders in education during his virtual general session speech at the 2022 NAESP Pre-K–8 Principals Conference in Louisville this past July. This comes as no surprise. Even prior to the pandemic, schools recognized the need to develop their portrait of the graduate, define and integrate 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, and “disrupt” the traditional practices that have stymied student growth. What practices no longer serve us (our students!) well?

### Defining Disruption

Jeff Schagrin and James Roscoe, cofounders of disruptionEDU, an organization that seeks to create moments that shift the paradigm to push education forward, frame disruption positively, as a way to question the status quo with the goal of unlocking potential within our schools.

Schagrin and Roscoe, who presented “Disruption Starts on Day 1” at the NAESP conference, share their three core beliefs about education:

1. Education won't change if leadership doesn't change.
2. School leaders should follow the Lead to Fail model daily.  
Be humble, be vulnerable, and be prideful.  
Culture is the foundation of change.

### Shaping School Culture

As schools integrate professional development (PD) with staff, consider priorities. According to Schagrin and Roscoe, it's imperative to

*The mission of the KAESP, the collective voice of Kentucky's elementary and middle level principals, in partnership with other education leaders, is to **develop citizens that can succeed in a global society**, by delivering to our members a network for support, professional development, visionary leadership, and by pro-active involvement in shaping education policy.*

### KAESP Officers

Dr. John Ansman, Treasurer, JCPS, Retired, Louisville, KY

Jason McGlone, NAESP State Representative  
Principal of Prichard Elementary, Grayson, KY

David Naylor, Past NAESP Zone 5 Director, Model Laboratory School,  
Richmond, KY

Want to join us? —Send an email to Rosie Young  
at [kaespky@gmail.com](mailto:kaespky@gmail.com) or [ryoung@bellarmine.edu](mailto:ryoung@bellarmine.edu)



to build energy and excitement for the first day of school—but don't let it stop there. They shared personal experiences from the past few years that have led to the overwhelmingly positive school climate at Grayslake North High School in Illinois, starting with this: Every moment of every day, school leaders work on culture through every interaction they have with staff.

“Every interaction you have, you are either adding to your culture or taking away from it,” they said during their session.

As positive interactions build over time, a supportive relationship is built. Referencing the *Moments Matter* by Dave Sanderson, Schagrin emphasized that every moment and every interaction molds your relationship with that person, and ultimately, it carries over into a strong school climate. When challenges arise (hello, global pandemic!) you have a strong foundation to move the proverbial big rocks. “School culture is the elasticity that allows a school to grow and stretch,” and this has never been more evident than in the past three years.

On a whole-school level, a yearly message helps unite the school with a common theme. In previous years, their school messages have included “Moments Matter,” “Making Connections,” and “Educators Are Superheroes!” These messages serve as a catalyst for everything else throughout the year and enhance a positive school culture. What's your message to unite your school?

### Modeling Risk-Taking

When leaders model innovation and risk-taking, it gives teachers the freedom and permission to do the same in their classrooms. Truly, we need to model what we

expect to see as instructional leaders. Schagrin and Roscoe shared experiences from Grayslake North to showcase some of their risks as they intentionally modeled risk-taking.

To disrupt the traditional direct instruction-style professional days of staff sitting in the library or lecture hall, Schagrin and Roscoe created an Amazing Race challenge. They developed this digital scavenger hunt using the platform Goosechase and divided staff into heterogeneous teams, including support staff, paraprofessionals, and lunch and hallway monitors, in a conscious effort to make this an all-inclusive experience.

Staff participated in team challenges beginning at this PD session, but their challenges continued throughout the year each quarter, with other staff also creating challenges. As the year progressed, teams continued to complete missions to keep this momentum going.

*Jennifer DeRagon is principal of George Hersey Robertson School in Coventry, Connecticut.*

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