



RESEARCH REPORT

Kindergarten Shifts

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF the Common Core State Standards may be the next step in a decade-long evolution of academic rigor in kindergarten.

Two recent studies shed light on how this “academization” of kindergarten affects students. The January 2014 working paper, “Is Kindergarten the New First Grade?” indicates that kindergarten is now more literacy-focused. For it, University of Virginia researchers Daphna Bassok and Anna Rorem analyzed

data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study to uncover kindergarten teachers’ curricular foci. In 1998, kindergarten teachers reported spending just over an hour a day on reading and language arts. By 2006, that figure rose by about 25 percent, or 17 additional minutes per day spent on reading.

MYTWOCENTS

During NAESP’s #digisafety tweet chat, we asked: How can principals help parents understand digital safety issues?

We need to exchange basic digital literacy competencies with parents. We’re all models of learning, digital and otherwise. We must model the literacies we expect in our students.

—Sandra Trach, @SandraTrach

Present to parents at PTO/PTA meetings about digital citizenship.

—Sandra Paul, @spaul6414

Time spent on mathematics instruction remained stable overall, Bassok and Rorem note. But, time spent on all other subjects dropped. Teachers in 2006 spent 46 minutes per week less on social studies and science, and 30 minutes less per week on music and art. Physical education dipped dramatically, too: In 1998, about 19 percent of kindergarten teachers reported that their students have daily PE; by 2006, this percentage was halved.

More rigorous reading and math instruction doesn't necessarily harm young students; in fact, it can be positive. The study "Academic Content, Student Learning, and the Persistence of Preschool Effects," published in November 2013 in the *American Educational Research Journal*, confirms that exposing kindergarteners to advanced reading and math content has long-term academic benefits. Exposing students to only basic content has no, or even negative, effects, write the study's authors.

So, kindergarten isn't the "new first grade," per se. Under the Common Core, both kindergarten and first grade may be new realms altogether. The challenge for teachers and principals remains how to strike a balance at the kindergarten level. Critics of boosted kindergarten content point out that kindergarten activities need to be developmentally appropriate, and need to foster the social and behavioral skills that prime students for lasting academic success. Teaching academic content, write Bassok and Rorem, need not be

at odds with playtime and other early childhood pedagogical approaches.

Refer to the September/October 2013 issue of *Principal*, which focuses on pre-K-3 learning, for tips to shape your school's kindergarten strategies.

Prepare to Vote!

THIS SPRING, ELIGIBLE NAESP members will elect a new president-elect as well as directors for Zones 1, 2, and 8. The election will take place March 15 - April 15. Refer to the March issue of *Communicator* for election information (including how to log in to the NAESP website), and candidate biographies.



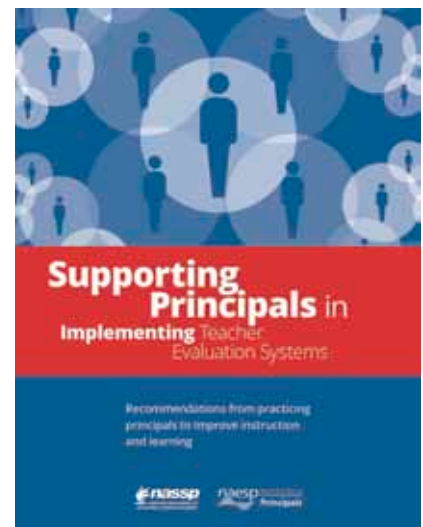
Best Data Practices for New Principals

NAESP'S NEWLY FORMED **National Panel of New Principals** aims to explore the struggles and successes of early career principals. Each month, the panel of first- and second-year principals answers a few brief questions about their experiences, and NAESP shares these insights.

Recently, the panel explored how to overcome difficulties in high-needs schools. Here are three of panelists' best data-focused practices:

- **Compile electronic data binders** for each classroom that are updated on an ongoing basis with new scores. These can help principals keep track of their students' and teachers' progress.
- **Give students their own data binders** to track their own achievement data. This gives students greater autonomy and a sense of accomplishment.
- **Create a "data room" for teachers** to help them visualize and better track key measures of student success.

To join the panel, or nominate a colleague for it, please visit naesp.org/national-panel-new-principals.



Teacher Evaluation: New Directions

PRINCIPALS CAN SPEND hundreds of hours a year on teacher evaluations. NAESP and NASSP have partnered to examine how this process can be smoother for principals, releasing a joint policy brief on teacher evaluation. *Supporting Principals in Implementing Teacher Evaluation Systems* offers policymakers and district leaders seven recommendations to bolster principals as new evaluation systems take root. Read the full brief at naesp.org/teacher-evaluation.

Provide info nights and "social media tastings" for parents led by students and teachers. [It's a] great way to build capacity with families.

—Joe Mazza, @Joe_Mazza

Hold a digital citizenship day for kids, with a parent session afterwards.

—Katie Ritter, @Katie_M_Ritter

✦ For more digital citizenship strategies, review our #digisafety wrap-ups on Storify: storify.com/NAESP