Lt. Gen. Benjamin Freakley
Named NASBE’s 2010
Policy Leader of the Year

U. S. Army Lt. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, commanding general of the United States Army Accessions Command, has been named the Policy Leader of the Year by the National Association of State Boards of Education. The honor is annually given to a national or state policymaker in recognition of their contributions to education. Freakley is the first active military officer to receive this honor.

“In the last year, NASBE was joined in an innovative partnership with the U.S. Army in the cause of cutting the dropout rate and improving secondary education,” said Executive Director Brenda Welburn. “In this cause, Lt. Gen. Freakley understands deeply the implications of the country’s failure to graduate every student ready for life and ready for citizenship. He is a special kind of leader who sees and is acting upon the need for education and the military to unite in the service of America’s youth to better ensure the nation’s future. For these efforts, NASBE is proud to present him as our Education Policy Leader of the Year.”

As part of a military career that began with his graduation from the United States Military Academy in 1975, Benjamin Freakley assumed command of U.S. Army Accessions Command in 2007, which includes oversight of the Army’s Recruiting Command, Cadet Command, and Accessions Support Brigade. In this role, he has been a strong proponent of improving education through the Army’s partnership with NASBE. He has served in leadership positions from platoon leader through commanding general, including three times in combat, in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan).

State Education Chiefs Discuss Best Strategies for School Turnaround

There is no single answer on how to successfully turn around low-performing schools no matter the setting, according to a pair of state education chiefs at yesterday’s general session on how to do just that. But there are several critical elements that need to be in place, two of which are strong leaders and a courageous state board, said Utah State Superintendent Larry Shumway and Colorado Commissioner Dwight Jones.

For Shumway, turning around a low-performing school district begins with reading. That is, students need to know how to read before and... cont'd on page 3
Even as the world has advanced into the Knowledge Age, when technology has made information about most anything available at the press of a button, the model for education and schools in the U.S. remains entrenched in the past. And that needs to change.

The current education model in the United States, a relic of the Industrial Age, is increasingly out of touch with the needs of society and the students it serves. In addition to the continued use of dated models of educating students, our systems for teacher training and evaluation have not kept up with today’s fast pace of change.

In its report, *Next Generation Learning: Transforming the Role of Educators Today for the Students of Tomorrow*, NASBE’s 21st Century Educator study group calls for a reexamination of how America not only looks at teaching, but whether teachers are given even adequate professional development to keep up with the ever-changing demands of society on their students.

“There isn’t a profession left that does not require at least some postsecondary education, be it to learn a trade, some programming specialty, or a four-year degree, but our existing model is predicated on giving students the choice of college or the factory floor, and that cannot stand,” said NASBE Executive Director Brenda Welburn.

“We need our educators to be trained to help develop students’ skills well beyond what the old methods of rote memorization and application have been able to do. The students of today and tomorrow need to be schooled in higher-order thinking, and to accomplish this we must improve and dramatically alter how we train our teachers.”

With this in mind, the panel arrived at 10 recommendations for state boards prefaced by issues for state boards to consider before taking action. These include:

- State boards of education need to work with higher education institutions and accrediting entities to reexamine preparation programs to ensure that future educators are entering the workforce with 21st...
above all else. Without this, students cannot be reasonably expected to understand other subjects because, well, they cannot read about them.

Jones said that developing a trust of the state by district personnel is a critical early step toward successful remediation, as well as full buy-in for a plan from the state board. “As commissioner of education, one of the things I think is vital is there is a clear set of conditions for partnerships that starts with the state board,” he said. “The state board has got to have the courage to say we have got to get better results for our kids.”

The conversation also eased into concerns about schools that show improvement but still do not make adequate yearly progress under NCLB. For schools or districts to succeed, a clear statement of goals is needed, and this clarity can be lost as administrators sift through data.

“For what we were paying attention to student data, principals are focused on the quality of instruction,” Shumway explained of his experience as a district superintendent. “What we are really in the business to do, what we spend on the money on, is teaching. It’s instruction, and student achievement is the outcome of that experience.”

For Jones, who is the presumptive new superintendent of Clark County, Nevada schools, student improvement is more important than making AYP. “I’m not a big supporter of trying to make AYP because state-to-state, making AYP means something different,” he said. “I’ve looked at what making AYP means in Nevada, and I would tell you we’ve got to be more honest with our parents about what achievement looks like whether we make AYP or not.

“Clark County is one of the largest urban districts in the country that makes AYP, but have you looked underneath what making AYP means in Clark County? Have you looked at the achievement gap? Have you looked at the graduation rate? And we say making AYP is a condition we can say to parents. I would say students and parents already know [it is not sufficient].”

**Structure of Schools**

boundaries. Create an environment that actively promotes and supports innovation within and beyond the school walls (e.g., in the school community, students’ homes, and school building).

- Allow technology to facilitate student learning that transcends the traditional building and school day.

- Create human capital policies that support effective teaching and leadership leading to next generation student learning. Eliminate barriers based on certification and professional training.

**Educator Training and Evaluation**

century skills and have the ability to transfer those skills to today’s learning environment.

- Beginning educators need to be placed in learning teams as a means of ongoing learning, support, and growth in the profession.

- States and districts need to consistently invest time and resources in developing 21st century skills in their current workforce through intentional, practical professional development that promotes collaboration, reflective practices, and the integration of technology.

*Don’t forget to fill out your forms to be a part of next year’s study groups and committees!*
Host State Night at Olympic Park, Utah