AASA, The School Superintendents Association
President-Elect Candidate 2023

David A. Jensen, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Humboldt County School District
Winnemucca, Nevada

Member:
- AASA, 2006-present
- AASA Governing Board, 2018-present
- Nevada Association of School Superintendents, 2012-present

Current Position:
Superintendent
Humboldt County School District
Winnemucca, Nevada
2012-present

Previous Position:
Assistant Superintendent/Chief Financial Officer
Humboldt County School District
Winnemucca, Nevada
2008-2012

Post-Secondary Education:
- Ed.D., University of Nevada Reno, Reno, NV, 2009
- Coursework for Nevada Administrative Licensure, Reno, NV, 2004
- M.S. and Specialist Degree, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 1996
- B.S, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 1993

AASA and Other Activities:
- Life Touch Memory Mission, AASA Member Participant, Guatemala, January 2023
Why are you seeking election as AASA’s president-elect?
I believe public education has reached a pivotal point that will influence the future trajectory of American education. As districts continue to address COVID academic learning loss, broad staff shortages, reduced revenues and continually increasing state and federal reporting requirements, I will continue the essential work of AASA and prior presidents to effect change for our nation’s public schools. Prior experiences have prepared me to vigorously advocate on behalf of all of the nation’s school districts, superintendents, staff and most importantly, students.

If nominated and elected, what will be your No. 1 priority?
I will advocate for opportunities beyond the traditional school setting to include personalized learning models that meet individual student needs. This priority would utilize the expansive technology-based educational services available to tailor education and meet every student’s personal needs. It’s time to re-envision public education for our nation’s students.
Educator Compensation: Make or break for future teachers?

For most educators, compensation was not the motivator for entering the education arena. Rather, it was based on a desire to positively impact the lives of children and to engage in a profession where “making a difference” is not simply a slogan but a reality. Educators understood their career choice wasn’t going to make them rich; however, they didn’t expect to earn less than their peers with similar degrees.

As the nation grapples with the challenges of an economic downturn, and even indicators of a recession, the challenges associated with staff compensation are magnified. Even pre-COVID, concerns with educator compensation were coming to light, with studies demonstrating that inflation-adjusted teacher wages have remained flat since before 2000 and that teachers are compensated at a lower rate (23.5% lower) than similarly degreed individuals in other professions (Allegretto, 2022).

As compensation disparity has increased over the years, so too have the benefits associated with private-sector employment. Meanwhile, school-based challenges have intensified. Across the nation, regardless of political affiliation or belief, education during and post-COVID has been difficult. From potential exposure to the virus to polarized politics, challenging student behaviors to the negative national perspective of public education, the challenges inherent to teaching are leading many to leave the profession. This exodus of teachers is compounded by fewer candidates entering the field, leading to growing challenges of filling crucial vacancies.

So, if compensation is not the sole motivator for our nation’s teachers, why would making compensation a key retention and requirement tool be important? I believe the answer is simple; though not the sole motivator, compensation does play a role in the decision-making process of today’s potential teaching pool.

I remember talking to my daughters as they entered post-secondary education. I asked if they were going to become teachers, and both provided an emphatic No! When I asked why, each cited many of the common challenges occurring in schools, such as student behaviors, state and federal mandates, and the growing political nature of public education. They also cited inflexible work schedules, limited recognition programs, and of course, compensation.

Both of my girls left college with bachelors’ degrees in nursing, hours that are more conducive to their life schedules, and compensation levels more than 50% higher than the starting teacher salary in their community.

Despite compensation not being the driving factor, there is no doubt that compensation does provide an indicator of value. An old friend, and former superintendent, would often summarize what education needs in today’s world. Simply put, he says, “Education needs CPR: Compensation, PERS (retirement system), and Respect. One without the other fails to keep the patient alive.”

I believe now, perhaps more than ever, it is imperative that our nation’s educators come together to advocate for greater compensation for educators. Staff recruitment and retention, as well as building a teacher candidate pool, will be a challenge until a balance towards salary levels in other professions is bridged.

As our nation’s educational leaders, we are in a unique position to advocate for education in the halls of our own legislative buildings, and on Capitol Hill as we meet with our nation’s
leaders. This includes addressing both compensation and retirement incentives. Internally, as leaders, we have the ability to drive the Respect conversations by highlighting the great work occurring in each of our school districts.

Together we can collectively work to restore education as a profession that is actively pursued and celebrated. The best is yet to come.

David Jensen is Superintendent of Humboldt County School District: E-mail: djensen@hcsdnv.com.

Reference:

November 10, 2022

Noelle Ellerson Ng  
Associate Executive Director, Advocacy and Governance 
AASA  
1615 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Ms. Ng,

Please accept this letter as confirmation of my intent to seek the office of president-elect for AASA. It has been my pleasure to be a member of AASA since 2006, and to serve on the Governing Board since 2018. I look forward to being of support and assistance to AASA, the Executive Board, Governing Board and our nation’s superintendents.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

David Jensen, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
djensen@hcsdnv.com
November 10, 2022

Susan Keema, Executive Director
Nevada Association of School Superintendents
P.O. Box 2276
Carson City, NV 89702-2201

Dear Colleague:

I am seeking nomination to become a candidate for the position of president-elect of AASA, The School Superintendents Association.

Compliance with the AASA electoral process requires that I ask your organization not to endorse or promote my candidacy or urge my election.

This does not preclude your organization from noting that AASA has an election and noting all of the candidates, including me. AASA’s electoral process was reformed because, like the national political electoral process, it had become too expensive and prolonged. The Executive Committee of AASA adopted the new rules regarding endorsements of candidates to make the campaigns more consistent with standards of conduct and ethics of school administrators, by having all campaigning done through AASA publications and at the AASA National Conference on Education.

Individual active members may communicate with other AASA active members, about a single candidate and support of that candidate by letter, fax or electronic transmission. Any cost of the mailings, faxes, or electronic transmissions must be the responsibility of the individual and cannot be that of the candidate or other third party. No enclosure, attachment or brochure may be distributed with the letter, fax or electronic transmission.

A member may discuss a candidate on a personal, one-to-one individual basis with another member. Endorsement of candidates by a state association, caucus, committee, group or corporation could result in sanctions against me, including a 10 percent deduction from my vote total.

Please call me if you have any questions about AASA election rules or the information you plan to publish. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

David Jensen, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Humboldt County School District
Winnemucca, Nevada

“Every child will graduate; beginning with Kindergarten, each will be prepared and confident to succeed.”
AASA Election: President-elect Candidate Pledge

I have read the rules and procedures contained within the AASA Election Guidelines and I agree to obey the AASA election rules, in spirit and in word.

Signature ____________________________ 11/10/2022

Date

Address

Dr. David Jensen, Superintendent
310 East Fourth Street
Winnemucca, NV 89445

Office Telephone: (775)623-8218
FAX Number: (775)623-8102
Email Address: djensen@hcsdnv.com

The AASA Election Guidelines are posted on the AASA website at www.aasa.org