

# NASB News Update--July 2016

## News from the Association, Nevada, and Across the Nation



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### Supporting Success for All Students through Local School Board Leadership



#### A Message from NASB's President



For the July President Message, I want to share with you some comments in a blog that I read recently online. The title of this blog caught my attention because it distills some important concepts for our use as board members when we are thinking about the overall effectiveness of our schools. It seems to me that this perspective also gives a handle on several easy-to-communicate perspectives to share with parents, business partners, and others in our communities.

Matthew Lynch is the author of this blog. It appeared on June 29, 2016, in **Education Week's** blogs and is entitled "The Five Attributes of Successful Schools." Mr. Lynch proposes that there are no more than these five common attributes that make up an effective school. None of these will probably surprise you; however, the way that Mr. Lynch describes them really captures the essence of each one.

These ideas fit well with one of my favorite quotes from Lou Holtz: "In the successful organization, no detail is too small to escape close attention." Focusing on these five attributes will help us concentrate our attention more effectively on student achievement.

#### **1. Leadership**

*The first attribute is quality leadership. Students perform better when the principal and school board members provide strong leadership. Effective leaders are visible, can successfully convey the school's goals and visions, collaborate with teachers to enhance their skills, and are involved in the discovery of and solutions to problems.*

#### **2. High Expectations**

*The second attribute is having high expectations of students as well as teachers. High expectations of students have repeatedly been shown to have a positive impact on student performance. Students are somewhat dependent on the expectations placed on them during this period of their lives, as they are still shaping their personal sense of ability and esteem. Teachers who are expected to teach at high levels of effectiveness can reach the level of expectations, particularly when teacher evaluations and professional development are geared toward improving instructional quality.*

#### **3. Ongoing Evaluation**

*The third attribute of a successful school is the ongoing screening of student performance and development. Schools should use assessment data to compare their students with others from across the country. Effective use of assessment data allows schools to identify problematic areas of learning at the classroom and school levels, so that teachers can generate solutions to address the problems.*

#### **4. Goals and Direction**

*The fourth attribute of a successful school is the existence of goals and direction. According to research, the successful school principal actively constructs goals and then effectively communicates them to appropriate individuals (e.g., students, teachers, and the community at large). School principals must also be open and willing to incorporate innovation into goals for school processes and practices. So it's important to invite input from all stakeholders in the process of developing school goals. Student performance has been shown to improve in schools where the entire school community works toward goals that are communicated and shared among all in the learning environment.*

#### **5. Secure and Organized**

*The fifth and final attribute of a successful school is the extent to which the school is secure and organized. For maximum learning to occur, students need to feel secure. Respect is a quality that is promoted and is a fundamental aspect of an effective and safe school. Successful schools also have a number of trained staff and programs, such as social workers, who work with difficult or troubled students before situations get out of hand.*

If we can keep our data and policy eyes on these five attributes, it seems to me that we can have a greater impact on student achievement. Thank you for all you do each day to help our Nevada students.

Sincerely,

**Joe Crim**

Joe Crim, Jr.  
NASB President



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### Commentary: Fourteen Things Gifted Students Want Teachers [and School Board Members] to Know

By Joshua Raymond

*Reflecting back on my time as a gifted student and what my daughters are experiencing now, here are some things I wish my teachers and theirs [as well as school board members] knew.*

1. I intensely want to learn. Learning is really fun for me. Coming to school and 'learning' what I already know distresses me. School was supposed to be an exciting place full of knowledge. Now I want to escape it.
2. I tuned out after the third time you said that. In fact, research shows that the repetition needed for most learners makes me learn less. I usually only need it once or twice and am eager to move to the next item.
3. I want to make connections and explore. I'm wondering how what we learn in biology this year is connected to what we learned in earth science last year. I have a billion questions! Most of them would take the class far afield and you don't like that. Can you recommend a book to me instead?
4. I may be poor, a minority, or have a learning disability. I can still be gifted, so please don't underestimate me.
5. I don't want to be singled out. Academic success isn't tolerated like success in sports. Grouping several of us who are ahead to work together gives me a support group and doesn't make me as much of a target for bullies.
6. I can be very intense. Sometimes I am a huge wave with intensity on display and sometimes I am a riptide with intensity below the surface. My intensity can be physical, mental, or emotional. Please try to understand me, not just punish me.
7. I want other kids who understand me. I hate when I'm the only gifted student in the classroom, so please don't split us up to make classrooms equal. I need friends too.
8. One would never put a third grader in a seventh grade classroom or a seventh grader in a third

grade classroom. Academically, I'm a seventh grader. In maturity, I'm still a third grader. I don't fit well either place. Help!



9. I'm not really good at mentoring struggling students. I skip steps in math, and reading comes very easy to me. Both of us end up frustrated and I miss out on learning time. Saying that teaching a subject will make me understand it thoroughly is bunk. I'm not the student who needs that!
10. I won't know it until later, but I need to work hard, overcome obstacles, and recover from failure. Breezing through school harms me in the long run. But please make it meaningful work, not just more work!
11. Getting 100% isn't good for me. It probably means that the material was too easy and I didn't learn what I needed to. Worse, 'perfect' becomes part of my identity instead of 'striver' and it becomes about the score, not the learning.
12. I need to know I'm gifted. It isn't for my ego. I need to understand that what comes easy for me doesn't for all students. Help me understand that they need the repetition and extra help. I know this sounds odd, but this is my normal and I wonder why others aren't like me.
13. But sometimes I am a bit arrogant. It's hard to develop intellectual humility when I'm the smartest student in the room and ace every test. Intellectual humility is important for me to develop, but that is not the same as embarrassing me when I make a mistake. That is just cruel.
14. I have struggles and questions too, but I'm afraid to say anything in front of the class. I don't want to seem dumb. Please check in on me once in a while.

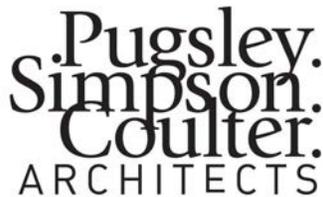
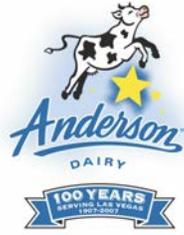
I know you are busy, but I hope you will take the time to understand me better. Ask your district for professional development on instruction and accommodations for gifted students. Read a book about gifted learners. Attend your state's gifted association's conference and take some classes in the policy track there.

*[Joshua Raymond is the parent of three gifted girls, founder of a gifted advocacy group, and board member of the Michigan Association for Gifted Children.]*

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## Past Transfers of Federal Land to Nevada Led to Corruption, History Suggests

By Sean Whaley

Some Nevadans are pushing the federal government to transfer more public acreage to state control, but history suggests past management of these lands by those entrusted with their care was mired in corruption. The current push for a transfer is underway because about 85 percent of Nevada is controlled by various federal agencies, primarily the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, according to the Nevada Legislature. But if Nevada officials failed before, what guarantee is there that it won't happen again?

The late Republican Gov. Charles Russell, in an oral history recorded in 1965-66, strongly criticized Nevada's management of the lands the state received

from the federal government when it became a state in 1864.

The sections of land were given to the state to finance public schools. The state subsequently persuaded Congress to instead give it 2 million acres of more desirable lands for the public school funding effort. Russell, governor from 1951 to 1959, minced no words about what happened with Nevada's state lands. Russell noted that in 1938, Nevada had about 400,000 acres of land to administer. By 1951 when he took office, that number had been reduced to 8,000 acres.

"A number of state officials became very wealthy on the land that they accumulated," Russell said. "This, to me, is one of the low points in Nevada history, because the land had been given to the state of Nevada as having a land-grant college, and much of this land went for a very minimum.

"And such people as Red McLeod and other state officials (this is easily a matter of record) had obtained these large acreages, especially in Clark County, which made them wealthy people," Russell said.

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Wayne McLeod was state surveyor general from 1939 to 1951. He died in Reno in 1964.

Today there are 2,914 acres of school trust lands remaining in Nevada.

### **FUTURE PROBLEMS FEARED**

Critics question whether the same type of problems could arise with any new federal land transfer.

Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Nev., said last week that he expects a hearing this year on his Nevada lands bill, House Resolution 1484, which would transfer about 7 million acres of federal land to the state.

He commented that while a hearing is expected, action on the measure is less likely, although components of his bill are contained in other measures that could see approval by Congress this year.

One example is the Pershing County lands bill introduced in June by U.S. Sens. Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Dean Heller, R-Nev.

Asked about Nevada's troubled history of managing its state lands, Amodei said there needs to be accountability and transparency in any transfer of lands to the state. But there is more oversight of such actions in the 21st century compared to what happened decades ago, he said.

A transfer approved at the 2015 state legislative session to provide additional land to a copper mine project in Yerington, for example, required payment for the land at fair market value, Amodei said. "This bill is pretty transparent," he said.

But Bob Fulkerson, the state director of the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, which opposes any such land transfer, said Amodei's bill is not only "bad for ordinary Nevadans who love our wild and open spaces, but it's a giftwrapped package to private developers and other wealthy interests yearning to make a quick buck by closing off our lands."

"Gov. Russell's prescient statement shows our state's history in managing public land transfers is rooted in corruption at worst, ineptitude at best," he said. The alliance is an umbrella advocacy organization representing more than 30 liberal-leaning groups in Nevada.

Despite the uphill chance for passage, Amodei said he wants a hearing on the legislation to continue to build momentum for a transfer of lands to Nevada's control.

### **REVENUE OPPORTUNITY SEEN**

Supporters of the idea, which also passed the Nevada Legislature in 2015 in Senate Joint Resolution 1, argue that the state could bring in revenue by leasing transferred lands for grazing and mineral rights. The

measure passed on a party-line vote with Republicans in favor.

Several Nevada elected officials, including Gov. Brian Sandoval, also support such a transfer.

Opponents have expressed concerns that any such transfer would ultimately close off more acreage to access by Nevada residents as the land was sold to private interests. There is also the question of whether the state could afford to manage such lands if there were a fire, for example.

Officials in other Western states, notably Utah, Montana and Idaho, also are seeking transfers of public lands to state control.

The transfer of the public lands as proposed in SJR1 includes lands in the original railroad corridor across Northern Nevada, called checkerboard lands, and lands already identified for disposal by federal agencies, among other acreage that would total 7.3 million acres or about 10 percent of the public lands total in a first phase.

Amodei said much of the acreage in his bill involves these checkerboard lands, where alternating ownership by private interests and public agencies make it difficult to manage the acreage. It also involves land already designated for disposal by the federal government.

Checkerboard lands in Nevada run along the original Central Pacific railroad right of way. They are difficult to manage because of the alternating ownership. Amodei said a transfer would allow consolidation to make it easier for ranchers, for example, to run their operations more efficiently.

Amodei said his bill has undergone revisions to ensure that existing public access to the lands is protected. SJR1 was requested by several Republican state lawmakers as a follow-up to a 2014 study on the viability of the state taking over some of the millions of acres of land in Nevada that are now under federal control.

A study by the Nevada Land Management Task Force, established by the 2013 Legislature to review the issue, in 2014 produced a report arguing that the state would benefit from such a transfer because of economic development opportunities.

### **OTHER SCANDALS**

Russell wasn't the only one to express concern about management of the state lands, a scandal that carried on during his administration as well.

In Christopher J. Walker's "The History of School Trust Lands in Nevada: The No Child Left Behind Act of 1864," published in 2006, he cites a 1956 grand jury of

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Ormsby County investigation that discovered improprieties in the sale of the lands. Ormsby County later became the state's only consolidated city-county, and was renamed Carson City.

The grand jury report alleged that state lands had been sold to favored legislators, other public officials and their friends and relatives, Walker wrote. Most of the land sales took place in the Las Vegas area, where lands were sold at a fixed price of \$1.25 an acre despite being worth much more.

The buyers then turned around and sold the land, making big profits.

"There were no indictments because the paperwork that would make such a case could not be located," Walker said in his book. The grand jury report nevertheless named and censured several individuals. Those comments were removed, however, as a result of a Nevada Supreme Court decision challenging their inclusion in the report.

The problems with the management of state lands did lead to the abolishment of the state surveyor position and the creation of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, which oversaw the state's public lands, in 1957. The Legislature also passed a law requiring such lands in the future to be sold at public auction or through sealed bid.

*[This article appeared in the Las Vegas Review-Journal, July 10, 2016.]*

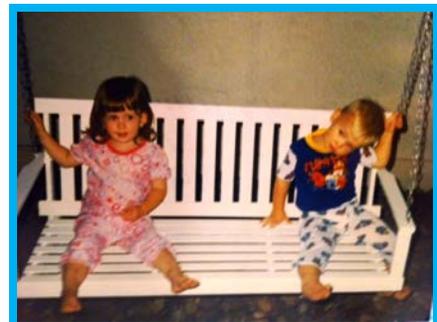
## School Board Members Are Active outside the Board Room



Pictured above are members of the Cranor wedding party at the marriage of Becky Smith and Tanner Cranor [son of Bud and School Board Member Erin Cranor (Clark)]. The photo was taken outside the Salt Lake Temple on June 11, 2016.

According to Erin, this wedding was particularly joyous for both the Cranor and Smith families because the "parent" couples were close friends while attending college. The Smiths visited the Cranors several times in Las Vegas before they moved their family to Oklahoma then later to Sparks, Nevada. Although Becky and Tanner did not know each other growing up, except via Christmas cards and a few family visits, there are a few pictures of Becky and Tanner as toddlers, including the photo below. Becky and Tanner are each the oldest child in the family and were born on the same day in 1994.

Erin has been busy outside the board room with family events honoring the couple and helping transport wedding gifts from Las Vegas to Provo where both attend college.



**PLAN AHEAD!**  
**2016**  
**NASB CONFERENCE**  
**November 18-19**  
**NASB GOVERNANCE MEETINGS**  
**and**  
**NEW BOARD MEMBER**  
**ORIENTATION**  
**November 17**  
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**Atlantis Casino Spa Resort**



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### Focus on Two of NASB's Corporate Sponsors—



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Middlebury Interactive Languages provides a new way to engage English Language Learners with an innovative digital ELL curriculum designed to help close the achievement gap. The supplemental blended learning curriculum uses proven strategies to help facilitate language acquisition and improve student outcomes. Instructional modules allow students in grades 4 through 10 to learn the fundamentals of academic English while completing projects that relate to English Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science.

Middlebury Interactive Languages' digital K-12 world language courses in **Spanish, French, Chinese and German** give students the opportunity to immerse themselves in language and culture in an interactive online environment.

The curriculum—developed by Ph.D.-level academics and linguistic experts—is supported by decades of research showing that students need exposure to authentic materials and frequent opportunities to interact in the target language. Courses utilize principles of the immersive language pedagogy and teaching methodology used at Middlebury College's renowned Language Schools to help students gain a stronger base of comprehension and to accelerate language learning.

For more information, please contact Jamie Northrup at [jnorthrup@middleburyinteractive.com](mailto:jnorthrup@middleburyinteractive.com) or visit our website: [www.middleburyinteractive.com](http://www.middleburyinteractive.com).

WGU Nevada is a partnership between the state of Nevada and nationally recognized Western Governors University. Governor Brian Sandoval created WGU Nevada to expand and grow WGU in the state. WGU Nevada offers **more than 50 bachelor's and master's degrees** in the high-demand fields of business, IT, teacher education, and healthcare. WGU Nevada now serves more than 1,600 students and has awarded degrees to more than 1,100 graduates.

WGU Nevada is an online, competency-based university designed to expand access to higher education for Nevada residents. Established by the state of Nevada in partnership with Western Governors University, WGU Nevada is designed to serve the needs of Nevada citizens. WGU Nevada offers more than 50 accredited bachelor's and master's degrees in high-demand career fields.

The principal goal of WGU Nevada is to open doors to higher education for adult learners through:

- **Access to quality education.**  
An online, Nevada-based university, WGU Nevada grants access to nationally recognized degree programs to all Nevadans who can complete a challenging online program.
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