



2017 Utah NAME Conference

Saturday, February 25, 2017 | Glendale Middle School, SLC, UT

6th-12th Grade Student Essay Contest Prompt

Theme

Building Bridges: Engaging Our Communities and Families for Student Success

Theme Vision

Multicultural Education scholars and practitioners have made great progress in helping educators become aware of, understand the importance of, and develop the skills related to asset based approaches to education; especially for historically marginalized populations. Such progress is manifested in research on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Teaching, Funds of Knowledge, Community Cultural Wealth, and a host of other lenses that seek to build on the rich cultures, knowledge, and experiences of diverse students. However, greater attention needs to be given to the ways communities and families are recognized as critical contributors in the ecology of student learning. Far too often, community, family, and cultural resources are not valued and are underutilized by educators. Utah NAME strongly believes in and advocates for an increase in sophistication and frequency of school partnerships with family and community. Now, more than ever, we need educators who are bridge builders—people who are willing to recognize more holistic, community approaches to education.

Essay Contest Prompt

American schooling systems often focus on students' individual achievements like grade point average and test scores. We recognize that by focusing on individual measures like these, we limit the value and contributions of families and communities in the learning process. Families and communities enrich who we are and what we stand for more than we know. Please write an essay that responds to the following prompt question:

- **How has your family and/or communities helped you to become the student or person you are today?**

As you write your essay, please consider the following additional primers to help your thinking. Do not feel like you have to address the items below. They are meant to simply help you think about the prompt question above.

- Describe your sense of family and community.

- Discuss how you and your family define success.
- Explain ways families and communities could be brought in to the schooling process.
- Describe ways you have been enriched by your families and communities.
- Please make a personal connection to the conference theme.

Each essay should be no more than 500 words and should be double-spaced (Word formatted). Make sure your name, grade level, and school name are all on a cover sheet.

Submission Deadline

Please submit your cover sheet and 500-word essay by Monday, January 30, 2017 to Dr. Kyle Reyes at kyle.reyes@uvu.edu. Questions can also be directed to Dr. Reyes.