



# THE VOICE

## NAESP ELECTIONS

### SPECIAL EDITION

VOLUME 62 No. 3



**PRESIDENT-ELECT CANDIDATE**  
Steven D. Geis, Ed.D.  
North Trail Elementary School  
Farmington, MN



**PRESIDENT-ELECT CANDIDATE**  
Travis Wyatt  
Jasper County  
Junior High School  
Newton, IL



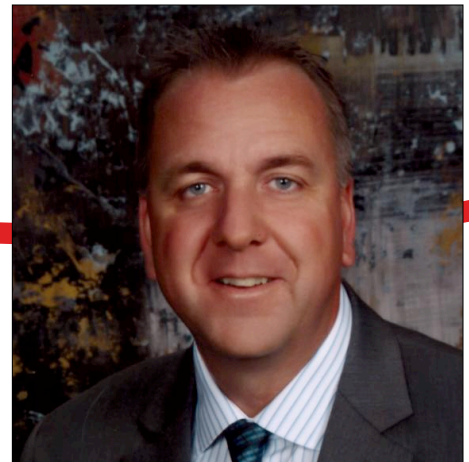
**ZONE 7 CANDIDATE**  
John Pothast  
Redoubt Elementary School  
Soldotna, Alaska



**VICE PRESIDENT CANDIDATE**  
Eric S. Cardwell  
Besser Elementary School  
Alpena, MI



**VICE PRESIDENT CANDIDATE**  
Brian K. Partin  
Thomas Jefferson Elementary  
School  
Kingsport, TN



**ZONE 7 CANDIDATE**  
Dave Steckler  
Red Trail Elementary School  
Mandan, North Dakota

# 2015 NAESP Election

With the passage of the NAESP Bylaws at the 2014 Delegate Assembly in Nashville, the Board approved an aligned set of policies that became effective immediately. The NAESP Bylaws now allows for a President, President-Elect, and Vice President to serve as Officers on the NAESP [Board of Directors](#).

To ensure an orderly transition in leadership, the Board approved a Transition Plan that calls for the 2015 Election to feature candidates for a President-Elect position and candidates for a Vice President position -- each will serve a three-year term of office beginning July 1, 2015.

For 2015, voting will take place Friday, February 27th through Thursday, March 12th. Eligible NAESP members may vote for the President-Elect and Vice President during this voting window.

For 2015, new Zone Directors will also be elected in Zones 5, 7, and 9 in accordance with their zone process. If you have questions about your zone election, please contact your [zone director](#).

## Who's Eligible to Vote?

Member types eligible to vote: Active, Institutional Active, Emeritus and Lifetime. Member types not eligible to vote: Retired, Aspiring, Associate, International Associate and Institutional Subscription.

## When Will Voting Take Place?

The 2015 NAESP election will be open to voters on February 27-March 12 .

## How to Log in?

To ensure the security of the voting system, you must [log in](#) to the website before you can access your ballot. See [Tips for Logging In](#), watch NAESP's [how-to video](#), or call 800-386-2377 and request help to vote.

To log in, go to [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org) and type your username (your primary e-mail address on file with NAESP) and password. If this is your first time to log in, your password is your last name, and you may be prompted to change your password to something more secure. After you are logged in, click on the button to access your ballot. The ballot page will include links to information on each candidate's experience and qualifications.

Additional Questions? [Get answers here](#). If you have any questions, please call Membership at 800-417-0348



## Candidate for NAESP President-Elect

Steven Geis, Ed.D.  
Principal, North Trail Elementary School  
Farmington, MN



Thank you for being a principal and having the most influential, challenging, and rewarding positions in today's society. As educational leaders, we have the privilege of guiding staff, communities, and students on the path to a successful, productive life full of learning. This can only be accomplished with the help of strong advocating associations like NAESP. NAESP serves us all by advocating, providing professional resources and development, and helping us establish collegial relationships.

It is my desire to continue the rich traditions of NAESP and serve our principal base by listening, building relationships, and working tirelessly on your behalf. I plan on conveying and telling your stories, for we are the experts and have the unique opportunity to gain critical perspective about education as year after year we work with our students, staff, and community. Our message of educational successes needs to be heard loud in our communities and nationally.

We know there are educational challenges and unresolved problems we may never be able to fully overcome. However, these problems cannot be solved by firing our way to achievement. We need to work with our state associations and partner with NAESP to proactively share the successes and accentuate the positive. We need to be above the banter and role model professionalism, as we all do, for others to emulate.

It would be a true honor to represent mid-level and elementary principals as your President-Elect. It would be my goal to empower NAESP State Representatives to be effective local connections to principals, proactively and positively showcase our educational successes and achievements, promote NAESP to drive membership of aspiring and mid-level principals and retain existing members, and advocate for independent reading.

Thank you for taking the time to read about me and considering me for your next President-Elect of NAESP.

# Candidate for NAESP President-Elect

Travis Wyatt

Principal, Jasper County Junior High School

Newton, IL



“Making a Difference” is the biggest opportunity we have on a daily basis in our schools. This approach starts first with a viable and focused approach of building positive relationships with students from each person in our buildings, as we are educators each and every day. Our students, staff, school, district and communities deserve and need our “Best” to provide the highest quality education, as this is the future of our great nation. Wow... what an incredible and awesome responsibility we have as Principals and Educational Leaders – who would want it any other way! This incredible responsibility and balancing act of “wearing all the hats” is what led me into education 26 years ago and drives my daily desire to constantly improve in our great profession.

It would be a very humble privilege to lead our national association, of incredible educational leaders, as President Elect. I will work tirelessly for continued growth in membership, advocacy, continued and improved networking opportunities, and improved technology, as well as focusing on strategic goals with collaborative approaches and “outside the box” ideas and views to insure NAESP maintains prominence.

Some would say we are in some of the toughest educational times in history, perhaps we should see this time as the most exciting time for education growth! Together, with your support, we can lead the National Association of Elementary School Principals in this incredible opportunity to “make a difference.” Please vote - education is too important not to.

## Candidate for NAESP Vice President

Eric Cardwell  
Principal, Besser Elementary School  
Alpena, MI



Greetings! My name is **Eric Cardwell**, proud principal of the Besser Bulldogs, a kindergarten through fifth grade building in Alpena, Michigan, along beautiful Lake Huron. I currently serve as Zone 6 Director while seeking the position of Vice President for NAESP.

I passionately believe in the educational system that serves the students of the United States. Our nation's commitment to educational opportunity for all students has provided our country with an unparalleled foundation that has, in turn, fueled the most prosperous country in the world. I firmly believe it imperative to be an advocate for the needs of children, families, and principals.

For the continued success of NAESP, it is essential that we promote **membership**. This is also a moral obligation as we look to support principals in the field. Expansion can only be accomplished through a thorough understanding of the membership and by addressing the needs of the ever-changing role of the principal.

In regard to **political advocacy**, NAESP seeks to create the correct message and set of solutions rather than having a solution hoisted upon our educational institutions. Principals across the United States need to provide boots on the ground, real-world input to educational reform, and be recognized as experts in the field by extending relationships with legislatures.

I believe the Vice President of NAESP must provide a **highly interactive, collaborative relationship** with not only the governing board and NAESP office, but also with state affiliates and members. To meet current and prospective members, while President in Michigan, I traveled 40,000 miles representing MEMSPA. It is critical for the Association to be engaged—gaining perspective in order to govern effectively.

Purpose, performance, and promise shine brightly for NAESP and the children we serve. It would be my distinct honor to represent you as Vice President of NAESP.

## **Candidate for NAESP Vice President**

Brian K. Partin, Ed.S.  
Principal, Thomas Jefferson Elementary  
Kingsport, TN



Dear NAESP Members,

First of all, I would like to thank the NAESP Nominating Committee for granting me the opportunity of candidacy for NAESP Vice President. It is one that I am both honored and humbled to receive. Moreover, it is one that I take very seriously!

Through my service with the Tennessee Principals Association and NAESP Board of Directors, I have learned the value of collaboration and the importance of having a collective voice. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that our nation's principals join together as a unified force. In order to continue to meet the demands of the communities we serve, principals need to know that their professional organization is a strong, powerful advocate for them as they serve on the frontline of America's schools.

As a parent of two beautiful girls, I am compelled to continue to help make their educational experiences exemplary ones. My youngest daughter is a living example of how early intervention, parental support, and appropriately funded special education can provide an equitable educational experience for an intellectually disabled child. This, along with other personal and professional experiences, has taught me the importance of working with stakeholders for the advancement of all students.

J.K. Rowling stated, "We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided." In order to reach the unity needed in our profession, it is imperative that our nation's principals work together for the betterment of the profession and our schools. If given the chance to serve as an executive officer on the NAESP board, I am committed to continue leveraging principal leadership through intentional collaboration and advocacy efforts that promote the principalship. For these reasons, I humbly seek your vote for NAESP Vice President.

# Candidate for NAESP Zone 7 Director

John Pothast  
Principal, Redoubt Elementary School  
Soldotna, AK



In 1997, Apple Computers ran an advertising campaign titled “Think Different”, embracing the vision and talents of “the misfits, the rebels and the troublemakers” within our society. It celebrated their ability to think differently, and lauds, “Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.” For years this ad has both challenged and inspired my professional courage. Education in our country is at an unprecedented crossroads. Assessments for student learning and teacher performance, funding, school safety, and professional development are just a few of the issues facing principals today. Accountability, school choice, and innovation are our new norms. What NAESP does today to actively shape and change our future is paramount to our success.

My ambition to be the Zone 7 Director comes because I have a desire to help our organization wrestle with these important and complex issues facing us, develop a vision to meet our needs, and then work hard to help guide us in that direction. When I left the classroom to become a principal, I realized that I had a much larger impact on my students: rather than affecting just the students in my classroom, I now had an impact on every student, staff member and parent within our school community. Likewise, my work as president of our state association has allowed me to expand my circle of influence to the state level, representing principals from all over our great state, from urban Anchorage to small, rural “bush” villages literally a thousand miles away. I have become accustomed to representing the variety of voices from our diverse communities. We have similar diversity within our Zone and I look forward to the opportunity to represent your collective voices at the national level. For the past few years I have attended the NAESP National Leaders Conference and have worked on principalship advocacy with the executive directors and Federal Relations Coordinators from each of the states in Zone 7, which has given me great insight into the issues facing all of our schools. In that way, I now want to further my efforts at the next level, giving me the opportunity to use my skills and talents at the national level and represent the collective voices of our zone as our national board continues to work on behalf of all of our schools, students and principals.

I have several goals to accomplish if elected as Zone Director. Keeping our Zone strong and robust in its participation and influence at the national level is a priority, as well as supporting our state affiliates any way I can, including a focus on membership and advocacy, both locally at the state and nationally. Additionally, NAESP President Mark White recently sent an email informing us that NAESP is looking at ways to further develop our relationship with NASSP. Although there are some specific focal points exclusive to elementary principals, such as early childhood education, many of the big issues facing us today are K-12 issues, so a natural connection between our associations already exists. I will use my experience at both the elementary and secondary levels to help guide those discussions in a meaningful and thoughtful way and ensure that our work with NASSP appropriately addresses the K-12 issues while also continues to meet the specific needs of elementary and middle level schools.

I am challenged by the words of the Apple “Think Different” ad, inviting me to be a leader who is not afraid to “invent...imagine...create...inspire.” I am challenged to stare at the “canvas” we call school and rather than see what is, imagine what could be. If we want our students and teachers to rise to achieve their full potential and change our world for the better, we need to set the example for them to follow. In that light, I like to think I’m just crazy enough to change our educational world for the better and I hope you will join and support me in that journey!

## Candidate for NAESP Zone 7 Director

Dave Steckler

Principal, Red Trail Elementary

Mandan, North Dakota



My interest in seeking the position of Zone 7 Director comes from the desire to help fellow colleagues and children with the knowledge I have gained through my years as an educator. During the last nineteen years as a principal, I have had the opportunity to meet and network with a variety of principals across the state of North Dakota and in other states. These years have been most rewarding sharing individual and collective successes and failures, as well as, joining hands to network for schools where children come first. I truly believe we hold the most influential, challenging and rewarding positions in today's society.

In the past few years, education has become a challenge due to the lack of funding and the demands that have been placed on children within our nation's schools. The National Leaders Conference has been part of my leadership for the past four years. I truly do believe that our united efforts on Capitol Hill have helped me discover the major impact we have in advocating for children. The collaborative approach that NAESP provides has given me the motivation to become part of an organization that supports children and principals.

The past four years, I have taken advantage of all opportunities to take an active role within NAESP. Working on the NAESP Membership Committee gave me an experience where I learned greatly from others, and felt honored to be a part of this committee. I have also played a major role in creating and sustaining a Zone 7 Reception for the past three years that continues to carry momentum at the NAESP National Convention.

In my opinion, the role of the Zone 7 Director is crucial for advocating for education at the national and state level. My vision for this position are four qualities that drive me: communication, purpose, passion and pride. I believe that communication educates me; purpose drives me; passion fuels me; and pride defines me. Within that vision comes relationships. It is imperative that the Zone 7 Director build and maintain relationships with State Representatives, the NAESP Board and other leaders throughout our nation. I am a believer that our children are counting on us to serve with a purpose where their best interest is our number one priority.

It is with excitement, energy, experience, pride and integrity that I aspire to serve NAESP as Zone 7 Director. I am confident that I can perform and meet the expectations of Zone 7. I believe I can effectively bring advocacy and enhance the role of principal while on the board of NAESP.