



Professional Bio

Gail Connelly is Executive Director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and President of the NAESP Foundation. She has served the Association in senior leadership roles for more than two decades. Located in Alexandria, Virginia, NAESP serves 25,000 Pre-K-8 principals and 35 million students in the United States of America and other affiliates worldwide.

During Connelly's 25-year tenure as a member of NAESP's executive team, the Association more than doubled in size to become the largest and most well-respected advocacy organization dedicated solely to serving elementary and middle level school leaders in their commitment to all children. Connelly led the development of NAESP's National Distinguished Principals Program, the National Principals Resource Center, the NAESP Web site, the e-Knowledge Portal for Principals, and the Peer Assisted Leadership Services, a mentoring program for principals. She recently orchestrated the development of two major publications: *Vision 2021: Transformations in Leading, Learning and Community* and *Leading Learning Communities: What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do* and created a *Strategic Framework* to guide operational efforts aligned with Vision Goals established by the NAESP Board of Directors.

NAESP has long been a leader in setting standards for high-quality early learning with its *Leading Early Childhood Learning Communities*. Historically, NAESP produced early learning resources for parents – *Little Beginnings* – and for grandparents – *Little Things Make a Big Difference*. Most recently, plans involve establishing a “blue ribbon” task force on early learning through the NAESP Foundation to inform policy recommendations and resource development to enhance seamlessly aligned learning experiences for all children from preschool through grade three.

Believing passionately in the power of education to expand human potential, transform lives, and shape new visions for leading and learning in a globally complex world is what drives Connelly. Grounded in her earliest years as an English teacher, Connelly's career has encompassed all levels of organizational leadership, development, and management for educational nonprofits including a Presidential Advisory Council on Innovations in Education, the American Council on Education, and the Florida Mental Health Association. She has served as a strategic planning, management, and fundraising consultant for several national and state organizations, including the National PTA.

Connelly was awarded the NAESP Honorary National Distinguished Principals Award in 2008 and recently received the NAESP Outstanding Service Award for 25 years of dedicated service to principals and children.

Education:

B.A., University of South Florida
MBA, American University
The George Washington University -
Executive Leadership Doctoral Program