

NASB News Update--November 2016

News from the Association, Nevada, and Across the Nation

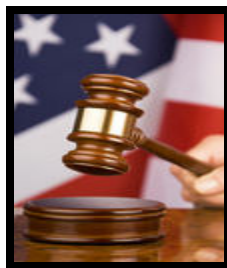


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**Supporting Success for All Students
through Local School Board Leadership**



A Message from NASB's President



I learned a long time ago that one of the least productive things you can do is continually look backward and think about mistakes or missed opportunities. What's done is done, and we must all learn from our mistakes—as well as our successes. It seems to me that forward is the only direction that warrants the majority of our time and energy.

This applies not only to all aspects of our personal and business lives but to our board service as well. The bottom line is that we are responsible as board members with setting policy that ensures that each student is given every opportunity to succeed.

Whether a student aspires to be a rocket scientist, a lawyer, a doctor, or chemical engineer—or whether a student wants to be a refrigerator or air-conditioning repair expert, an industrial welder, or a manufacturing technician—we in public education must set direction in our districts that guarantees that students—all students—are given the best chance to reach their goals.

Although I don't believe that every child should get a trophy or blue ribbon merely for participation, I do believe that all kids need to be built up—not torn down. Our districts need to encourage students to pursue success in whatever their area, wherever their interests may lie. It's up to us as educators and local school district leaders to lay that foundation for them.

I see truck drivers every day who are making excellent salaries—even with sometimes adverse circumstances—and they are putting in an honest day's work, leading good lives, and being productive to society. College was, however, not their route. And, I see graduates who have gone on not only to higher education but law school or medical school and are now serving society as highly degreed professionals in the legal and medical fields.

It's up to the students to step through the door into their chosen fields; it seems to me that it is up to us to open that door.

Preparing the way for our students to succeed in life begins much earlier than in high school. It's in the lower grades where schools need to give kids their first tastes of success, to let them learn life lessons and to encourage them in their early endeavors, whether it be in constructing model airplanes, playing soccer, showing cattle, going hunting or fishing—whatever lights that spark. Kids also need to learn the precious lesson that life involves really good days and some tough ones. They need to be able to handle both. That's life.

This is where attracting and retaining the best teachers—the educators who are in for the right reasons—are so important. I've heard people say that "teaching is a calling." Now that I've served eight years on the Pershing Board of School Trustees, I can see the truth of that statement. Great teachers not only facilitate classroom instruction, they encourage...they offer a smile or two in the hallway...they build up their students and help them succeed. They teach their students that attitudes are contagious.

Whether our kids see themselves driving a truck, reading meters, welding ships, writing stories, performing brain surgery, or researching a cure for Alzheimer's, these students are our future.

If we can give our students the tools and the inspiration to succeed and to go as far as their drive and potential can take them, then we've done our job.

I have enjoyed serving for the last year as the NASB President. This opportunity has shown me so much good work happening around our state, in each of the seventeen school districts. Each of our school boards works hard to accomplish just what I've focused on in this President Message: giving our students the tools and inspiration to succeed.

I encourage you to attend the Orientation on November 17 and the Conference on November 18-19. All three days are filled with opportunities for us to grow as individuals and as boards working together.

NASB News Update--November 2016

News from the Association, Nevada, and Across the Nation

Let me leave you with my favorite quote from legendary football and life coach, Lou Holtz:

"We can all be successful and make money, but when we die, that ends. But when you are significant is when you help other people be successful. That lasts many a lifetime."

Thank you for all you do each day on behalf of all of our students in Nevada's public schools.

Sincerely,
Joe Crim,
NASB President



NASB Conference Keynote Speaker Friday, November 18 Dr. Kati Haycock, Education Trust



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Dr. Kati Haycock is one of the nation's leading advocates in the field of education. She currently serves as President of The Education Trust. Established in 1996, Ed Trust works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, pre-kindergarten through college.

The organization's goal is to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that consign too many low-income students and students of color to lives on the margins of the American mainstream.

Before coming to The Education Trust, Kati served as Executive Vice President of the Children's Defense Fund, the nation's largest child advocacy organization. A native Californian, Kati founded and served as President of The Achievement Council, a statewide organization that provided assistance to teachers and principals in

predominantly minority schools for improving student achievement.

Known for years as a powerful force on education policy, Ed Trust is often described as "the most important truth teller" in American public education. But the organization also works hand in hand with educators and civic leaders in their efforts to transform schools and colleges into institutions that serve all students well. Kati speaks about educational improvement before thousands of educators, community and business leaders, and policymakers each year.

She has received numerous awards for her service to our nation's youth, and serves as a director on several education-related boards, including those of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, The New Teacher Project, and the Hunt Institute.

NASB Conference Keynote Speaker Saturday, November 19 Dr. Chris Haskell, Boise State University

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At Boise State University, **Dr. Chris Haskell** specializes in preparing pre-service and graduate teachers in methods and applications of technology integration in the classroom. In addition to instilling fundamental skills, Chris focuses on the use, adaptation, and implementation of emerging technologies in teacher education including gaming, mobile communication devices, portable media players, social networking tools, and virtual worlds.

Serving as a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Technology at Boise State University, Chris is actively piloting and developing groundbreaking alternative approaches to delivering and tracking learning. With co-inventor Dr. Lisa Dawley, Chris created 3D GameLab, a game-based/quest-based learning management system.

NASB News Update--November 2016

News from the Association, Nevada, and Across the Nation

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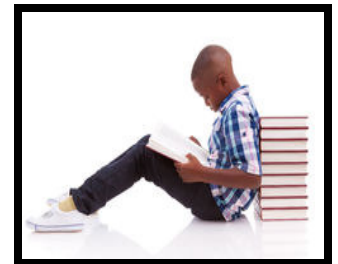
Commentary— Black Boys in Crisis: They Aren't Reading

By Matthew Lynch

Literacy is the basic building block for the rest of an academic career and the lifetime that follows it. Research shows that kids who come from homes where reading was a priority, and they were read to by their parents, perform better academically throughout their lives. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that Kindergarten students who are read frequently to at home are more likely to count to 20, write their own names, and read (or pretend to read).

Only 53 percent of children ages 3 to 5 are read to every day by a family member, though, and that number drops for families with incomes below the poverty line. The importance of parental influence in reading extends beyond the youngest grades. The U.S. Department of Education reports that fourth-grade classrooms with low parental involvement have students with average reading scores that are 46 points below the national average.

Reading isn't important just for its own sake, however. Literacy is the foundation for all other learning endeavors. The Educational Testing Services reports that students who read more in their homes perform better on math assessments.



The connection between reading in early childhood and its impact on future years is clear. Since parents, grandparents, and siblings are the default role models most of the time during that vital 0 to 5 age group, the responsibility to instill early literacy falls on families.

That's a problem for black boys. Only 10 percent of eighth-grade black boys in the U.S. are proficient in reading. In urban areas like Chicago and Detroit, that number is even lower. By contrast, the 2013 National Assessment of Education Progress found that 46 percent of white students are adequate readers by eighth grade, and 17 percent of black students as a whole are too. The achievement gap between the two

NASB News Update--November 2016

News from the Association, Nevada, and Across the Nation

rates is startling, but the difference between the NAEP report on black students as a whole and the stats on black boys alone is troubling too. This is where that important dissection between at-risk groups needs to take place. It is not simply black children in general who appear to be failing in the basics, like literacy; it is the boys.

Where does that disconnect arise? Hypothesizing from the NAEP data, a brother and sister from the same household could have vastly different literacy levels, even if they come from the same environment and are read to the same amount of time (even if that amount of time is none). That difference—that gap in literacy achievement—shouldn't fall on parents. That's the fault of our schools. Literacy learning is tailored to girls. So how do we adapt it to better reach our boys—particularly our young men of color?

Reading is only one piece of the school puzzle, of course, but it is a foundational one. If the eighth graders in our schools cannot read, how will they ever learn other subjects and make it to a college education (or, in reality, to a high school diploma)? Reading scores tell us so much more than the confines of their statistics and I believe these numbers are one of the major keys to understanding the plight of young black men in our society as a whole.

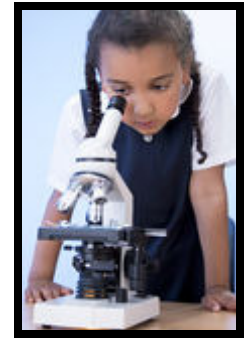
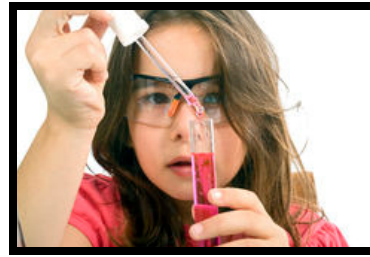
[This article first appeared in Education Week Online, October 12, 2016. Matthew Lynch is an educational consultant and owner of Lynch Consulting Group, LLC. He currently resides in Richmond, Va. He is a former K-12 social studies and special education teacher who now researches policy and education reform.]

Opinion—In Praise of Uncertainty

By Jal Mehta

Perhaps the most undervalued quality in primary and secondary education is uncertainty. Students are rewarded for getting things "right," and uncertainty is seen as an undesirable quality to be remedied. But in the real world, almost everything good comes out of uncertainty--that's the space that sparks invention and creativity, and, critically, it is the space in which knowledge is developed. Failure to live in uncertainty not only denies students a chance to develop the kinds of capabilities they need to live in a complex world, it gives them a false view of the very knowledge they are studying.

You can see this problem most pointedly in the sciences. High school (and even some college) students seem to think that English is the place for interpretation, whereas math and science are the places where there is a right answer. But this couldn't be further from the truth.



Consider a study that compared college and graduate school experiences with science. The authors find that undergraduate science majors view scientific knowledge as objective and fixed, emerging cleanly out of the five-step method laid out in their textbooks.

When these students undertake significant lab work in graduate school, however, they realize that making science is in fact a messy and highly provisional process.

This transition is initially disheartening for students but ultimately helps them to develop a more mature and realistic vision of the scientific method and, over time, to contribute new knowledge to the field.

If we want our future citizens to understand science, they can't just learn Newton's laws or Darwin's theory of evolution, they need to know how science is constructed, from the inside out. As with the students in the study, this will actually first require a puncturing of the infallibility of scientific "truths," and then a resettling around a more realistic view of how science is made.

A related problem is that in too many classrooms, students are playing the game of school, trying to guess from their teacher what the right answer is. Teachers play into students' worst instincts when they present knowledge as fixed, and held by the teacher, which underscores the notion that students' role is to guess the right answer that the teacher knows. This problem is so pervasive that it is largely invisible to both students and teachers, for whom what I've described is just school, rather than a particular way of conceiving of school.

At the same time, we all know, deep in our bones, that the most significant learning comes out of confrontations with uncertainty. The pattern is generally that we hold some set of beliefs as central to our understanding of the world, and then there is a collision with a set of facts that calls these core beliefs into question. Then there is a period of searching and uncertainty, in which many different new possibilities are considered. This is generally unpleasant, because it is unmooring and destabilizing. Then there is a recrystallization around a new equilibrium, which holds

NASB News Update--November 2016

News from the Association, Nevada, and Across the Nation

until the next destabilizing event. Jack Mezirow has described this process as transformative learning.

There are teachers who already teach this way. I had one, when I was in high school, a man named John Roemer, whose particular talent was finding an opposing argument for any belief that you held dear. You thought you were an environmentalist? Okay, why are you prioritizing fuzzy squirrels over human jobs, you tree-hugger?



More recently, I was in a class last week on Descartes, where students were reading small portions of the text, and pondering his argument that the only thing we can know for sure is that we exist. (Everything we think we see could be a dream, but the fact that we are thinking it means that we, at least, exist.) Well, if thinking implies existence, said one student, what about computers? Do computers think? They seem to, but do they exist? What about a vegetable state? In vegetable state, we seem to exist but we can't think. What would Descartes have made of that?

After about an hour of these kinds of questions from students, the teacher tried to wrap it up with his summation at the end. But before he could even finish, the students were asking questions of this summation—once you let skepticism out of the bag, you can't put it back in.

What would it take to develop a system that consistently prioritized this kind of uncertainty? It would mean a whole series of changes to the way we do things now. In terms of policy, if there continued to be external tests, either from the state or from the College Board, they would need to change what they prioritized--less asking students to demonstrate that they know lots of discrete facts in the disciplines and more developing opportunities to really think using the tools of the disciplines.

It would mean slowing down, dramatically--much more time on fewer things, unwinding the layers of those things rather than "covering" them and moving on to the next. It would mean developing different kinds of capacities and dispositions in students—not just "grit" but the ability to exist under conditions of uncertainty and seeing this struggle as productive rather than

disabling. It would mean changing the views of knowledge of teachers, administrators, superintendents, and policymakers.

Knowledge is not, ultimately, something that is fixed and should be passed on, but rather something that was created and could be created anew by the next generation of students. And it would mean re-socializing parents and students to see school less as a race that is won by those who acquire credentials, and more as a particular kind of place where young people go to confront the major questions of human existence.

This world might be far off, but it is worth striving for. [This article originally appeared in Education Week Online, October 25, 2016. Jal Mehta is a Harvard education professor.]

News from Nevada: Angry Trustees Agree to Stay on Council Overseeing CCSD Reorganization

By Amelia Pak-Havey

Despite a strained relationship with state legislators over a \$1.2 million consultant fee, the Clark County School Board voted to keep its representative on the Community Implementation Council that will oversee the reorganization of the district.

The board voted 6-0 on Wednesday for Trustee Erin Cranor to remain seated on the council, although she or the board may still withdraw if they find that the group's actions "are not in good faith."

Board members quoted in this article:



Trustee Dr. Linda E. Young



Trustee Erin Cranor



Trustee Carolyn Edwards

Trustees again expressed concerns over paying for the consultant, the TSC²Group, which will cost up to \$1.2 million. The Advisory Committee for AB 394, the legislation that mandates the district's overhaul, approved the consultant last month. Regulations for the law require the school district to pay for it, although the district argues that the committee may have exceeded its authority.

NASB News Update--November 2016

News from the Association, Nevada, and Across the Nation

"At this point in time I think we have a fiduciary responsibility to make sure that we are cognizant not only of our budget, but how our budget is spent," said Board President Linda Young. "And to spend \$1.2 million in this manner I think is irresponsible."

Trustee Carolyn Edwards said she's still seriously concerned about the fee, which she called egregious.

But she said she was pleased to hear many people on the council say they did not want to hinder the district's reorganization work.

"We'll see how serious they are about not wanting to get in the way, because they could certainly get in the way," she said.

"We're moving and I think it's a good thing that we're moving, but I do think this consultant could actually slow us down."

The hiring of the consultant caused backlash from the district, which sent a letter to the Legislative Counsel Bureau arguing that the payment is "contrary to the Legislature's original intent."

The TSC² Group has deferred comment to implementation council chairman Glenn Christenson, who brought the proposal forward with TSC² Group President Tom Skancke.

Christenson has said that the cost is just a small portion of the district's multi-billion dollar revenue.

He also said the council could be constructive in the areas where the district needs assistance. "There's no doubt that a lot of work needs to be done on the weighted funding formula, as well as the human capital system," Christenson said Wednesday.

Skancke, the former head of the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance, is also a transportation infrastructure expert who currently serves on the Nevada Department of Transportation board of directors.

Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky urged the board to use the council to respond to the district's reorganization needs, including a weighted student funding formula and a new human capital management system.

"Let's use that group to our advantage and let's make sure that we are putting that on the record at all of those meetings," he said. "That if you truly want to help with the implementation, then this is how we can have you deliver."

[This article appeared in the Las Vegas Review Journal, November 2, 2016.]

Research Findings— School Bullying Can Leave Lifelong Scars

By Kate Stoltzfus

When students are bullied as children, the emotional damage doesn't just go away—it leaves an impact that can last decades. An estimated 5.4 million students ages 12 to 18 reported being bullied—about one in five students—and 1.7 million experienced cyberbullying in 2013, according to a 2015 report from the U.S. Department of Education. For lesbian, gay, and bisexual students, the bullying rate is even higher, nearly 34 percent offline and 28 percent online, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in 2016.

While there have been many studies about the psychological effects of bullying on children—there has been less research about what happens after they reach adulthood. Ellen Walser deLara, a family therapist and associate professor of social work at Syracuse University, interviewed more than 800 U.S. adults ages 18 to 65 about their experiences with bullying for her recent book *Bullying Scars: The Impact on Adult Life and Relationships* (Oxford University Press).



The conversations revealed that childhood harassment can negatively affect self-esteem and body image, mental and physical health, trust and future relationships, and decision-making abilities. Yet, some victims of bullying reported that their struggles helped them build stronger character.

Earlier this year, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine touted an approach to bullying prevention that advocates for changing the social-emotional climate of school culture, with more student-led prevention efforts and the elimination of harsh punishment for bullies. And Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential nominee, recently proposed a \$500 million "Better Than Bullying" initiative to help states create plans to stop bullies. Republican nominee Donald Trump has not yet laid out his own concrete proposal to combat school bullying.

NASB News Update--November 2016

News from the Association, Nevada, and Across the Nation

DeLara shared some insights with me by email about the effects of bullying, how schools and educators should respond to bullies, and her advice for helping victims of bullying heal as they grow up.

As a family therapist who has worked for more than 35 years with children and adults to address maltreatment, school violence, and bullying, what is your sense of the past and present bullying landscape? How have you seen these issues change in and outside of schools over recent decades?

It is difficult to come up with an exact answer to this question because keeping statistics on bullying is a relatively new phenomenon. Most people can remember bullying that took place in school "way back when" but no one was recording these incidents. What clearly has changed is the fact that children now are at risk of being bullied on a 24/7 basis. Our current technology has brought about cyberbullying that occurs on a multitude of different platforms that young people access. Oftentimes, this happens outside the awareness of any adults in their lives.

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, an estimated one in four students experience bullying. What leads students to bully one another in the first place?

There are several reasons. One is that children act out what they have learned in their various environments: at school, at home, in their communities. They follow others who demonstrate power in this same manner. Another reason, but one less known, is that young people bully others to force conformity in their environment. Children, like adults, are uncomfortable with unpredictability and unpredictable behavior.

Consequently, they will push and exhort, sometimes by extreme means, children whose behavior or appearance is outside the norm and therefore worrisome. Basically anyone who is different becomes a target for bullying.



In an Education Week Commentary published in September, author Alfie Kohn argues against the use of "zero tolerance" policies for bullies, saying that punishment not only fails to address the problem, but can make bullies more aggressive. Many readers countered that this kind of response fails to support bullying victims or teach students

consequences for harmful behavior. What, in your opinion, are the most effective strategies for dealing with bullying in K-12 schools? What role should teachers, parents, and students play in prevention?

For effective bullying prevention, all stakeholders have to be actively involved: students, teachers, parents, school personnel, bus drivers. Bullying takes place in the context of a system. Unless the entire system is involved, focus will be placed very narrowly on "the bully." This is very short-sighted because there is most often a bully-victim-bully cycle that adults do not see.

Bullies have most often been victimized first. Consequently, a whole-school, system-wide approach in terms of support and prevention is the only kind of program that actually demonstrates a decrease in bullying.

In your recent book, you discuss the lasting harm that victims of bullying deal with beyond childhood—including its negative impacts on self-esteem, decision-making, relationships, and physical and mental health. What are the most important takeaways from your findings? For K-12 students who are victims of bullying, what advice do you have for ways to heal and combat these lasting negative effects as they grow?

Of the important messages I received from the over 800 people who participated in my study, one stands out: The effects of bullying never truly go away. Some people are resilient enough to go on to productive employment, but many still contend with difficult emotions and unsatisfactory relationships. At the same time, another critical takeaway from the research is that some people, as adults, actually experience positive effects.

They see themselves as having overcome terrible situations, in some cases trauma, and have survived as stronger individuals. For victims still experiencing negative consequences, it is important to recognize that they are not alone and that there is help available. For those who still struggle with the aftermath of childhood bullying, there are some effective interventions—family therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy. People may carry scars, but they can overcome the past.

[This article originally appeared in Education Week Book Marks, November 2, 2016.]

