

Welcome to 2025-26 school year. Region 6 is off and running. Find out about many upcoming events. Don't miss out!



Advance Newsletter

August 26, 2025

President's Message



Empowered to Lead, Inspired by Heart, United for Impact

Dear Region 6 Colleagues,

Happy New School Year. As we launch the 2025–2026 school year, I am honored to serve as your ACSA Region 6 President. It is a privilege to lead alongside such a passionate and dedicated community of educators.

Each of you brings heart, courage, and vision to your work, and it is that spirit that inspires this year's theme: ***Empowered to Lead, Inspired by Heart, United for Impact***. This theme is more than a guiding phrase, it reflects the journey we have taken together. We began with *Leading for Justice: A Work of Heart*, grounding our leadership in equity and compassion. We deepened that commitment with *Leading with Our Hearts*, reaffirming that empathy is essential to leadership. We then embraced *Courageous Leadership: Leading with Heart and Mind*, where bold decision-making met deep humanity, and we celebrated our resilience with *Thriving as We Shine*. Now, we arrive at a place where we are ready to lead, empowered by experience, inspired by those we serve, and united in our shared purpose to make a lasting impact.

The work before us remains complex. Budget challenges, evolving student needs, and systemic inequities demand our very best. In Region 6, we meet these challenges together. Leaning on each other, learning from one another, and leading with both

strength and compassion. This year, we will continue to provide meaningful opportunities for professional learning, connection, and advocacy. From our Mini Academies and networking events to our signature Conference and Awards Night, we remain committed to elevating leaders and creating spaces for growth, joy, and inspiration.

Let us move forward with purpose, empowered in our leadership, inspired by the heart of our profession, and united for impact. The road ahead is ours to shape, and I look forward to traveling it with you.

In partnership and gratitude,
[Lorianne R. Ventura, Ed.D.](#)
President, ACSA Region 6

Illuminating Leadership at NASSP's National Principal of the Year Celebration



In 2024, Efa Huckaby was nominated by the Delta Charter for the Secondary Principal of the Year Award in Region 6. He was selected as the region winner and advanced as a finalist in the ACSA Administrator of the Year Awards Program. At the 2024 Leadership Summit in San Diego, Efa was honored as the state Secondary Principal of the Year. As the state award recipient, he was selected to represent California at the NASSP's (National Association of Secondary School Principals) National Principal of the Year Celebration this past July in Seattle. What an incredible honor. We are so proud of you for this well-deserved recognition, Efa!

Here's Efa's account of this honor:

In July, I had the immense honor of representing ACSA Region 6 and the state of California at NASSP's National Principal of the Year Celebration, Illuminate 2025 in Seattle, WA. To stand among 60 of the nation's best school leaders was humbling, inspiring, and a moment I'll never forget.

What made this celebration so meaningful was not just the recognition—it was the chance to build networks, share our voices, and speak to our collective advocacy for students and schools. One of the most impactful moments came from Pete Hall of Education Hall, who challenged us directly: "How will you leverage this honor and your street-cred to positively impact the future of this profession? How will you use your voice and your position to

strengthen education?" Those questions hit home. They reminded me that this recognition isn't the finish line it's a platform, and a responsibility, to push forward.

The National Principal of the Year program celebrates leaders who build inclusive cultures, inspire innovation, and elevate others. But more importantly, it amplifies our voices and connects us in a network of passionate educators who are committed to shaping the future together.

I left Seattle energized, grateful, and determined to represent Region 6 with pride and to keep using this platform to ensure every student we serve feels seen, valued, and empowered.

By Efa Huckaby, Principal, Liberty High School – ACSA Region 6



Welcome New Superintendents in Region 6

ACSA Region 6 extends a warm welcome to the new superintendents in our region:

Cheryl Cotton, West Contra Costa USD
Darnise Williams, Antioch USD
Maurice Ghysels, Pleasanton USD
Zack Larsen, Fremont USD
Nia Rashidchi, Castro Valley USD
Chien Wu-Fernandez, Hayward USD
Denise Saddler, Oakland USD
Gigi Patrick, Martinez USD
Leticia Bhatia, John Swett USD
Julie Valdez, Canyon SD



Region 6 Leadership Retreat



Members of the Region 6 Board of Directors gathered on Saturday, August 2 for the annual Leadership Retreat at the Del Valle Winery in Livemore. Region 6 President Lorianne Ventura welcomed our region leaders to a day of reflection, connections, and inspirations. She shared her personal story and experiences that have shaped her educational beliefs and leading to her vision in leading Region 6 this year. Opening activities provided opportunities for our Region leaders to get acquainted and reconnect with each other.

We were honored to have our ACSA Deputy Executive Director, Margie Cuizon-Armellino, who joined us and provided a training on ACSA leadership including the state of ACSA. We were also excited to have Rene Rickard, our ACSA President-Elect, joined us for the day. She reported on the recent ACSA

Board Retreat led by President Daryl Camp and what's ahead this year for ACSA.

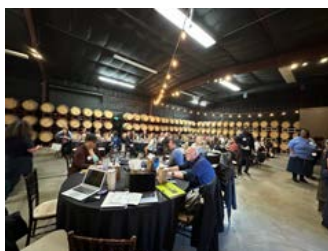
Using the ACSA Strategic Plan Framework, Region 6 Survey Results, and evaluations of last year's goals, Board members shared their thoughts and prioritized ideas in small groups. There were much discussion and ideas generated that will help inform the work of our region for this year. Our Region 6 Strategic Goals will address the following areas:

- Communication
- Professional Development
- Legislative Action and Advocacy
- Membership Support

The day ended with a reception for Board members to socialize and network with one another.



President Lorianne Ventura sharing her personal story that has guided her life and career journey



Our Board of Directors are fully engaged in some fun and serious collaboration in setting the direction of Region 6 for 2025-26



Margie Cuizon-Armellino conducting ACSA leadership training with Rene Rickard and Raul Zamora



Two R6 Superintendents, Crystal Castaneda and Harvey Yurkovich, serving as leaders on our Board of Directors



Margie welcoming Rachel Chang, new to Board as R6 Rep to ACSA Council of Student Services & Special Ed Leaders



Four of our awesome Charter Presidents: Phyllis Hamilton, Ramon Camacho, Monique Walton, Paulette Smith



Region 6 Rep to Council of Middle Grades Leaders, Danielle Wilford, wearing her new Region 6 jacket with ACSA pride



Amos Nugent reporting out on his small group's brainstormed strategies for charter-based grassroots recruitment



Past President Matt Chamberlain presenting the Most Engaged Charter perpetual plaque to 2023-25 Diablo Valley Charter President Evan Powell



Joy Dardenelle and Jessica Ochoa from Region 5 sharing their work in San Mateo COE on Self Care and Caring for Team Members



Making time for our Board of Directors to connect with one another



Great weather, awesome venue, outstanding company!



Region 6 Strategic Goals 2025-26

Using feedback from the Region 6 survey last spring and ongoing progress checks of 2024-25 goals, our Region 6 Board of Directors developed the 2025-26 strategic goals at their August Leadership Retreat. These goals are aligned with ACSA's Strategic Plan Framework and fall into four categories: Communication, Professional Development, Legislative Action and Advocacy, and Membership. Charters will now develop their goals for 2025-26 aligned to these goals.

Region 6 Strategic Goals 2025-26

approved 8.20.25

COMMUNICATION

Goal 1: Support Charters to disseminate ACSA and Region communications to members as well as non-members

Goal 2: Establish a communication framework that will facilitate members' understanding of ACSA and Region 6 resources

Goal 3: Explore and implement additional communication tools

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1: Provide differentiated professional development opportunities for new and existing members, focusing on underserved populations

Goal 2: Support the development and continuation of affinity groups and spaces

Goal 3: Provide opportunities for members to reflect and process their learnings from professional development

Goal 4: Explore offering mini-academies similar to ACSA Academies

LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND ADVOCACY

Goal 1: Increase participation in local, state and federal advocacy

Goal 2: Developing regular communication to help members to stay on top of the most current information and where to find it

Goal 3: Support ACSA's advocacy work

MEMBERSHIP

Goal 1: Recruit and Support Members

Goal 2: Identify a membership liaison in each charter to Support Region 6 membership efforts

Goal 3: Connect with programs in Region 6 to gain access to potential ACSA members



Membership Networking Socials

Two Region 6 Membership Events Coming

Mark your calendar to gather for back to school social events hosted by Region 6!

Let's celebrate the opening of a new school year. Meet up with ACSA colleagues and enjoy each other's company. Bring a friend or colleague, ACSA member or not-yet member. Choose from two dates and two locations for your convenience.

These are FREE events: Appetizers and 1 drink ticket per person. Raffle prizes, extra ticket if you bring someone who is not yet an ACSA member!



Tuesday, October 7 from 5:00 - 7:00 pm
Lazy Dog
3100 Newpark Mall
Newark, CA 94560

[Download Flyer](#)

[RSVP](#)



Tuesday, October 14 from 5:00 - 7:00
pm
Smith's Landing Seafood Grill
1 Marina Plaza
Antioch, CA 94509

Co-hosted with Delta Charter but all R6
members and their colleagues are
welcome

[Download flyer](#)

[RSVP](#)



Region 6 Women's Leadership Network

ACSA REGION 6 Join Us for the Fall Women's Leadership Network Event



Empowering Equity Centered Leaders in Today's Educational Climate

Discover strategies to **enhance leadership skills** and build a supportive community of women who uplift each other in their careers.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Nia Rashidchi,
Superintendent of Castro Valley
Unified School District

Engage with successful leaders and expand your professional network while gaining valuable insights on overcoming challenges in leadership roles.

**Join us for an inspiring morning of
conversation, connection, and growth.**

Breakfast will be provided.

Tickets are \$25.
Purchase your ticket on
Eventbrite today at this
[link:](#)

OCTOBER 4, 2025

8:30-11:00 A.M.

CASTRO VALLEY USD BOARD ROOM
4400 Alma Ave, Castro Valley, CA 94546

 association of california
school administrators | **region 6**

Saturday, October 4, 8:30 - 11:00 am
Castro Valley USD Board Room
4400 Alma Avenue, Castro Valley

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Nia Rashidchi
Superintendent of Castro Valley USD

Purchase your ticket on [Eventbrite](#)



Calling all AAPI ACSA Members in Region 6



Region 6 is launching a new AAPI Administrators Network! This new affinity space will create professional networking opportunities for AAPI administrators in our region. It will support them in addressing challenges and navigating professional issues. It will also empower, mentor, and elevate AAPI voices and representation in educational leadership.

Last spring, we reached out to those ACSA members in Region 6 who have self-identified as AAPI in their membership profile. Thank you to those of you who responded to our survey. If you are an AAPI ACSA member and did not receive any information and would like to be a part of this community, it's not too late. Please complete this [Google Form](#).

Our first event is on September 3 from 5-7 pm at Creek House Dim Sum Restaurant in Walnut Creek. [Attached](#) is the network schedule of meetings/events for this school year.

We would like to thank Susan Vidalon-Suzuki and Joseph Theam, Financial Consultants of Equitable Advisors, for their sponsorship.

If you have any questions, you can reach out to [Rose Lock](#), R6 Executive Director or [Hong Nguyen](#), Region 6 VP Staff Development & Equity Chair.



ACSA Conferences



□ September 17–19, 2025 | Hyatt Regency, Sonoma County (Santa Rosa)
Whether you're a seasoned leader or just beginning your journey, this forum offers space to reflect, grow, and lead with clarity.

Join us for the Women in School Leadership Forum, a powerful three-day experience built to uplift and empower women at every level of educational leadership.



We will be celebrating the women who are shaping the future of our schools and communities. Our Region 6's **Parvin Ahmadi** will be honored as one of the two recipients of the **Exemplary Woman in Education Award**.

We're honored to welcome **Nicole Steward**, a passionate advocate for radical self-care, as this year's keynote speaker. A social worker (MSW) and yoga instructor, Nicole will guide us through how mindfulness and intentional self-care can help us discharge toxic stress, stay grounded, and continue leading with strength and compassion.

You'll also have access to tailored session strands focused on:

- Wellness – Mental health, resilience, and work-life integration
- Empowering – Confidence, equity, and mentorship
- Shaping – System redesign, innovation, and inclusion
- Future – Visionary leadership and the skills to thrive through change

Come for the connection. Leave with renewed purpose. Register now:
<https://bit.ly/WomenSchoolLeadership25>



Have you registered for the 2025 Leadership Summit yet?

ACSA just announced a dynamic keynote speaker lineup and we want to make sure our region is well represented at this year's premier event for school leaders across California. Join us in San Francisco, November 6 – 8, for three days of inspiration, professional learning, and connection. You'll hear from nationally recognized voices and return to your district recharged and ready to lead.

Keynote speakers include:

- Dr. Calvin Mackie: Founder of STEM NOLA and champion for equity in STEM education
- Dr. Ghody Muhammad: Author of *Cultivating Genius* and expert in culturally responsive teaching
- Dr. Victor Rios: UCSB professor and leading voice on equity, discipline reform, and youth empowerment

This year's theme, *Lead Loudly: Sharing Stories, Building Bridges*, is a powerful reminder of the impact we can make when we lead with clarity, courage, and connection.

Early bird registration ends August 30.

We'd love to see a strong showing from Region 6 at this year's Summit.

Register today: <https://bit.ly/LeaderSummit25>



ACSA Academies



ACSA Academy graduates don't just learn—they lead

ACSA Academies offer online and hybrid formats that make it easy to grow your leadership capacity while working full-time.

These high-impact programs are designed to fast track your readiness for advanced roles in California schools and districts, helping you build the skills and network you need to lead with confidence.

Explore your options: bit.ly/Academies2025-2026

Congratulations to the following Region 6 members who completed an academy in 2024-25!

Jeannine Megia
Hong Nguyen
Jeffrey Evans
Jackie Cortez
Thomas Fletcher
Sukanya Goswami
Mallanie Harris
Eric Mapes
Alexis Meron
Robin Sehrt
Sabrina Silverman
Bernardo Varela
Gloria Wong
Richelle Piechowski
Rhonda Cervantes
Kesha Emmendorfer
Lery Chavez,
Ashmeet Sahni
Blaire Wyatt
Aurelia Buscem
El-Sioufi, Rania
Julie France
Kelly Mackey
Anika Hardy (Patterson)
Eric Peyko
Daniel Scudero
Eric Mapes
Alexis Meron
Robin Sehrt
Sabrina Silverman

Bernardo Varela
Gloria Wong
Richelle Piechowski
Rhonda Cervantes
Kesha Emmendorfer
Lery Chavez,
Ashmeet Sahni
Blaire Wyatt
Aurelia Buscem
El-Sioufi, Rania
Julie France
Kelly Mackey
Anika Hardy (Patterson)
Eric Peyko
Daniel Scudero
Jon Buxton
Catherine Flores
Heidi Leber
Jennifer A. Clark
Corrin Vanetti
Danielle Winford
Trina Plummer
Roberto Perez Jr.
Matthew Chamberlain
Rachel Chang
Amos Nugent III
Jessica Saavedra
Shamar Edwards
Denise Rugani



Region Annual Conference

June 12, 2025

After a 5-year hiatus, the Region 6 Annual Conference returned on June 12, 2025 with over 200 members in attendance at the Double Tree Hotel in Pleasanton. The theme, *Thriving as We Shine: Leading with Heart and Mind*, reflected Region 6's ongoing commitment. In the words of our Past President Matt Chamberlain, "... to lead with empathy, act with conviction, and center our decisions on the well-being of our students, staff, and communities..." The one-day conference was a wonderful opportunity for our ACSA members to connect, network, and be inspired by exceptional keynote speakers as well as presenters from our own region.

We were honored to have Dr. Patricia Brent-Sanco, Director of Equity, Access, and Instructional Services for Lynwood USD as our opening keynote speaker. Her presentation on "How to Swim in Muddy Waters" was a call to action for self care, balancing life, and the 6 pillars of life wellness.

A highlight of the conference was an Affinity Partners Panel, moderated by now retired

Superintendent Parvin Ahmadi. The panelist included representatives of CAAASA, CALSA, CAAPLE, and LGBTQ+ Network. 15 breakout sessions were presented by our own Region 6 members and 5 job-alike groups allowed attendees to network with colleagues.

The conference ended on a high note with incoming ACSA President Daryl Camp who inspired us all with his exciting vision for the future of ACSA in 2025-26!



Region 6 2024-25 President Matt Chamberlain welcoming attendees to the June annual conference



Conference Chair and VP Staff Development Christina Filios reviewing a robust program for the day



Dr. Brent-Sanco capturing our attention with her opening keynote "How to Swim in Muddy Waters" in muddy times



A roomful of administrators reflecting and celebrating another school year



Two amazing presenters and equity leaders gracing our conference: Dr Brent-Sanco and Tovi Scruggs-Hussein reconnecting at our conference



Russell Campisi from Pleasanton USD sharing successful practices in creating an inclusive special ed program



Parvin Ahmadi moderating our featured affinity partners panel



Much appreciation to CAAASA President Adam Clark and CALSA President Juan Santos for sharing their passion



Christina Filios thanking Juan Santos for bringing CALSA to our R6 conference



Cynthia Rapaido engaging participants on the fundamentals of school leadership



Matt Chamberlain introducing Peter Murphy and Kenzi Murray representing our Diamond Partner Curriculum Associates

Erin Roberts and Brandy Byers sharing strategies to uplift staff and celebrate small successes



Joe Romagna representing CCCOE providing information on various programs including preliminary and clear credential programs

Conference attendees getting to know our ACSA President Daryl Camp and learning about his journey and ACSA leadership vision



2025 Annual Conference Planning Committee



From Region 6 Executive Director

There is no better time to join ACSA than NOW!

ACSA is again running a promotion for new certificated and classified members. "New Member" is defined as any applicant who has never been a member or was not a member for the last 12 months. Dues will be \$2 a day for certificated and \$1 a day for classified new members in this first year of membership.

Region 6 was awarded ACSA rebate incentives for our growth of membership in 2024-25. Your Executive Committee voted to allocate some of these funds to help grow our region's membership. Any applicant who has never been an ACSA member will receive a \$200 (certificated) or \$100 (classified) cash incentive to defray the cost. There are still few more incentive awards remaining on a first come basis. If you know a colleague who has been waiting to join, this incentive should get them to the finish line!

Applications must be scanned and emailed to R6 Executive Director [Rose Lock](#) no later than August 29 on a first come basis to be eligible and as long as budgeted funds are still available.

Volunteer Opportunity

Know any recent retiree looking for a volunteer opportunity? I highly recommend the Diablo Valley Assistance League, an all-volunteer philanthropic organization in Contra Costa County. It's a perfect undertaking for retired educators or those just transitioning into retirement which allows them to continue to support children. Their volunteer activities and community-based programs primarily target students and families as beneficiaries: scholarships, reading, school clothing, art lessons, food boxes, and many others. Interested? [Download this flyer.](#)

Rose Lock
Region 6 Executive Director



Welcome New ACSA Members



Welcome to the following new and reinstated ACSA members in Region 6 during the recent membership drive!

Livermore USD

Katie Crouse, Douglas D'Amour, Mark Neal, Michelle Pechette, Tara Rodrigues, Andrea Tapia, Kayla Wasley

Mt. Diablo USD

Victor Adame, Alexander Bennett, Heather Fontanilla, Kelly Ann Jacob, Jeanne Johnson, Megan O'Malley

San Ramon Valley USD

Stephen Anderson, Kenneth Bazan, Andrea Calloway, Stephanie Davenport, Jill Nonn, Bjorn Remmers, Jamie Shackelford, Shannelle Sherrod, Rhonda Taft, Mona Keeler, Patricia Kawahara

West Contra Costa USD

Indira Bell, Kim Jordan, Allison Makela, Denita Robbins, Theresa Williams

New Haven USD

Jami Majewski, Jessie Welcomer, Kimberly Petitt, Matt Harris, Frank DeLapo



Partners Corner

Thank you to our ACSA Region 6 partners whose donations and sponsorships support various programs benefitting our school leaders.

ACSA Region 6 Partners 2025-2026



[Contact Us](#)

We welcome your feedback and suggestions.

[ACSA website](#)

[Region 6 website](#)

Region 6 Staff

[Rose Lock](#), Executive Director

[Steve Collins](#), Associate Director

Region 6 Leadership

President: Lorianne Ventura

President-Elect: Christina Filios

Past President: Matt Chamberlain

VP, Staff Development: Hong Nguyen

VP, Programs: Paulette Smith

VP, Legislative Action: Efa Huckaby

VP, Membership: Erin Roberts

Secretary: Valerie Nebo

Treasurer: Suzy Chan

Equity Chair: Hong Nguyen

Communication Chair: Pam VandeKamp

ACSA Board Director: Raul Zamora

At-Large Representatives: Lorne Barbosa, Nia

Rashidchi, Deb Brill, Lynn Mackey

The mission of the Association of California School Administrators is to advocate in the best interests of students and to develop, empower and inspire equity-minded educational leaders.

