

NAESP NATIONAL DISTINGUISHED PRINCIPAL[®] PROGRAM

A Program to Recognize Excellence in
Elementary and Middle-Level Principals'
School Leadership

2025 APPLICATION PACKET



All 2025 NDP materials are due to NAESP by **May 2, 2025.**

E-mail: ndp@naesp.org



NAESP NATIONAL DISTINGUISHED PRINCIPAL® PROGRAM



A Program to Recognize Excellence in Elementary and Middle-Level School Leadership

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The National Distinguished Principals® (NDP) program was established in 1984 to recognize elementary and middle level principals who set high standards for instruction, student achievement, character, and climate for the students, families, and staffs in their learning communities. The program was based on three fundamental ideas:

- Children's attitudes towards learning and their perceptions of themselves as lifelong learners are established in the beginning school years.
- The scope and quality of children's educational experiences are determined primarily by the school principal, who establishes, through the important work of teachers and the support of caring parents, the character of a particular school's program.
- The dedication and enthusiasm of the outstanding principals who guide children's early education experiences should be acknowledged to both show appreciation for their work as well as to allow them to serve as models for others in the field.

Each year, NDPs represent pre-K–8 public schools from all across the country, as well as principals in U.S. private schools and those from the United States Departments of Defense Office of Educational Activity and the United States Department of State Office of Overseas Schools. Public school elementary and middle-level principals are nominated by peers in their state, and final selections are made by committees appointed by each of NAESP's state affiliate offices. Honorees from private schools and overseas schools are selected by special committees.

Criteria established by NAESP require that the individual is a practicing principal with at least five years' experience in the principalship, who plans to continue as a practicing principal. The principal must demonstrate evidence of outstanding contributions to the community and education profession and:

- **Be a member of NAESP for at least one year at the time of nomination and maintain membership through the conclusion of the NAESP NDP Award Ceremony;**
- Be a practicing principal at the time of nomination;
- Has been a building principal (not assistant principal) for five years;
- Is clearly committed to excellence;
- Leads a school that has programs designed to meet the academic and social needs of all students; and
- Has firm ties to parents and the community.

PLEASE NOTE

Elementary school NDP candidates must be principals of schools with students in either grades pre-K, K, 1, 2, 3, or 4, though older students may attend as well.

Middle level school NDP candidates must be principals of schools with students in grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and/or 8 only.



NAESP NATIONAL DISTINGUISHED PRINCIPAL® PROGRAM

NOMINEE'S APPLICATION FORM

(TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE - Please type, word process, or print clearly)

Name	Prefix	First	Middle Initial	Last	Suffix
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~ CONTACT INFORMATION – HOME ~

Home Address	Street	City	State	Zip	Country
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Cell Phone	Home E-Mail	Twitter Handle
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~ CONTACT INFORMATION – SCHOOL ~

School Name	School District
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School Address	Street	City	State	Zip	Country
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School Phone (Include Area Code)	School Fax (Include Area Code)	NDP's School E-Mail
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School Setting:	Urban	Suburban	Small Town	Rural
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~ PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION ~

Professional Experience (List by most recent, excluding current position/school)

Position	Name and Location of School	Dates

Total Number of Years as a Principal _____ Total Number of Years in Current Position/School _____

Professional Preparation (List by most recent)

Degree	Name and Location of Institution	Dates

~ SCHOOL INFORMATION ~**School's Grade Configuration** (check one)

- ☐ Elementary School Nominee- School's Grade Configuration _____
(must include either pre-K, K, 1, 2, 3, or 4, though older students may attend as well)
- ☐ Middle School Nominee – School's Grade Configuration _____
(may NOT include pre-K, K, 1, 2)

School Enrollment _____

Students Receiving Free/Reduced-Price Meals _____ %

To be completed by Private School Nominees Only:

**PRIVATE SCHOOL NOMINEE
~ ORGANIZATION INFORMATION ~**

This nominee is representing:

- ☐ **Council for American Private Education (CAPE) organization** ☐ **Other private school organization**
☐ **Independent nominee**

Name of organization represented: _____

Name of Board Chair_____
Board Chair's E-Mail

***Save as individual document for easy uploading**

~ PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES, AWARDS, AND HONORS ~

Name of Professional Association/Organization	Offices Held / Awards Received	Dates

~ SERVICE TO COMMUNITY ~

Name of Community Association/Organization	Offices Held / Awards Received	Dates

~ THREE MOST SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS A PRINCIPAL ~

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

***Save as a separate document for uploading**

~ BEST PRACTICES FOR BETTER SCHOOLS ~

An important component of each NDP program is the compilation of Best Practices used in the schools of our National Distinguished Principals. We recently revised our submission guidelines based on feedback from principals. To that end, please submit your Best Practices in the manner explained below.

- Describe one to five practices that have worked well in your school. When appropriate, supply accompanying data (graphs, spreadsheets, tables, etc.) that address results and outcomes.
- Categorize each of your ideas by using the following abbreviations (many will fall into more than one category):

Abbr.	Category
AP	Assessment Tools for Principals (Including Self-Assessment)
EC	Early Childhood Education
IL	Principal's Role as Instructional Leader
PC	Parent and Community Relations
SA	Student Assessments
SI	School Improvement Strategies
SL	Student Leadership
ST	Standardized Tests
TA	Teacher Assessment and Evaluation
TD	Teacher and Staff Development
TL	Turnaround Leadership
WC	Whole Child Initiatives
21st	21st Century Learning (problem solving, teaching creativity and collaboration across borders)

FORMAT GUIDELINES (see attached sample copy):

1. At the top of your submission please include your name, title, and the name and address of your school (please see attached sample copy)
2. Separate each practice by title.
3. There is no word limit, but NAESP reserves the right to edit copy if necessary.

“Best Practices Sample”

Full Name, Title
School Name
City, State

Around the Corner, Around the World (21st, WC)

A goal of Name school district is to graduate world-class citizens who will become quality contributors in their communities and beyond. In past years, educators at School Name have reached out to schools as far away as Afghanistan and Japan, connecting children and exposing them to diverse customs and languages. School Name’s students have learned that, despite cultural differences, kids are essentially just kids. Principal Name believes that same lesson can be taught by partnering with a school just around the corner.

He and his team approached the staff at the Name of Academy—where 95 percent of students are Latino and many students speak Spanish as their first language—to propose a partnership. Initially, the goal was for 4th graders at both schools to expand their understanding of what it means to be a community while learning math and science concepts together in a fun team-building activity called the Solar Sprint. But the program blossomed into more when teachers and principals began to share resources and time—and meals out—and students at both schools joined forces to feed hungry children around the world.

Implementation

Twelve LEGO E-Lab kits were purchased with Dream funds for the 4th grade classes at School Name so that they could participate in a Solar Sprint competition at School Name in June. Working in teams, students designed, built, tested and raced solar cars; in the process they learned about simple machines, renewable energy, speed and efficiency ratios, and other concepts. On the day of the race, engineering students from the Name of University came to display their race car designs and interact with students.

While students worked on their solar cars, they also engaged in community service projects. School Name students and their families collected and donated books—and much-needed sports equipment—to the Name of Academy. Children from both schools packaged 15,000 meal kits to support Kids Against Hunger, a humanitarian food-aid organization. Board of education members and the school superintendent were in attendance at the event to show their support.

Results

Fourth-graders from both schools applied math and science concepts and raced their cars in a friendly competition for a successful Solar Sprint. But the alliance that started with a math-science project went beyond what organizers had anticipated. School Name students organized a book drive for and took part in a collaborative service project with their new friends at the school.

And principals and teachers from the two schools became friends, sharing resources and ideas and helping out at one another’s school events. The partnership was acknowledged by a National PTA’s Family-School Partnership Award of Merit.

Next Steps

Pearson and his team plan to continue their relationship with school. They have applied for a grant to purchase computer equipment that will allow staff at the two schools to communicate more easily using video conferencing.

***Save these as one individual document for easy uploading**

~ SCHOOL LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS ~

Please answer the following four questions regarding your professional beliefs, practices, and accomplishments in each of these areas that qualify you to represent your state or organization as its National Distinguished Principal.

Please limit each response to a maximum of 300 words, answer each question on a separate sheet of paper, and include your name in the upper right-hand corner of each page.

Question 1: How do you balance leadership and management duties to best support student achievement?

Question 2: How have you involved parents and community members in supporting student achievement?

Question 3: How do you support learners who are struggling, challenge learners who are excelling, and maintain high standards for all?

Question 4: How do you cultivate, monitor, and advance a positive climate in your building?

NAESP's *Leading Learning Communities: Pillars, Practices, and Priorities for Effective Principals* (2020) identifies nine key areas of effective school leadership. Please refer to these areas as you answer the four questions above.

- I. Establishing shared values and vision for schools.**
- II. Engaging and communicating with families and the community.**
- III. Emphasizing personal and professional well-being and development.**
- IV. Leading personalized and collaborative teaching and learning.**
- V. Distributing leadership among a community.**
- VI. Supporting the academic, social and emotional, and physical needs of children and adults.**
- VII. Managing talent and resources to maximize effective teaching and learning.**
- VIII. Cultivating support in the district and community.**
- IX. Focusing on what matters most.**



SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATION FORM

The above-named principal has been nominated to be a **National Distinguished Principal**. This form is to certify that the principal's employer understands the following obligations and responsibilities inherent in acceptance of this award.

- The Distinguished Principal will be expected to travel to and from Washington, D.C. to participate in the two-day recognition events and ceremony.
- The National Association of Elementary School Principals will provide two nights lodging, an opening night welcome reception, and one dinner (the awards banquet) for each honoree and one guest. **Costs for travel and other meals are assumed by the nominee, the school district, or other state or local sources.**
- The Distinguished Principal may receive limited requests to represent the National Association of Elementary School Principals on national committees. In these cases, costs are borne by either NAESP or the sponsoring party.
- Publicity for the Distinguished Principal may generate occasional opportunities for speaking engagements at the state level as well as requests to visit the principal's school.

This is to certify that I acknowledge and endorse the nomination of _____
Name of Nominee

as the National Distinguished Principal representing _____
State, Private School, or Other Jurisdiction

Name of Supervisor/Employer (please print)

Title

Address of Supervisor/Employer

Phone Number (including area code)

Signature of Supervisor/Employer

Date

The National Distinguished Principal program does not discriminate.

NOTE TO THE NOMINEE: Please submit this Nominee's Certification Form with your completed application packet to your state professional association, state affiliate NDP liaison, or private school authority.



NATIONAL DISTINGUISHED PRINCIPAL DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
requires this completed packet of information on file for each
National Distinguished Principal.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>____ Application Packet</p> <p>____ Best Practices</p> <p>____ Signed Affirmation Statement</p> <p>____ Supervisor's Certification Form</p> | <p>____ Four letters of reference:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">____ Supervisor ____ Fellow administrator</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">____ Teacher ____ Parent/civic/community member</p> |
|--|--|
- ____ **A high-quality, color photo.**
 Photos should be a headshot (chest/shoulders up) with a plain, colored background.

IMPORTANT!

NAESP needs a high-resolution, color photo of each NDP. Images need to be at least 300 dpi, 1500 x 2000 pixels (5 x 7 inches) and in .jpg, .png, or .pdf format.

Please include the name and state/organization as the file name
(Ex: Jane Doe-VA or John Smith-DoDEA).



NOMINEE REFERENCE FORM NATIONAL DISTINGUISHED PRINCIPAL

Letters of Reference

Name of Nominee: _____

Each National Distinguished Principal nominee is asked to secure four letters of reference, one from each of the following persons: **an immediate supervisor or superintendent, a fellow administrator, a teacher currently serving on the nominee's staff, and a parent/civic/community leader.** Each letter of reference should include a copy of this form.

To the Nominee's Reference:

The National Distinguished Principal (NDP) selection committee appreciates your help in assessing this NDP candidate's skills and knowledge in the area of school leadership. Please base your comments on the nominee's professional performance. Limit your comments to one 8 ½ x 11" page, using at least 10 pt. type. If you prefer, your letter of reference may be mailed directly to the nominee's state affiliate or the organization that he/she represents.

This letter of reference is from (please check one):

_____ **The nominee's supervisor**

_____ **A fellow administrator**

_____ **A teacher**

_____ **A parent/civic/community member**

Please print or type.

Printed Name of Reference

Title

Address

City

State

Zip

Country if not USA

Phone (including area code)

Fax (including area code)

E-Mail Address

Signature of Reference

Date

TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE

NAESP NATIONAL DISTINGUISHED PRINCIPAL® PROGRAM



NOMINEE’S AFFIRMATION STATEMENT

I do hereby affirm that I plan on remaining in a position of school leadership during the year in which I am serving as a National Distinguished Principal.

I do further affirm that I have been a member of NAESP for at least one year at the time of my nomination and will continue to be a member through October 2025.

I do further affirm that the information included in this application packet is a fair and true representation of the facts of my professional career.

I do hereby grant my permission for any or all of the enclosed materials (including my photo but excluding my home address, home and/or cell phone number, and home e-mail address) to be shared with persons and organizations interested in promoting the National Distinguished Principals program and its honorees.

I do hereby agree to serve as an “ambassador” for the principal profession and the National Association of Elementary School Principals on the local, state, and national level.

PRINTED NAME OF NOMINEE: _____

NOMINEE’S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____