Join Us in Tampa!

25th Annual
NAEA National Conference
October 28-30, 2019

Hotel: Tampa Marriott Water Street

Reserve Your Hotel Room

School Tours are filling fast! Sign up today!

Other Pre-Conference Offerings:

- Building Strong Brains: Trauma Sensitive Strategies for Alternative
Educators

- Thrive More Than Survive: 8 Key Strategies to Achieve Educator Well-Being
- Inspire Greatness with NAEA Continuous Improvement Tools
- Gallery Walk of Alternative Schools

NAEA Conference Registration

**NAEA 2019**

**Conference KEYNOTE Speakers**

Opening Keynote  
Kevin Honeycutt

Closing Keynote  
Dr. Adolf Brown

2019 NAEA Conference Special Luncheon Keynote Speaker

NAEA is Honored to Present Dr. Curtis Jones

2019 National Superintendent of the Year and Alternative School Advocate

Register Today
The First Step to Great Leadership is Self-Awareness

By Ron Thomas

“While I was waiting for my interview in a reception area, a pizza delivery man, a young guy dressed in a T-shirt and jeans, carried in a heavy pack of pizza boxes and water bottles. He struggled with the door. I jumped up, but before I could help him, a receptionist let him through.

5 minutes later I am sitting in the interview conference room, the “pizza delivery man” walks in. He extends his hand for a handshake and says, “I am Greg Tagaris, chief information officer of DoubleClick. Sorry I am a little late. I was taking food to my guys. They are working without lunch because we have technical problems. I saw you trying to help me, thanks.”

The inner leader

As those of you who follow my TLNT column know, I love these types of stories. As I commonly say, “You can’t teach this in a leadership off site.” Leadership of this type is ingrained; some have it and, unfortunately, some don’t. I often times struggle as I coach executives, quite amazed at their inability to be self-aware and to not realize that every action sends a message. Every decision or indecision sends a message.

This style of leadership I would define as authentic, genuine. Did this CIO have to be told to show a kind side and get pizza for his crew? There is an effortless feel to this and it comes across as natural.

I have always felt that what you do when no one is watching shows the real person you are; the kindness you show when nothing in return is expected.

Becoming an authentic leader is not easy. It takes a great deal of self-reflection (getting to know oneself), and the courage to do the right thing. It involves a degree of selflessness. In a world crowded with self-important, morally corrupt, and dysfunctional leaders, authentic leadership is, and will always be, at the top of the best leadership styles.

Know thy self

I have a dear friend who is a psychiatrist. He told me that during your training you must be analyzed to better understand yourself. This has stayed with me over the years as I ask the questions, “Do you know who you are? Do you understand you?” Those are powerful questions we should ask ourselves from time-to-time. Our perception of ourselves can become severely skewed over the years. As a leader at the top of the corporate food chain, the deference shown you by your subordinates can create a false sense of who you are. Over a period of time, this cocoon can grow leadership blind spots. Without periodically stopping to look yourself in the mirror of honest analysis, you can fool yourself into thinking you have all the answers and know what’s best.

The self-absorbed leader is a danger to any organization.

Become the maestro

Effective leaders are like orchestra conductors. Just as the conductor is tasked with optimizing and harmonizing the efforts of each musician to create something greater and more powerful than discrete, individual performances, leaders are expected to do the same.

The effective leader must make sure everyone understands the direction and, at the least, understands the journey they are on. They ensure people know what is expected of them, have the opportunity to practice their part, and receive feedback to improve individual and collective success.

Like the orchestra conductor, a leader must be able to orchestrate great performances as a group rather than managing each section or individual as separate performers.

Who are you?

Effective leaders build a solid foundation for success by focusing, first on identifying and understanding who they are. This self-awareness is the first step to great leadership.
addressing their own development needs, and then on building relationships and fostering teamwork, rather than simply focusing on directing the efforts of others. While it might seem counterintuitive, the most important aspect of developing your team is spending time focusing on yourself. Many leaders believe that focusing on managing should be their first priority, not realizing that effective leadership begins with themselves as individuals. A clear understanding of self is the critical foundation of effective leadership.

So next time you are thinking about your leadership effectiveness, think about your self first, before you think about others.

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2019 Video Contest

“NAVIGATING THE FUTURE” - Tell the story of your alternative program in a 2-5-minute video or rap. This contest is open to middle and high school students who attend alternative education programs. Your video should communicate the message and mission of your program and relate it to the annual national NAEA conference theme “Navigating the Future.” Entries may express this theme in any genre or shooting style but must be submitted by link containing a YouTube URL.

THE PRIZES:

First Prize—$400.00  Second Prize—$300.00  Third Prize—$200.00

ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED by OCTOBER 12, 2019.
WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED at the NAEA conference.

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ACCESS Character Education (ACE)

The team of Jina Reed, Ryan Hinkle, Brianne Parker, and Anne Wolff co-created the ACCESS Character Education (ACE) program geared specifically towards at-risk students in their community sites and incarcerated youth populations. ACE engages students in high interest novels through the use of Restorative Practices, Universal Design for Learning (UDL),
and Character Education, while utilizing an interactive 21st Century model. ACE incorporates the MTSS initiatives and the California State Standards. In addition to creating our ACE curriculum, we have co-authored the attached article.

According to the team, "It has has been an exciting year of collaboration with other county offices in California. Sharing our work is completely free created by alternative educators for our kids! We would love to have as many alternative educators we can utilize our tools in support of student learning! Igniting a passion to read in our students is a lifelong skill that for invaluable for their futures!"

For more information, please check out their article which outlines their program!!
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VXXKzlpqnOS8nxfy4Q6CvM_omZ1BMZwyA_CyindOrB8/edit?usp=sharing

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**Board Member Spotlight**

**Dr. Edward Lowther**
Region 2 Director

Dr. Edward G. Lowther is a professional educator. He earned a Doctoral degree in Education Leadership, an Education Specialist degree in Special Education and Administration & Supervision Prek -12, a Masters degree in Special Education, and a Bachelor in Therapeutic Recreation.

His areas of expertise range from education to therapeutic recreation to music. He has been an education practitioner and leader in the areas of special education, (teacher, administrator and professor) transition coordinator for alternative education, education consultant and presenter, private music teacher, and a high school marching band instructor.

Edward resides in Woodbridge, Virginia, (which is located 20 miles south of Washington, DC), with his wife, Angie and their 5 children, triplets Rachel, Joshua, and Emily born in 1994, Aaron born in 2000, and Madeline born 2004. Dr. Lowther is available to share his expertise in the following areas: alternative education, behavior management, curriculum development, and special education.

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**Looking for ALL Former NAEA Presidents:**

*We want to reach you with a special invitation! Please email current NAEA President, Pamela Bruening at pam.bruening@gmail.com with your current contact information. Thank you!*

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**ESSA Puts Pressure on Schools to Reduce Student Absences. Here's How They**
Might Do It

By Evie Blad

The Every Student Succeeds Act puts more pressure on schools to ensure their students show up every day. But when it comes to addressing chronic absenteeism, some educators and policy makers say they are building the plane in the air, relying on a growing body of research about everything from student health and motivation to mentoring to family poverty to find ways to move the needle.

A new brief from FutureEd, a think tank at Georgetown University, explores existing strategies state and local decision makers my consider. Working with University of Illinois researcher Patricia A. Graczyk, the report's authors explored the research behind 22 different approaches to determine how well they meet ESSA's requirements for evidence-based school improvement.

**What is Chronic Absenteeism? And What Does ESSA Say About It?**

More than 7 million students—about one of every six students enrolled in the country's public schools—missed at least 15 days of school in the 2015-16 school year, the most recent federal data show. Such high rates of missed school days—whether or not they are excused absences—can affect students' engagement in the classroom and likelihood of graduating, researchers have found.

So 36 states and the District of Columbia opted to include varying measures of chronic absenteeism in the accountability systems they created to comply with ESSA, the federal education law that replaced the No Child Left Behind Act. Those accountability systems also take into account traditional factors, like graduation rates and test scores, to determine if a school is successful.

And, even in states that didn't include chronic absenteeism in their ESSA plans, the law requires schools to include such data on their school report cards that provide parents and the public with information about a school's performance. That may ratchet up pressure to make sure students show up and to determine how to intervene when they don't.

Proponents of chronic absenteeism in school accountability favor it because it is a broad measure that touches on all areas of school policy and practice—from discipline to student health to classroom management.

"Ultimately, the best strategies for reducing chronic absenteeism are steps that improve the educational experience of all students," says the FutureEd report, which was written in cooperation with Attendance Works, an organization that promotes school attendance. "Instruction that is relevant to students' lives encourages attendance and promotes academic achievement. A welcoming school climate can bring more students to school on a regular basis, and it can mitigate the trauma in many students' lives. Stronger bonds between students and teachers are associated not just with good attendance but with student success."

But some teachers and educational leaders have approached the new mandates with caution, worrying that many factors that affect students' attendance are beyond their control and that schools often lack the resources to tackle sticky issues like a lack of transportation or a mental health crises.

**Strategies to Ensure Students Show Up**

The report includes three levels of interventions.

- **Tier 1 interventions** are more general approaches that address the needs of the student body as a whole, like "nudges" and other reminders of the importance of coming to school, universal free breakfast programs, and building connections with students by meeting them at the doors of school buildings and classrooms.

- **Tier 2 interventions** are more specifically targeted toward the needs of students who struggle with attendance. They include focused mentoring programs, and school-based interventions for students with asthma.

- **Tier 3 interventions** require buy-in from other sectors. They include programs like truancy courts, interagency housing efforts, and case-management programs that include information sharing between schools and social services providers that
interact with high-needs students.

The report also includes resources like model school policies, links to external resources, and guides for sharing information.

Whatever strategies schools and districts use to confront absenteeism, most have an underlying data strategy that involves tracking a range of indicators to determine which students are most at risk to allow for early intervention and monitoring the success of these efforts, the report says.

CONNECT with others in your region at the 2019 NAEA Conference! Regional meetings enable you to meet your Regional Directors & connect with others in your state and geographical region. Learn how you can work together to provide each other with ongoing support throughout the year.

News Items Needed!
We want to feature your school next month!!!
Tell us about some of the great things your school is doing or a specific best practice that works very well. Send pictures or video links.
Please email your district/school news to: justin_demartin@yahoo.com
Submit Your Research

Your National Alternative Education Association has instituted an Annotated Bibliography of Alternative Education Research. I've submitted a few examples including Raywid’s seminal work on alternative education, Job for the Future’s piece on “Reinventing Alternative Education”, and National Dropout Prevention’s meta-analysis, to get us started. http://the-naea.org/alternative-education-research/

Your colleagues want your contributions! Submit works that you have found particularly useful using the simple template provided. NAEA members tend to most interested in the title and the What, How, Why of the work:

- **What** A description of the work and its findings
- **How** The methodology or some key terms like quantitative, qualitative, policy research
- **Why** The big picture – a rationale about why the work is important-valuable

NAEA looks forward to your submissions, so that alternative education research is accessible to NAEA members and all Alt Ed advocates. As you see, you will be recognized on a nationally available website for your contribution.

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Graduate Courses Available in Alternative Education at New England College

Get More Information Here
Connect with Alternative Educators around the Globe!

NAEA Monthly Twitter Chats (30 minutes)

These monthly chats focus on NAEA’s exemplary practices. It is for all stakeholders in the field of alternative/nontraditional education. Chats begin at 9:00 pm EST the last Tuesday of each month to build capacity and awareness.

Join Us!

NAEA Partners

Kennesaw State University

Submitting Articles

If you are interested in submitting an article for the NAEA newsletter please reach out to Dr. Justin DeMartin, Region 1 Director for more information. justin_demartin@yahoo.com