Today’s Highlights

Saturday, October 15

8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.
Topical Breakfast Tables
with Executive Director’s report

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
General Session on the
Interface between NAEP and
Common Assessments

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Breakout Sessions:
U.S. and International Student
Health Policies
Learning Readiness and Early
Childhood Education

12:15 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.
President’s Luncheon
with presentation of the
Friend of Education Award to
Bob Wise

At the President’s Banquet, Brenda Welburn was feted for her 27 years of service to NASBE, state boards of education, and America’s school children.

Bob Wise Is NASBE’s 2011 Friend of Education Award Winner

Bob Wise, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education and former governor of West Virginia, is being honored with NASBE’s Friend of Education Award. Nominated this year by the West Virginia State Board of Education, the national award is given annually to an individual or organization whose contributions to education are significant and enduring.

“As governor, Bob Wise worked with his state board to set West Virginia on the path to raising its standards and improving education for every student—a path on which it remains,” said Executive Director Brenda Welburn. “As president of the Alliance for Excellent Education, Bob has been a tireless advocate for reforming our nation’s secondary schools and increasing the nation’s graduation rate. For this work and much, much more, we are proud to present Gov. Wise with this honor.”

As governor of West Virginia from 2001 to 2005, Wise implemented the PROMISE Scholarship program, significantly increasing college attendance. From 1983 to 2001, he served in the U.S. House of Representatives, where he aggressively worked to preserve federal financial aid for students to attend college.

“I am very grateful to receive this award from the members of NASBE, who are the leaders in each state moving our children to a quality education that prepares them to be college-and-career-ready,” Wise said. “NASBE is a national leader in so many ways, and I greatly appreciate the chance to be able to work with committed people who make a positive difference in education.”
AACTE, NSBA Reps Respond to Study Group Recommendations on Teacher Effectiveness

NASBE officially released its 2011 study group report, *Gearing Up: Creating a Systemic Approach to Teacher Effectiveness,* and panel members said all stakeholders must be involved in the conversation of building and strengthening the capacity of the teacher workforce. Study group representatives Theresa Hopkins-Staten (chair-CT) and Angelika Schroder (CO) said that without this collaboration and communication, reform efforts will not be as powerful or effective as intended.

In the spirit of collaboration, NASBE invited Sharon Robinson, executive director of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, and Patte Barth, director of the Center for Public Education at National School Boards Association, to comment on the report's findings.

Both said the report's recommendations are strongly aligned with the ideals of their organizations, thereby creating an opportunity for the organizations to work together to establish a system of continuous improvement and communication among educators, local districts, and higher education. To continue the important work, both guests spoke to the importance of working together—"to speak with one voice"—as a next step in advocating for support and development of the profession.

"It is the collective responsibility of the state boards and state education leaders" to place highly effective teachers throughout the districts and states, Robinson said, while noting the inequity in teacher distribution. She also said, it is equally vital to create the environments in which the teachers are able to be successful and students are able to learn. Robinson further expressed her appreciation that the study group report outlines criteria for clinical practice for student teachers and for administrative leaders to create the environment for continuous improvement within the profession.

Barth highlighted the importance of systemic approaches to developing the workforce and "providing a framework with flexibility to allow districts to meet and fulfill the expectations." She explained that to create this framework, it is important for state boards "to facilitate the collaboration among all stakeholders." Additionally, Barth noted the need to create opportunities for state boards, institutions of higher education, and local districts to work together to develop systemic changes strengthening the alignment of the path from teacher preparation to a practicing teacher.

David Green Advocates Benchmarking Policy and Practice

Long after the meal itself is forgotten, some of the messages delivered by David Green, the speaker at Friday’s keynote luncheon, are likely to resonate with those in attendance. Green, president of the Center for Evidence-Based Education, stressed that we all have read extensively about performance benchmarking, to make great advances it is important to benchmark practice.

"Isolation, as we all know, is the enemy of innovation," he said early in his remarks as he explained that innovation is derived from a combination of questioning, observing, networking, experimenting, and thinking about practice.

It is up to state boards, Green said, to make sure school principals have the autonomy to innovate and learn from practices not only from across their own state or even the United States, but from like-sized schools worldwide. These need to be learned via strategic networking with their global peers and from evidence that backs-up these practices.

And if school leaders do not have such autonomy, he said, then it is up to state boards to hold officials’ in their respective education departments and local superintendents’ “feet to the fire” to make sure it happens.
Attorneys Offer Insights into Immigration and Education

Immigrant students are one of the fastest-growing populations in the U.S. and two state board attorneys told conference-goers that it would be wise to consider the impact of this student group when creating state policies. Vermont’s Mark Oettinger and Jennifer Hackemeyer from Georgia said that while it may be more expensive to provide services to English language learners, failure to provide such services can exacerbate achievement gaps that might already exist due to many factors.

The pair said many states have recently taken action to pass immigration laws that impact schools. A North Carolina law requires parents to provide a birth certificate for school enrollment (with a few narrow exceptions), and an Alabama law requires schools to record the immigration status of their students. The latter was explained as a measure not to instigate deportation proceedings, but to collect data that could be used by the legislature to draft future legislation.

Alabama’s law has received considerable media attention, and the federal government has requested an emergency injunction to stop its enforcement, which is currently working its way through the court system. Critics of implementing the law are worried that it will prevent families from sending their students to school out of fear of being deported if they themselves are not legally in the country.

The panelists explained there are no comprehensive federal laws that address immigration, especially as it relates to education. However, the 1982 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Plyler v. Doe* provides a limited framework that can guide the thinking of state education systems. The case is based on a Texas law that prohibited school districts from receiving state funding to educate children that are not legally in the country and to deny enrollment to these children. The Court decided that Texas’ desire to focus its resources on the legally residing students in their state who, they argued, are more likely to remain in the state after graduation, was not grounds for denying education to students regardless of their immigrant status.

For example, while not explicitly related to immigration, the Migrant Education Program is a federal education initiative providing direct funding to school districts or consortia of school districts to provide social support services to migrant children. These supports may include classroom support, English language instruction, tutoring, health services, and college preparation.

Students younger than 22 years of age are eligible for the program if their parent, spouse or guardian is a migrant agriculture worker. Schools identify eligible students, and their families consent to enrolling them in a database that allows them to be tracked as they move.

It was noted that many current immigration laws are not strongly enforced, and that most court cases on the topic did not reach a decisive opinion. This does not give policymakers clear guidance on the best way to move forward when discussing how to incorporate immigrant families into the nation’s education system.

The way to improve the quality of our teacher recruits is to increase the requirements for getting into preparation programs and increase salaries. If we don’t want to improve the workforce, we don’t have to do a thing.

Mark Tucker, presenter at the session on Economics and Workforce Development.
2011 President’s Reception, Silent Auction, and Banquet