

# LET US KNOW IF YOU'RE INTERESTED!

In 2014, NASBE will offer State Board and Associate Members numerous opportunities for professional development and service in the organization. In addition to elected positions on the Board of Directors, President-Elect Jane Goff will make study group and committee appointments for the coming year.

If you are interested in being active in your Association, please indicate your interest below, then return this form via email or fax by **Friday November 22, 2013**.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Study Group on Student Engagement  
*(meets three times – January 24-25, March 14-15 and June 12-14)*

\_\_\_\_ Study Group on Rural Education  
*(meets three times – January 24-25, March 14-15 and June 12-14)*

\_\_\_\_ Government Affairs Committee *(meets twice, January 24-25 at Legislative Forum, March 13-14, and October 16-18 at the Annual Meeting, and with monthly conference calls)*

\_\_\_\_ Public Education Positions Committee *(meets virtually in June)*

\_\_\_\_ Finance Committee *(meets by conference call)*

\_\_\_\_ Distinguished Service Award Committee *(meets by Conference Call)*

\_\_\_\_ Friend of Education Award Committee *(meets by Conference Call)*

Descriptions of study groups and committees are also attached. **IMPORTANT: STUDY GROUPS WILL MEET ONLY IF FUNDED IN 2014.** For State Board Members, participation in study groups or on committees is contingent upon the consent of the state assuming the cost of travel and living expenses. States with Professional Development Accounts may use these funds for study group travel and hotel. *NASBE Associate members are welcome on Study Groups, but must pay their own travel and living expenses. The fee for non-dues paying states is \$2500.*

**Return to LeeNaura King – by email ([leenaaurak@nasbe.org](mailto:leenaaurak@nasbe.org)) or fax (703) 876-2313**

## 2014 COMMITTEE AND STUDY GROUPS

In addition to the Board of Directors, almost one hundred NASBE members serve the Association as members of standing committees. Committee members are appointed after the Annual Conference by the President-Elect from a roster of persons solicited from every state board of education and by those who return committee interest forms.

- Distinguished Service Award Committee (meets by telephone)  
Up to five members serve on the Distinguished Service Awards Committee. The members are responsible for selecting up to three state board members serving on boards from three different NASBE geographic regions who have made outstanding contributions to education and have served selflessly in the education of our nation's youth. *NASBE President-elect serves as ex officio chair.*
- Friend of Education Committee (meets by telephone)  
Five members serve on the Friend of Education Award Committee. The members are responsible for selecting, from a list of nominees, an individual or organization whose primary work may be outside the realm of education policy and education systems, but whose contributions to education have been significant and enduring. *NASBE President-elect serves as ex officio chair.*
- Governmental Affairs Committee (meets in January, March, and October and monthly by phone)  
The Governmental Affairs Committee shall be open to any member who wishes to serve on the committee and has their board approval; however, membership will be limited to one person per state. The size of the committee is unrestricted, and the Chair of the committee will be appointed by the incoming NASBE President. When legislative and governmental issues arise, the committee is responsible for recommending to the NASBE Board of Directors positions in conformance with existing NASBE policy. The committee also recommends positions compatible with the purposes of the Association for which there are no established policies.
- Public Education Positions Committee (meets once in June)  
The committee consists of the four Junior Area Directors and four additional members appointed by the incoming President. The committee solicits new public policy positions and revisions to standing positions from among the Association membership. The group considers proposals and changes and prepares and distributes a report to the membership.
- Nominations Committee (meets once in June)  
The committee will consist of seven members, one each elected during the area meetings, two elected from general membership during the Annual Business meeting. The Past President serves as Chairman.
- Finance Committee (meets by conference call prior to Board meetings)  
The committee consists of the Treasurer and three members (three-year terms, one chosen by current President, on a staggered basis). Committee is responsible for fiscal oversight of organization and audit review.

## 2014 NASBE STUDY GROUP RURAL EDUCATION

The number of rural students enrolled in public schools is increasing both as an absolute number and as a percentage of the total student population. According to the 2013 *Condition of Education* report, roughly one-third of the approximately 100,000 public schools in the United States in 2010-11 were located in rural areas (32,000), more than in suburbs (27,000), cities (26,000), or towns (14,000). Enrollment in these schools is growing, as rural areas have seen an influx of young parents, including immigrants and minorities, who are attracted by jobs in agriculture and energy.

There is evidence that students in these districts can thrive—they are likely to be in smaller classes in schools with high levels of community support and engagement. But the reverse can also be true. Research shows that states with a high number of low-income rural students tend to have lower student achievement across the board.

Educational achievement in rural America is one of the country's great overlooked challenges. Rural students achieve below the U.S. average on national tests, and high school dropout rates are higher and college attendance lower than they are in cities and suburbs. Given the growing importance of rural schools and districts, NASBE will conduct a study group in 2014 to explore how states can best support the unique challenges of rural schools, while also supporting their great strengths.

Among the issues to be explored by the study group:

- *Student achievement.* While students in rural areas perform better on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) than their peers in cities and towns, they generally score below their peers in suburban areas—and below the national average. One in four rural residents still fails to graduate from high school, and only 17 percent of adults over age 25 have college degrees – half the percentage of urban areas. The study group will look at state policies ranging from distance learning to regional education service providers, all of which can play an important role in closing this gap.
- *Funding.* The smallest rural districts are hurt by shrinking tax bases and a federal Title I funding formula that often has the effect of favoring districts with larger actual numbers of poor students over districts with larger percentages of them. Even when small rural districts apply for competitive grant programs, they can be at a disadvantage because they often lack staff members with experience in writing major grants and because their district may lack the resources to meet matching requirements. The study group will look at ways that state policy can level the funding playing field for smaller districts.
- *Recruiting and retaining strong staff members.* It is a challenge to recruit and retain highly effective educators and education leaders in many rural schools and communities, especially those that are remote or serve high concentrations of children living in poverty. There are some promising models, from “grow your own” models to enhanced

professional development. The study group will explore these successful models and discuss policy levers that can make them more widely available.

- *Educational options.* When the U.S. Department of Education asks low-achieving schools to be turned around, rural educators usually lack options: schools in many communities can't be closed because there are no other choices, and populations are too small to support charter schools. Yet there are some notable models of success, including the Walton 21<sup>st</sup> Century Rural Life Center. It is our hope that this study group will be able to visit models of effective educational options in rural areas.
- *Meeting diverse educational needs.* Rural districts may still enroll students who are highly gifted, who have profound disabilities, or who do not speak English. It is not only a lack of funding that may hamper a school's ability to serve the needs of all these students; it may also be the distance to supplemental learning resources that would be more readily available to students in urban or suburban districts. The study group will look at how states can assist districts in teaching students with low-incidence special needs.

The core composition of a NASBE study group includes members of State Boards of Education from eighteen to twenty states. The Study Groups convene over two days in January, March, and June. At each meeting content and policy experts present to the study group members; allowing them to delve deeply into the issues and determine areas for continuous study and examination. Each convening builds on the previous meetings and electronic communications, webinars, and mailings provide Study Group members with on-going information resources and learning opportunities throughout the study period. Ex officio individuals representing specific perspectives and experiences are also invited to participate.

A report on the group's findings with recommendations for state policy will be released in October at the NASBE Annual Conference.

## 2014 NASBE STUDY GROUP STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Most students start school with a strong desire to learn. But over the years, that desire seems to wane. One study of 1,500 classrooms found that in 85 percent, fewer than half of all students were “engaged” in learning. In other words, only 15 percent of these classrooms had most of their students focused on learning.

The lack of student engagement manifests itself in many ways. A recent analysis published by the Center for American Progress (CAP), based on student surveys from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, found that students are general not engaged in what they are learning. Large percentages say their schoolwork is “too easy.” Many say they are rarely engaged in deep or rigorous learning activities—and students from disadvantaged backgrounds are even less likely to say they are challenged in class. So it should not be surprising that more than one in four students leaves school before graduating.

Yet in a world where US students must compete not only with their peers from neighboring states, but also from students around the world, it is critical that students are engaged in what they are learning. The authors of the CAP study suggested that students may be doing poorly on tests like the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessment “because they’re not challenged in school.” So a failure to engage students is not only a personal imperative . . . it is an economic necessity.

Student engagement is also an equity and diversity issue. Four conditions that create engaged people as adapted from Glasser’s choice theory are: 1) some component of fun, 2) the ability for the participants to choose and exercise an appropriate amount of personal power, 3) the sense of belonging to something greater than themselves, and 4) a sense that, although not yet able, they have a fighting chance at gaining competence at a given task. Disadvantaged students, students who do not fit the standard mold, students with learning disabilities, and all of those who are perceived and treated as such are much more likely to suffer a lack of all four. To advance equity and inclusion in our nation’s education system demands that we attend to student engagement and the components that foster it.

State boards of education are charged with much more than approving academic standards. Their mission is to provide guidance and quality educational opportunities that are conducive to improved student engagement for all. In this study group, members will examine a range of issues that can contribute to improved student engagement. These include:

- *Teacher Training and Professional Learning.* Research is beginning to show a strong link between teacher practice and student achievement. Yet all teachers have not been trained in the best ways to engage today’s learners. The study group will examine state policies to increase for pre-service and in-service educators to enhance their competencies in reaching today’s students.
- *Social-Emotional Intelligence.* Possessing social-emotional intelligence has a strong impact on engagement in any venue. Savvy business leaders are very aware of the

importance of understanding their own social and emotional strengths and challenges and being able to identify and respond to it in their employees. In education, the diversity of experience, socio-economic status, family and cultural background, and language create an even greater need for teaching and fostering SEL. State-level policy that supports SEL in the classroom and school is essential to student motivation.

- *Service Learning.* Because student engagement is enhanced by providing a sense of being part of something greater, service learning opportunities can be an essential part of promoting student engagement. The study group will explore ways to promote service learning.
- *Brain-based and Psychology Research on the Nature of Engagement.* There are substantial amounts of research in the behavioral and social sciences fields as well as in the medical field of brain-based research that fully expands on the conditions that inhibit and destroy human motivation and those that foster and enhance it with discussions on emotional, physical, and intellectual levels and on the personal, group, and social scales. This research is vital for an in-depth understanding of this complex issue and the study group will hear from experts that specifically tailor that research to education and education policy.
- *Increasing Rigor in the Classroom.* The NAEP data showed that nearly one third of eight-grade students report reading fewer than five pages a day *either* in school *or* for homework. That is far below what experts recommend for middle school. These students also report that they rarely write lengthy answers to reading questions on tests. Even after adopting more rigorous standards, states still must supervise how those standards are translated into curriculum.
- *Technology.* Can an increased use of technology improve student engagement in learning? How are states using distance learning to expand the options available to students? The study group will look at successful models and state policies that can support technology.
- *Career and Technical Education.* Career and technical education (CTE) across the board has higher degrees of student motivation and engagement for a number of reasons. First, it is relevant to students' own choices. Students choose a course of study they identify and that has meaning for them outside of school. They foster a strong relationship with one adult for whom they gain and foster esteem. Students are respected for their own abilities to think—to identify problems, question assumptions, and create solutions. Students belong to a group of people—other students, career adults, business leaders, and teachers—that all share a common interest. Study group members will explore how CTE creates that atmosphere of success and engagement and how those lessons might be applied to state-level policy.

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