Greetings Wyoming Secondary Principals,

I hope that you all had an incredible summer with family and friends taking care of yourselves. Your job is incredibly busy and filled with stress and so I hope that you were able to finally take a few minutes for yourself and your loved ones and are now ready to tackle another exciting school year in your district.

I am extremely excited and grateful to be able to serve as the President of your organization for the next year. I have served on the board as an assistant principal’s representative and as an at-large representative for the past several years and I look forward to working with all of you to ensure that this organization is meeting all of your needs. As the principal at Lander Valley High School I spend my days like all of you, ensuring that we are meeting the needs of every student, every day. As your president, I hope to do the same for you, meeting the needs of every administrator, every day!

This summer our organization held its first board retreat in many years. Our goals were to review our mission statement to make sure it was still reflective of who we are and to also ensure that we are making concerted efforts to achieve that mission. The mission of the Wyoming Association of Secondary School Principals shall be to advocate for all issues concerning middle and secondary level education in Wyoming, to promote the improvement of our schools through the implementation of research-based best practices, and to strengthen relationships among all schools in Wyoming through the statewide principal network.

We have drafted a plan which we will be discussing as a board during the fall to improve our organization in all three areas; membership and networking, professional development, and advocacy. I applaud all of you for taking the time and devoting the resources to be a part of this incredible organization. I believe that those of you who have had the opportunity to attend our Winter Conference in January and/or our Summer Retreat in June can attest to the strength of the organization in building relationships among schools and administrators and also to the high level of professional development that is being delivered at these events. This year, for example, we are very pleased to have Jimmy Casas coming to our winter conference. If you have not had a chance to hear Jimmy speak, I do not think you will want to miss this one. Although we know there is always room for improvement in both of these areas, we believe our biggest opportunity lies in the areas of advocacy.

This is where we need all of your help. Please communicate with us about the issues that you believe we need to advocate for. Our state department and legislature needs to hear from us and in order for that to happen we need to hear from you. Please feel free to contact any board member, or our Executive Director, Ken Griffith so that we can figure out a plan to best address the issues that you are facing. Here are the board members for the 2019-20 school year which are also available with email links and phone numbers on our website at www.wassp.org:

Brad Neuendorf (Lander Valley High School) -- President
Jeff Makelky (Big Piney High School) – President - Elect
Phil Garhart (Niobrara County High School) – Southeast Regional Director
Daryl Michael (Lander Valley High School) – Northwest Regional Director
Chris Rashleigh (Campbell County High School) – Northeast Regional Director
Ben Carr (Mountain View High School) – Southwest Regional Director
Jill Borchers (Twin Spruce Junior High) – Middle-Level Director
Royce Backman (Cheyenne South High School) – Assistant Principal Director
Tina Trout – Associate Principal Director
Shad Hamilton (Horizon Jr/Sr/High) – Alternative School Director
Jim Catlin (Natrona County High School) – At-Large Director
Amy Rose (Kelly Walsh High School) – At-Large Director
Jason Garman (Campbell County High School) – Past President
Becky Waters (Moorecroft High School) – NASSP Board Member

I look forward to working with all of you to help make being an administrator in your district a better and more positive experience and I hope that you will all take me up on my offer to feel free to contact me for anything that you may need throughout the next school year. I am grateful to serve on this board and I am looking forward to helping meet the needs of the administrators we serve.

Have a great school year,

Brad Neuendorf

Aspiring Leaders

If you have aspiring leaders or interns in your building who are working towards their admin ticket...

1. We can offer them a complementary associate membership.
2. They can apply for the Dr. Emmajo Speigelberg scholarship on our website.
QUESTIONS FOR YOUR COLLEAGUES ACROSS THE STATE? GO RIGHT HERE.

As our membership reaches an all-time high, this might be a great time to reach out to fellow administrators across the state.

https://www.principalsmonth.org/

LET THE CELEBRATION BEGIN

Please enjoy the $10 Amazon card from the Board of Directors in appreciation for the hard work you do every day for Wyoming kids.

Celebrate by taking time to visit wassp.org and nassp.org to find the amazing resources available from your associations.

Celebrate by contacting a colleague that should be a member, encouraging them to join and get their voice heard. Send their email contact to kgriffith@wassp.org. If they sign up, you get a check for $25.
Daniels Named Principal of the Year

May 7, 2019

Breez Daniels, Principal of Hot Springs County High School in Thermopolis has been named the 2019 WASSP Principal of the Year by the Wyoming Association of Secondary School Principals. Daniels will join her fellow state principals of the year from across the country for consideration as 2020 National Principal of the Year, in a program conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Mrs. Daniels accepted the challenge to lead both Hot Springs County High School as well as continue her leadership of Thermopolis Middle School two years ago, with hopes to build on the success of the middle school who was named a model professional learning community and a DuFour Award finalist in both 2018 and 2019. Since that time Hot Springs County High with the help of a great staff, and some great effort on behalf of the student body has seen impressive gains in student achievement, school spirit, and activities success. Hot Springs County High school was ranked as Meeting Expectations (WAEA) with their highest score in post-secondary readiness. They saw improvement in all areas including graduation rate and attendance. Not a single freshman failed a course during the 2017-18 school year, a terrific sign for graduations to come. Overall in 2017-18 the entire student body had only five failed courses (total), a tremendous improvement from previous years. This fall 18-19 nearly 50% of HSCHS freshman class received straight A's at the end of the first semester. To ensure grade inflation is not an issue data was triangulated from interim assessments. ACT data continues to improve. In 2017 34% of HSCHS students scored 21+ with roughly 5% scoring above 30, while in 2018 58% of HSCHS students scored 21+ with roughly 10% scoring above 30.

Student athletes in fall sports/activities were honored by the state for having a cumulative 3.72 GPA (Average of all participants). Girls Cross Country, Boys Golf, and Drama won state championships, Speech and Debate was state runner up, and Wrestling brought home a 4th place trophy thus far. Bobcat Pride Fridays have been a terrific fun addition to the school culture, and students are doing wonderful things leading the school in spirit building. Mrs. Daniels was also recognized recently as the 2019 Rebecca Burnette DuFour Scholarship Winner; one of only 10 women in the United States. The award celebrates women who have shown outstanding leadership qualities in their school community. She will have the opportunity to collaborate and be recognized with the other 9 winners later this year.

“The state principal of the year is a model of effective leadership whose knowledge, skills, and commitment advances each student toward their full potential,” said NASSP Executive Director JoAnn Bartoletti. “The research is clear that leadership is one of the most important school-based factors in student achievement, and NASSP is proud to highlight the incredible work that these principals are doing to build the future.”

The NASSP National Principal of the Year program convenes the year’s top principal from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and the U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Schools to be honored at a three-day institute in Washington, D.C. During the event, principals will meet with their elected officials to discuss legislation that impacts education, participate in professional development, network with NASSP staff and their peers, and be officially recognized for their achievement during an awards program.

From this pool of state winners, three national finalists are named in August and interviewed by a distinguished panel of judges during the Principals Institute. The 2020 NASSP National Principal of the Year will be announced at the winner’s school during National Principals Month in October. Additional information about the NASSP National Principal of the Year program can be found at www.nassp.org/poy.

About NASSP

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) is the leading organization of and voice for principals and other school leaders across the United States. NASSP seeks to transform education through school leadership, recognizing that the fulfillment of each student's potential relies on great leaders in every school committed to the success of each student. Reflecting its long-standing commitment to student leadership development, NASSP administers the National Honor Society, National Junior Honor Society, National Elementary Honor Society, and National Student Council.
Top Line Up For Winter Conference

You will want to mark your calendar for this amazing conference on January 26-28 at the Ramkota in Casper.

Dr. Joe Sanfelippo

Be Intentional
Every interaction matters because every interaction could be the one they talk about forever.

Open Doors
When people outside your walls know what you are doing it gives value to those inside.

Build People
People who feel that their work has value will go well beyond anything you asked them to do.

IN THE END, YOUR LEGACY WON'T BE ABOUT YOUR SUCCESS; IT WILL BE ABOUT YOUR SIGNIFICANCE AND THE IMPACT YOU MADE ON EVERY STUDENT, EVERY DAY, AND WHETHER YOU WERE WILLING TO DO WHATEVER IT TOOK TO INSPIRE THEM TO BE MORE THAN THEY EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE.

Jimmy Casas
CULTURIZE
Sunday, January 26, 2020

12:00 – 12:30  Registration
12:30 – 1:00  Welcoming activity
1:00 – 2:00  Mountains Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center
2:00 – 3:00  Jeff Wasserberger & Albert Sommers
3:00 – 4:30  Jimmy Casas
5:00- 6:30  WASSP AWARDS GALA
6:30  Board of Director’s Dinner and meeting

Monday, January 27, 2020

7:00 – 8:00  Registration
8:00 – 8:30  Welcoming Remarks – WASSP & WAEMSP Presidents, State Supt., NC Supt.
8:30 – 12:00  Jimmy Casas
12:00 – 1:30  Vendor Fair & lunch
1:30 – 3:00  Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)  Wendy Gauntner
3:00- 4:00  Cognia: David Hurst with data gathered around teaching learning and engagement
6:00 - ???:  Fun Night Activities

Tuesday, January 28, 2020

8:00 – 10:00  Joe Sanfelippo
10:00 – 11:30  WAEMSP & WASSP general business meetings
11:30 – 12:00  WASSP Drawings
Anson Reflects on Reading, Pheasants, and Retirement

While some of us are already considering our professional development days in August, others among us are considering our week-long vacation in Mexico in June to celebrate our retirement. While some of us will be in our offices Tony Anson is going to be looking over the Big Horn mountains at the sun coming up wondering whether today is a pheasant scouting day or an elk scouting day.

Tony isn’t too worried about next year’s WY-TOPP schedule, because he is retiring after 15 years as the lead learner at Riverside High School and Middle School in Basin, Wyoming and over 30 years as a teacher, coach, mentor, leader, and principal in Wyoming.

What started as a career on the teaching side in CTE when Tony also moved into a lead teacher role in his building, eventually became a conversation with the school board where they gave him the principal job 15 years ago without his certification and asked him to take on the role of building leader.

“I fell into the position by accident,” Tony says. “But I got sick of dealing with all the problems. After six principals in 15 years, everyone agreed to let me work on my principal endorsement while being the principal.”

Tony is able to look back now and see the changes that have occurred not just in education, but within the high school principal role specifically. One of the biggest challenges for current high school administrators that Tony sees is, “keeping up with the changing accountability factors.” He has some additional expertise in this area because of his heavy involvement with the Wyoming Accountability Advisory Committee as the secondary school principal representative. This committee was really the very start of our current WY-TOPP assessment system.

At Riverside, Tony is most proud of what he and his staff have done over the past 15 years with a guided reading program.

“We feel that if a student can read they can do anything. What has sent us over the top and made us a top school in reading is when we instituted close reading into our guided reading. This is when a student is taught to read a passage and tear it apart and find answers. That is something we are proud of here,” Tony says with enthusiasm.

When it comes to the challenges of secondary administration, Tony looks towards school data and providing input and options to staff. “Beginning every year we evaluate our data and come up with our improvement plan and decide it as a group to have buy-in,” he says. But he also knows the other side of it as well.

“The best way to get staff buy-in is to give them options and choices. However, I also believe that in order to bring about whole school change there are times that you have to mandate things and follow through to make sure it is being followed.”

Tony has long been active in WASSP as a member and leader on the board. “I would encourage all principals to be involved in WASSP. My most memorable and best learning times have occurred at leadership conferences. Nothing beats collegiality more than having to huddle around a fire at the boy scouts lodge to keep from freezing while also trying to act professional.”

Tony has a small farm in Basin with his horses, but what he is really looking forward to is the fall season where he can push pheasants with friends from all over Wyoming and to also go out on his next elk hunt without being limited by district leave time. Tony’s wife of three years, Angie, will continue to work in her position at the local national forest office, so he will have some time to enjoy the full four seasons that Basin has to offer to a long-time resident who loves the outdoors.

As for what Tony is going to miss the most? He is going to miss the same things most of us will miss: interacting with the kids and helping them along.

What isn’t he going to miss? The same things we won’t miss when we retire.

Congratulations to Tony as a career in education and leading our future is definitely something to be proud of.
WASSP Annual Winter Conference
January 26-28, 2020
Casper Ramkota
“Culturize”

Name:

Position:

School:

Address:

Email:

Check one:

$250 _____ Member before December 20, 2019

$400 _____ Non-member before December 20, 2019

$275 _____ Member after December 20, 2019

$425 _____ Non-member after December 20, 2019

You can fill out this word form and attach back to me. I will send you a return invoice and you can process with your business folks. kgriffith@wassp.org

or

You can fill out hard copy and send PO and registration form to: Ken Griffith, Executive Director WASSP, Box 601, Guernsey, WY 82214

or

You can fax all to me at 1-855-280-3133

Location: Ramkota Casper, Wyoming
(Principals Conference)
307-266-6000
If you live in Wyoming, you have to find a way to enjoy being outside. For Orlen Zempel - retiring after 13 years as high school principal at Kemmerer JR/SR high school in Lincoln County School District #1 - getting outside is a way of life. Whether it is elk hunting in the Wyoming Range, riding horseback into the Wind River Mountains, or in the winter months, plowing his two-mile long driveway with a snowblower that would make Tim the Toolman proud, Orlen looks forward to doing more of what he loves the most.

“You have to find a way to get outside and get yourself right in the head,” he says about being a high school principal. “We work in such isolation as principals, you have to create those opportunities to just clear your mind and get things right.” When asked about the challenges of being a rural principal, Orlen encourages anyone in the position to have someone they trust that they can run things past. An assistant principal, AD, or friend in another building can be someone that you can just bounce ideas off of.

“The small town principal job is so multifaceted. You have a new year coming. You know there are going to be surprises, but you just don’t know where they are going to come from. The pressure is on to act before you have all the information; you just can’t act too fast. Our conclusions are only as good as the information we have. Be willing to sleep on tough situations sometimes,” Orlen offers as advice to younger administrators.

Retired from Montana thirteen years ago as a VoAg teacher, assistant principal, activities director and principal. Orlen has seen it all across two states and his variety of positions. As a CTE teacher he taught, “A little bit of everything,” and remembers a group of “outlaws” (his word, used fondly) he had in one particular class who he managed to have come around when a substitute was covering for him in his classroom. “They learned to manage each other,” he says with a smile.

Officially retired at the end of June, Orlen is going to miss the constant effort of making things better for kids. He would often remind the staff that school is a marathon for kids and you have to sometimes love the unlovable qualities of some of your students. Although Kemmerer has a strong focus on using data for improvement, he also urges caution about putting too many eggs in the testing basket: “In the end, we have to be careful on that push [for test scores]. We have kids who are leaving the gates and they are in the middle of the road and they are going to be just fine, successful even. We also have to be looking at their grit. Their emotional, social, and physical grit. It’s tenacity for these kids. Are they okay in their own skin?”

Married for 38 years to his lovely (and patient) wife Elaina, the Zempels have three children who are off on their own and each successful in their own right. Orlen’s favorite memories are with his young children at Holter Lake in central Montana fishing, camping, boating, wrangling rattlesnakes, and getting startled by the occasional bear encounter. He is looking forward to creating new memories with his children and grandchildren. His oldest child, Diana, graduated from the Naval Academy and is now a major in the Marine Corps with the combat engineers at Fort Meade. His middle son, Trent is in Pennsylvania as a mechanical engineer after a successful career as a collegiate wrestler.

The youngest son, Thaddeus, is a petroleum engineer in east Texas. “Our youngest son wouldn’t be an engineer today without the Hathaway Scholarship,” Orlen says. “He ended up transferring to UW after going to Western for two years really because he felt really guilty about leaving that Hathaway money on the table. Now he is an engineer.”

As a parent, you work to equip your children for life and to help them develop the tools to be independent and successful. Being a parent, Orlen says, “Is the one job where you are trying to work yourself out of a job.”

Orlen’s children may have learned a thing or two about independence from their dad whose early career as an activities director in Montana involved him taking care of all things for sporting events, including football games where he had the pleasure of working with an old, salty head football coach, who also happened to be his building principal. One night before a big rivalry game the principal/coach came to Orlen in full on “game mode” and told him he didn’t want the opposing team in the crown’s nest for filming. Orlen reminded his coach/principal that they traditionally allowed visitors, including rival team coaches, to use the area for filming and to communicate with the sidelines. The principal got upset and tried to pull rank and said, “I know that; I don’t want them up there! I want you to tell them they can’t be up there.”

Orlen told his boss. “You may be the principal, but this is a football game and as the Activities Director I’m the boss down here. If you want to call me into the office on Monday and write me up because you are the principal you can do that, but they will be in the crown’s nest during the game.” The coach walked away muttering and Orlen never did get called into the principal’s office the following Monday for standing his ground.

Lincoln County School District #1 has had a consistent focus on curriculum development during Orlen’s career as a principal. As principal, Orlen helped lead that effort throughout his time as the instructional leader, but he also worked to not get lost in the weeds. “I focused on the quality of delivery as much as anything else,” Zempel says. “It goes back to Madeline Hunter: good delivery is good delivery.”

Orlen continues to explain that his expectations of staff included expecting them to lay out clear expectations, stating objectives (and to not mistake an activity for an objective). “I wanted to focus on things they can see,” he says. Classroom management may be poor because a teacher doesn’t use students’ names, or maybe their questions are vague. “Sound presentation,” he says, “is something any staff member should be able to see.”

“I will miss the challenge,” he says about retiring. Kemmerer is consistently competitive compared to other schools their size in quantifiables such as test scores and assessments such as the ACT, even with the amount of staff turnover they have had. As instructional leader Orlen believes that he needs to help staff see the goals they can have for their students. He has worked to create a vision for them about student performance as they enter each school year.

In working with staff in groups, Orlen works to have his staff meetings positive and meaningful. “I always put out there three or four positives about what is going on with staff.” There are several reasons Orlen works to start his meetings out on a positive note, but he uses those early comments as a chance to make the praise towards individuals in his building that are specifically related to what he needs to accomplish. “What can I praise?” he asks himself, even if it is about the quality of somebody’s emergency sub plans. “That staff member may be the only person who has emergency sub plans, but if I praise it, everyone else is reminded, “Holy cow, I better do my emergency sub plans.”

“What am I trying to accomplish,” Orlen asks, and then he directs his praise towards staff in that direction.

In retirement, Orlen is looking forward to giving back to people and helping those who have given to him and his family, but doing it in different ways than he is used to after a career in public education. He and his wife are already discussing the exciting degree of freedom that they are going to have. “Elaina and I are in a position now to begin choosing how we are going to positively affect other people’s lives going forward,” he says proudly.

Orlen is also looking forward to not being responsible for other people’s behavior. “You know, you have to own it,” he says. “Student behavior, teacher behavior: you are responsible as the principal. It will be nice to be able to focus on my family, my grandkids, and my nieces and nephews, and not worry what someone else is doing. I will miss those positive relationships with kids and parents.”