Dr. Gennaro R. Piraino, Jr., Superintendent of the Franklin Regional School District, has been named the 2019 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year.

Since 2013, Dr. Piraino has demonstrated both effective and collaborative leadership focused on raising student achievement and expanding student opportunities. Under his leadership, Franklin Regional (FR) has developed a college-and-career-ready approach that extends learning opportunities beyond the four walls of a classroom.

For example, the district now offers ALL students courses in engineering, biomedical science, and computer science, and “colleges in high school” partnerships save district families over $1.1 million dollars each year. In addition, a partnership with the National Math and Science Initiative resulted in a 79 percent increase in the number of students earning qualifying scores on Advanced Placement Exams, and 32nd out of 500 districts statewide in the 2018 Pittsburgh Business Times’ Honor Roll Ranking, while Franklin Regional High school earned its first “Silver Medal” distinction in the 2018 US News & World Report’s ranking of “Best High Schools in the Nation.” The number of district students recognized as National Merit® Finalists and Semifinalists has increased significantly over the past five years, while students attending career and technical centers have achieved the highest results in school history on the National Occupational, Career & Technical Exam (NOCTE).

Grounded and approachable, with a strong moral compass to do what is right through hard work and effort, Dr. Piraino exercises collaborative leadership intent on improving opportunities and achievement for students, empowering others to contribute in meaningful ways, and daring both himself and others to “dream big.”

Likewise, Dr. Piraino has demonstrated a commitment to professional leadership through service on both the PASA Technology and Research & Development committees, as a member of the board of the Tri-State Study Council of the University of Pittsburgh and as a member of the Western Pennsylvania Forum for Superintendents.

Dr. Piraino encourages a professional attitude marked by being positive, being open, being committed, being patient, being present and being supportive. Throughout his career, Dr. Piraino has demonstrated notable success as a K-12 leader in curriculum, instruction, assessment, technology integration, college and career programming, educational foundations, professional...
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DR. MARK DIROCCO

GIVE YOURSELF A GIFT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The holidays will soon be upon us, and the world seems to slow down a bit between Christmas and New Year’s Day. My column is similar that of Dr. Rich Fry, our PASA President (see p. 5), and emphasizes the need for school leaders to take some time for themselves during the coming mid-year break. I am hoping that our tag-team effort will cause our members to reflect for a moment and do something nice for themselves this holiday season by taking some time off.

We all know that December is an incredibly busy time in our schools. There are several holiday concerts and activities that bring parents and community members into our schools. Winter sports season is underway, with many evening and weekend athletic events on the schedule. It’s not uncommon for superintendents to be out five to six nights a week during this season, as they want to be supportive of their students and interact with parents. Add a few weather calls and school board meetings into the mix and it can be a very exhausting month for school leaders.

When the winter vacation finally arrives later this month, give yourself the gift of taking some time off between Christmas and New Year’s Day. A few days’ off can do a world of good for your mental health and physical wellbeing.

Many dedicated and hard-working administrators often find themselves in the office during the few workdays that are scheduled over the holiday vacation. It’s often a time when the phone doesn’t ring much and emails slow to a more reasonable pace, so you can actually get some work done.

However, working in the office between Christmas and New Year’s doesn’t give you the break you need to recover from the hectic December schedule and prepare for the winter/spring run that is on the horizon. By the time the holidays arrive, most school administrators are more tired and stressed than they realize. Staying out of the office for the entire holiday vacation could be just what the doctor ordered.

Superintendents have more challenges before them than ever before, and more expectations have been put upon them as issues in our society continues to become more complex. In this difficult leadership environment, it is important for superintendents and all school leaders to take care of themselves, as the strain of leadership can take its toll over time. Remember that your leadership capacity is directly related to your wellbeing.

If you don’t take care of yourself and then develop health issues, you may not be able to function effectively and will ultimately become another statistic in the increasing turnover rate of school leadership positions across the state. A few days away from the office over the holidays can actually make you more productive when you return.

Please consider taking a mini-sabbatical this holiday season and spend some extra time with family and friends. You’ll be a better leader for it.

The staff at PASA wishes all our members a wonderful holiday season. Please take the time to enjoy it.

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSINGS

The PASA office will be closed
Dec. 24 - Jan. 1 for the holidays.

If you must reach PASA during this time, please contact Mark DiRocco at mdirocco@pasa-net.org. (Dr. DiRocco will be checking email periodically.)
NEWS RECAP

Don’t forget to check the PASA website for the weekly Education Update that provides a summary of up-to-date legislative, state and national education news. For more information on the following news briefs, see the PASA Web site at www.pasa-net.org. (Click on “News and Advocacy” to access the current and archived updates.) And follow us on Twitter for the latest updates @PASASupts.

Election Results

Governor’s Race: Gov. Wolf easily won reelection over Republican challenger and former state senator Scott Wagner in last month’s election.

Congressional Races: Pennsylvania’s congressional delegation to the U.S. House is now evenly split between Republicans and Democrats, with four Democratic women from the southeast winning seats, the most ever in Pennsylvania. Sen. Bob Casey easily won his reelection bid over U.S. House representative Lou Barletta.

State Senate: Democrats gained five seats in the PA Senate, which reduced the Republican majority in that chamber.

State House: Although Democrats gained 10 seats in the PA House, Republicans maintain the majority, although that caucus will be decidedly more conservative after the defeat of several more moderate Republicans. The House will have 43 new members, with a few seats remaining open and requiring special elections.

School Safety News

Arming School Staff: The Tamaqua Area Education Association Area has filed with Schuylkill County Court of Common Pleas a legal challenge to a school board-approved policy authorizing the arming of district staff who undergo special training in carrying firearms and using deadly force while performing school duties. The lawsuit declares that the policy conflicts with the School Code and other laws.

Budget & Finance News

School Funding Lawsuit: Commonwealth Court has tentatively set summer 2020 for hearing the school funding lawsuit case. The challenge, filed in 2014 by the Education Law Center and the Public Interest Law Center on behalf of six families and six school districts, alleges that the state’s school funding system violates Pennsylvania’s Constitution, due to significant underfunding and gross disparities in allocations that penalize students in low-wealth districts.

Call for Increased Funding: PA Schools Work, a statewide education advocacy campaign, recently delivered a letter to Gov. Wolf, urging him to increase state funding in the 2019-20 state budget and provide annual increases in each of the next four years of $400 million in basic education, $100 million in special education and $10 million in career and technical education funding. PASA is a member of the campaign.

PSERS Contribution Rate: The PSERS Board of Trustees this month certified an annual employer contribution rate of 34.29% for fiscal year 2020, which begins on July 1, 2019.

State Revenue: Pennsylvania collected $2.3 billion in General Fund revenue in October, which was $95.5 million, or 4.3 percent, more than anticipated. Fiscal year-to-date General Fund collections total $12.4 billion, which is $336.6 million, or 2.8 percent, above estimate. Since the start of the 2018-19 fiscal year, overall tax revenue is $913.3 million, or 8.2 percent, more than was collected in the same period of the last fiscal year.

IFO Financial Report: According to a report recently issued by the Independent Fiscal Office, while state revenues to date are up, Pennsylvania could face a potential budget imbalance of up to $1.71 billion in the upcoming fiscal year, due to increasing expenditures, particularly in health and human services programs, and one-time revenue sources used to balance the FY 2018-19 budget.

Legislative News

House Legislative Leadership: House Republicans selected current Speaker of the House Mike Turzai (Allegheny) as their nominee for another term. Newly selected as House Majority Leader will be Brian Cutler (Lancaster). House Democrats reelected Frank Dermody (Allegheny) as Minority Leader and selected Jordan Harris (Philadelphia) as the new Minority Whip.

Senate Legislative Leadership: Republicans reelected their officers for the new session, including Joe Scarnati (Jefferson) as Senate President Pro tempore and Jake Corman (Centre) as Majority Leader. Democrats also voted to retain their current leadership, with Jay Costa (Allegheny) serving as Minority Leader.

Committee Appointments: Legislative leaders will assign committee membership and chairpersons when the new session begins in January.

State News

Future Ready Index: The new Future Ready PA Index is now live on the PDE website. The Index measures schools in three main categories: academic performance of students, student progress, and student readiness for college or career.

Transgender Policy Case: A group of Pennsylvania high school students is appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court a lower-court ruling upholding the Boyertown Area SD policy permitting transgender students to use restrooms or locker rooms consistent with their gender identify.

National News

School Lunch Rules: The U.S. Department of Agriculture has released a final school rule to roll-back Obama-era school lunch requirements regarding flavored milk, whole grains and sodium levels in meals served through the National School Lunch and breakfast programs.

Special Education Teachers: Research indicates that the number of special education teachers in the U.S. has dropped by more than 17 percent over the past ten years, while the number of students with disabilities (ages 6-21) declined by only about 1 percent during that time.

COMING UP

Lawmakers will return to Harrisburg in early January to swear members into office and start the reorganization process for the 2019-20 legislative session. Meanwhile, Gov. Wolf, who will be sworn in for a second term on January 15, is working on his 2019-20 state budget plan, which will be unveiled on Feb. 5. Although Republicans hold a smaller majority in both chambers following the November election, the conservative wing of the party is now stronger in the House, in particular, which will complicate compromise on budgetary and other policy issues. As always, stay tuned for the latest information by following us on Twitter @PASASupts.
Superintendent of the Year
continued from page 1

development, teacher and principal supervision systems, and other areas of organizational leadership.

As a leader, Dr. Piraino’s influence extends across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Based on Dr. Piraino’s experiences and leadership, Gov. Tom Wolf appointed him to serve as the PASA representative on the Pennsylvania School Safety and Security Committee. As a member of the committee, he continues to keep other school leaders informed and updated on state efforts to improve school safety.

Regionally, Dr. Piraino is an instrumental leader in workforce development and school/community partnerships. Through his role as Chairperson of the Westmoreland County Forum for Workforce Development, Dr. Piraino has been successful in building partnerships between schools, businesses, institutions of higher education, and local government. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Westmoreland County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Growth Connection of Westmoreland.

In nominating Dr. Piraino for this award, the district’s Board of Directors and administrative team noted his commitment to educational leadership in Franklin Regional and beyond.

“Dr. Piraino leads the district with a complete focus on students, a belief in collaboration in all endeavors, and an unrelenting pursuit of continuous improvement and excellence,” they said. “He understands that leadership is not about what one does independently, but rather about how one engages others in lending their voices, talents, perspectives, and efforts toward continuous improvement.”

Dr. Piraino will be recognized at a special PASA luncheon on Thursday, January 17 in Latrobe (rescheduled from November). As the Pennsylvania honoree, he and 49 other state honorees will be recognized in February during the AASA National Conference on Education in Los Angeles.

Congratulations, Dr. Piraino!

The National Superintendent of the Year Program was instituted 32 years ago by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) to honor outstanding public school superintendents. First Student, VALIC and AASA are co-sponsors of the award program. The goal of the prestigious awards program is to further inspire exemplary educational leadership and promote a sense of confidence and pride in the nation’s public schools. The Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year is selected by a PASA (Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators) panel of school administrators. Superintendent of the Year nominees are evaluated on how each candidate demonstrates leadership for learning, communication skills, professionalism and community involvement – active participation in local community activities, and understanding of regional, national and international issues.

SIGNING SB 1095 INTO LAW

Dr. Mark DiRocco, PASA Executive Director (L – back row), along with representatives from other education associations, recently was on hand when Gov. Tom Wolf ceremonially signed SB 1095 into law. The bill, now Act 158 of 2018, amends the School Code concerning graduation requirements and provide students with additional options to be eligible to graduate. PASA strongly supported the bill.

PASA LEGAL SERVICES

PASA’s legal staff offers a wide range of employment-related legal resources and services to PASA members who are Commissioned Officers. These services include consulting services, employment contract services, non-litigation dispute resolution, and assistance with the negotiation and development of separation agreements.

Go to http://www.pasa-net.org/legalservices to read more about it.
As the holiday season reaches a crescendo, our calendars are filled with student events that reinforce our “why” as school leaders. When asked why we became superintendents, most of us will relate something very personal that at some point gets around to making a difference for our students and community. Attending student performances and exhibitions this time of year reinforces that calling and serves as one of the many amazing opportunities provided to us in our role as school leaders.

With every wonderful opportunity that comes with our calling, there are also consistent challenges that can be taxing. Given my thirty-plus years in education, I seem to be having more conversations with colleagues that have retired from the job. When we discuss what they miss about the job, the first comment that consistently arises is, “I can tell what I don’t miss – weather calls!”

Every profession has positives and negatives. How we balance those challenges in support of our “why” often determines our ability to establish balance as a superintendent. Weather calls are not something that many superintendents look forward to, yet it is a necessary duty. Early morning collaboration with colleagues focused on the data we have at hand can be tenuous over time, and, in the end, is really not that fun. However, it is imperative that we balance this challenging part of the job with many other facets that reinforce our “why” – and student events this time of year can certainly fill that need.

Though the balance of the job is easily identified during the winter season, don’t lose sight of the need to balance throughout the entire school year.

Dr. Kerry Robinson and Dr. Carol Shakeshaft published a study in March of 2016 that focused on the stress of the superintendency and how this stress affected the health of superintendents. In the study, one of the factors that differentiated their findings was the ability of superintendents to balance the challenges of the position.

Being the CEO of a community organization that often is one of the largest enterprises in the community and is responsible for millions of dollars is certainly challenging. Couple that with the fact that most of our clients have a self-described understanding of the organization, and you have the makings of a perfect storm in some communities. Balance of self is critical within this framework, as the job can certainly consume our every minute.

These challenges provide some understanding for the most recent data collected by PASA within our state of the superintendency in the Commonwealth. Some of that data is striking:

- 154 superintendent positions changed from July 1, 2017.
- 279 superintendent positions changed from July 1, 2016.
- The average stay in one district is 3.4 years over the past nine-plus years.
- The average number of superintendents per district in the past nine-plus years is 2.7.
- Only 175 letters of eligibility were issued by the PDE last year.
- Only 9% (44) of superintendents have been in the same district for the past nine-plus years.
- Only 36% (182) of superintendents have been in the same district for the past five-plus years.

Reflecting on this information makes me wonder: Are we collectively balancing the complexities of the job?

During this holiday season I encourage you to take some time to catch your breath. Be selfish and spend an inordinate amount of time with those around you who make sacrifices throughout the year to allow you to handle your duties. This job of ours is so very challenging, it is paramount that we carve out time to recharge. It is impossible to maintain a balance when we don’t take advantage of the opportunities to rest and rejuvenate. The holidays can serve as that time to not only enjoy that opportunity, but also to resolve to make balance a part of our practice.

As the pressures of the job mount and we try and balance some pretty amazing views from inside and outside our community, take solace in some advice from the late Buddy Hackett, one of my all-time favorites: “Don’t carry a grudge. While you’re carrying the grudge, the other guy’s out dancing.”

Colleagues, during this holiday season and throughout the year, take some time to dance!

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**
A TIME TO BREATHE
BY BARBARA W. JEWETT, ASSISTANT TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It’s that time of year again – December, the time for holidays, Christmas trees and menorahs, shopping, baking, family – and making New Year’s Resolutions.

And then 2019 begins.

Our January at PASA is shaping up to be very busy, with programs – New Superintendents’ Academy, Aspiring to Leadership Workshops, start of the 2019 winter/spring PASA Webinar series – and meetings, including a Joint Boards Dinner with the PA Principals Association, PSBA and PASBO, followed by a PASA Board of Governors meeting.

You will be hitting the pavement also in January, preparing your 2019-20 budget, gearing up your staff and students for the PSSAs and Keystone Exams that will come all too soon, and keeping an ear and eye on weather reports in case you have to make those dreaded snow-day calls.

Others will be gearing up as well, specifically Gov. Wolf and the General Assembly, as both take office officially in January and get set for another interesting year focused on budgets and policy.

November election results mean smaller Republican majorities in both the PA House and Senate, but a definitively more conservative Republican caucus in the House, which will make working out compromises between the House and both the governor and the Senate quite challenging.

A slew of unresolved and continuing issues with real impact on Pennsylvania’s public schools likely will be “hot topics” in Harrisburg beginning this January and over the next two years. Property tax reform, charter school reform and education funding are only three, but add to that school safety/security, the role of the PA Department of Education, school “choice,” and the big one – the state budget.

Gov. Wolf presents his proposed budget on February 5, and thus begins the annual sequence of budgetary events (hopefully not a series of unfortunate events) that include hearings, media briefings, press releases, and general criticism of “the other side” until a final budget is signed into law. Republican leaders this month have already stated opposition to increasing ANY taxes with the next budget, so we shall see what is in the Governor’s plan.

As we have always done, in 2019 PASA will be joining you and other education groups to advocate not only for more state support of education but also to oppose policies, spending and programs that will erode our public schools and the essential role they have in our democracy. It’s a continuing challenge, but the PASA Resolutions will continue to direct that focus.

For now, however, we all need a break – and a few cookies. As both Mark DiRocco and Rich Fry have noted in their columns this month, we all need it (well, maybe not the cookies), and we need to take advantage of that break, to pause for a bit before everything kicks back into gear. As the writer of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes states, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.”

Time to breathe. Happy holidays.

**POLICY ON PASA WORKSHOP PAYMENTS/CANCELLATIONS**

CANCELLATIONS
A $25 service fee will be retained for cancellations received two (2) weeks or less prior to the scheduled program. NO REFUNDS/CREDITS will be given if cancellation is received five (5) business days or less prior to the scheduled program. All cancellations must be made/confirmed in writing.

PAYMENTS
All fees for programs and workshops, including those invoiced, are due in advance of the event. Payments not received in advance must be paid on-site.

NON-ATTENDANCE AND PAYMENT OF FEES
PASA understands that unexpected events may prevent a registrant from attending a program or workshop the day of the event. Unfortunately, PASA has limited capacity to absorb unexpected revenue losses (such as catering costs and other expenses) when individuals do not attend workshops and programs and fail to provide prior notice. For that reason, registrants who do not attend a program and have not provided a written notice of cancellation prior to the event as explained above in “Cancellations” remain responsible for payment of registration fees. Any unpaid fees not received thirty (30) calendar days after the program will be assessed an additional $25.00. Accounts must be settled prior to registering for any future PASA programs. Registrants may appeal to the Executive Director if there is an extenuating circumstance or unforeseen emergency that prevented attendance the day of the event.

WEATHER & PROGRAM CANCELLATIONS
In the event that a workshop is postponed due to weather conditions, registrants will receive full credit toward the rescheduled program. If the registrant is unable to attend the rescheduled workshop due to conflicts and informs PASA in advance (as per the above-listed cancellation/refund policy), PASA will apply the registration fee already paid toward the registration fee of a future PASA workshop.

PASA Membership Directory

The 2018-19 PASA Membership Directory was mailed to PASA members this month, and members also were sent an email providing a link to the online version.

NOTE: The directory includes the listing of members who paid their annual membership dues by the Oct. 1 deadline. The addendum includes the names of those who paid within a week of the deadline.
The enchanting holiday season has arrived and the legendary, heroic, wise, jolly man in the red velvet suit will soon deliver personalized gifts to children across the world. I find it intriguing that Santa understood the importance of “personalization” long before business and school leaders’ explicit endorsement of the concept.

Envision that job in which your ultimate mission is to provide the personalized gifts for children across the world. Imagine traveling at an unbelievable speed, year after ever-changing year, to successfully meet this expectation. This demand is incomprehensible, especially at this time of year. Yet Santa gets it done while also attending daily holiday events.

How does Santa do it? How does the seemingly impossible task of personalizing gifts for all children occur?

Let’s examine his core, yet simple, leadership practices….

- Santa’s workers are always pictured smiling. Therefore, I conclude that the culture within the work environment is conducive to the mission. The mysterious Arctic Circle Workshop is a pleasant, inspiring, and supportive place to work.
- Given Santa’s long-term success, it is safe to assume that he effectively communicates and collaborates with his Arctic Circle communities and partners to advocate for the resources that his workers need to do their jobs.
- He could have continued to produce the same old rocking horses and toy drums of the past, but he assures relevancy via his workers’ production of gaming and other smart machines. Based upon Mrs. Clause and the elves’ responsiveness to the children’s transforming requests, it is my assumption that Santa has a growth mindset. Santa hires only the best elves and reindeer. Obviously, all of his workers meet their performance goals. Yet because Rudolph has had the nose for leading, Santa has persistently relied on him through the years. (On a side note, my one concern for Santa is that Rudolph has been leading this charge for a very long time. I worry that Santa and his Workshop will become obsolete if he does not encourage and nurture upcoming leaders.)

- Because his team always meets their December 25 deadline, it is safe to assume that Santa holds his team accountable. Obviously, all understand the importance of their mission and dutifully focus on it.
- Santa celebrates with his team. He does not eat all the cookies and drink all the milk by himself. He profusely thanks his leadership team of reindeer by sharing these most precious rewards with those who navigated the most challenging of elements. In addition, as depicted in multiple picture books, they hold a grand, heartfelt celebration with Mrs. Claus and the elves upon their return to the Workshop.

Does Santa’s massive mission sound familiar? I’m sure you recognize the Santa in you! Like Santa…

- You inspire a culture that embraces your vision of personalized student success.
- You tirelessly advocate for adequate resources.
- You cultivate growth mindsets and embrace relevant change.
- You hire those who have passion for your district’s purpose and you fuel their talents.
- You hold yourself and your teams accountable.
- With your teams, you celebrate your students’ personalized successes.

Although you are not flinging a bundle of toys on your back, the weight of your vast responsibilities is notable. You may not be dressed in an outlandish fur trimmed suit (or maybe you are) as you travel from one cheerful event to another this holiday season, but I know that your eyes do twinkle, your dimples are merry, and your droll little mouths are drawn up like a bow.

Enjoy the mirth and warmth of the season with those you love and lead!

For breaking education news and the latest from the Capitol, follow us on Twitter @PASAsupts.

Check the PASA website at www.pasa-net.org for reports, testimony, the program and meeting schedule, archived Updates, the PASA Career Center (job postings) …and more!
A family-run tree farm is nestled on a small hill less than a mile from my house. As I sit and work at my dining room table, I watch the cars travel our country road on their way to the tree farm. Kids bundled in bright coats run and play in the rows of evergreens searching for the perfect tree to adorn their homes. Once I step outside, I can hear the laughter and joy as families make their selections. Once making their choice, they leave the farm, with their tree tied, wrapped, or even bungee-corded to their car's roof.

I smile as I think about the traditions of the holiday season. Visiting families and friends, volunteering to support those less fortunate, a family football game after a holiday lunch, a snow-tubing outing, baking grandma's secret chocolate chip cookies, reading a diary on Christmas Eve to reflect on the year, shopping for those perfect gifts, etc. Each of us has our own personal and family traditions. What are your traditions? What do you look forward to in the holiday season?

Now think about your school or district. What kind of traditions exist in your organization? Do you take some time during the school year to celebrate those around you and build your own organizational traditions or rituals? Do you have opportunities for staff members to connect and build shared experiences and memories with one another?

For example, my colleague and I treat our administrative team members to a catered lunch as we take a few minutes to connect with each other during this festive time of year. Our second grade students walk up the hill behind their school to visit our administration building, sing carols to all of us, and take a quick tour of our offices. One of Salisbury’s elementary principals always makes and serves breakfast for her staff the day on which staff returns from holiday break. This gives her staff a soft start to their return to work as they catch up with colleagues and share their stories of the season. We have many traditions at this time of year.

Hopefully, traditions transcend the holidays in our schools and across our districts. At opening convocation, we start the morning with a district-wide breakfast where all staff have the opportunity to connect with each other, share their summer adventures, and celebrate the upcoming year. Recently, we started a tradition where our schools host Thanksgiving lunch for our parents and community members. In our office, we serve a treat and sing to celebrate staff members’ birthdays.

What are some of your traditions? Do you have a regular gathering for team-building? Do you have an annual all staff event or celebration? Do you have a potluck meal? Do you celebrate with recognitions? For example, we have a local district who has an annual gala to recognize award recipients. Do you have any traditions for new employees?

Why are traditions important? Traditions affect culture. In an August 2018 article, “Workplace Culture: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How to Define It,” the author shares, “Culture is the character and personality of your organization. It’s what makes your business unique and is the sum of its values, traditions, beliefs, interactions, behaviors, and attitudes.”

Does your organization have rituals and traditions? What are your school’s values and beliefs? Does everyone know and share the core beliefs? What do the interactions look like in your school or district? How do individuals behave in your organization? How does everyone treat each other? What is the attitude of the faculty and staff in your organization? What would others say about your organization if they visited you and observed?

How do all of these factors—values, traditions, beliefs, interactions, behaviors, and attitudes—combine to create your workplace culture? What data do you have which helps you in your team better understand your culture? What other data could you collect?

After we define our culture, we can reflect on our organization. Are you (and your faculty/staff) satisfied with your culture? If not, what can you do in the new year to help build traditions and community and articulate values and beliefs?

Our families and professional staff really do look forward to these traditions with anticipation and excitement! I wish you an enjoyable holiday season rich with traditions and rituals, both personally and professionally.
PASA WOMEN’S CAUCUS SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR TWO AWARDS

The PASA Women’s Caucus is seeking nominations for two special awards, awarded annually to women in education.

WANDA MCDANIEL AWARD
This honor is awarded to an aspiring school educator or administrator who shows evidence of great leadership potential. The award is named for Dr. Wanda McDaniel, an outstanding administrator and superintendent who displayed a high quality of leadership.

MARGARET SMITH LEADERSHIP AWARD
This honor is awarded to an administrator (active or retired) who has demonstrated proven leadership in education. The award is named for Dr. Margaret Smith, first president of the Women’s Caucus, a former Pennsylvania superintendent and a former PA Secretary of Education.

Nominators for both awards (two per nominee) must address four areas: the nominee’s leadership, significant contributions in inspiring women and/or peers, significant accomplishments and evidence of continuing professional or personal growth.

Award recipients will be recognized at the Women’s Caucus Spring Conference, scheduled for May 13-15 in Hershey.

Nominations for both awards are due by Friday, February 22. Writable forms are available on the PASA web site, http://www.pasa-net.org/wcawards.

COMMUNICATION TIP OF THE MONTH
“Certain touchstone issues are certain to attract pushback – redistricting, changes to school schedules and revisions to grading practices. Sometimes it’s parental opposition and sometimes it comes from staff. One great way to solicit support is to include community voices in the conversation early on. Successful programs often begin with public conversations around specific topics. Inviting the community to inform discussions can have a lasting effect on its views toward district leadership.” – Nick Caruso, senior staff associate for field services and coordinator of technology with the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, as published in the December issue of AASA’s School Administrator. The issue examines ways to raise human capital in school districts, including articles that look at going beyond customary human resources to elevate the work of teachers and staff, the disappearing act of millennials and the great workforce divide, alternative certification programs, and the creative value of staff disagreeing at work.

See the PASA website for more information at https://www.pasa-net.org/leadsummit.

REGISTRATION FEE:
EARLY BIRD THROUGH FEB. 18
PASA Member: $299
Non-Member: $399
AFTER FEB. 18
PASA Member: $349
Non-Member: $449

NOTE: Payment is due in advance. Hotel rooms available at a special rate of $169 +tax. Deadline: February 15.
STILL TIME TO REGISTER!

designed to provide practical information and tools to assist those considering a future career as a district cabinet-level leader and/or superintendent

Thinking about moving forward in your professional journey? Or know someone who is? These are the workshops aspiring school system leaders need!

ASPIRING TO CABINET-LEVEL/CENTRAL OFFICE LEADERSHIP
PASA Office - Jan. 31, 2019 (April 8 - snow make-up date)
Focus: an overview of cabinet positions; preparation for these roles; team building; the differences between contracted term and tenured compensation plans; and actions for successfully transitioning to the role that is right for you. Current superintendents and a cabinet-level leaders will facilitate practice interviews with participants.

ASPIRING TO THE SUPERINTENDENCY
PASA Office - Feb. 1, 2019 (April 9 - snow make-up date)
Focus: an overview of the role, responsibilities and rewards of serving as a superintendent; balancing responsibilities; finding the right match; negotiating a sound contract; and entry planning and transition. A search consultant will discuss the search process and tips for securing the job.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE
8:00 a.m. - Check-in/continental breakfast
8:30 a.m. - Program begins (includes lunch)
4:15 p.m. - Program concludes

REGISTRATION FEE:
$159 (per day). Register for one day or both days!

HELP US GROW FUTURE LEADERS!
Encourage aspiring leaders in your district or building to take advantage of this excellent learning opportunity!

BONUS: EARN GRADUATE CREDIT!
PASA is partnering with Shippensburg University to provide the option of earning three Shippensburg University graduate credits that can be applied to its nationally recognized Letter of Eligibility Program. The credit option requires two weekend seminars and a field experience through Shippensburg University, in addition to participation in both days of PASA’s Aspiring to Leadership Workshops. Those seeking this option must be currently serving in an administrative or supervisory position.

Want more information? Need to register?
See the PASA website at https://www.pasa-net.org/aspiring.
2019 PA Teacher of the Year

Abington Heights High School teacher Marilyn Pryle has been named Pennsylvania’s 2019 Teacher of the Year. Pryle, who teaches English literature, also is the author of seven books for teachers, including “50 Writing Activities for Meeting Higher Standards.” She will be Pennsylvania’s entrant in next year’s National Teacher of the Year competition.

Schools of TechXcellence

Five Pennsylvania schools/districts were among the 39 nationwide recognized this year by District Administrator magazine as “Schools of TechXcellence.” The program, sponsored by HP and Intel, recognizes schools that have implemented innovative, effective and replicable technology programs that contribute meaningfully to student or operational success. The Pennsylvania recipients include (listed with categories): Council Rock SD (professional development), Quakertown Community SD (security), Warrior Run HS (technology integration), Bellefonte Area MS (professional development) and Pine Grove Area HS (virtual and augmented reality). Click here to read more about the program and the recipients.

A Magic School Bus

Downingtown elementary students will be learning about STEAM pathways in style in the Innovation Lab, or to some it may seem more like a magic school bus. The Innovation Lab is inside a school bus that is traveling to the 10 Downingtown Area School District elementary schools and offering hands-on activities and lessons in the STEAM areas (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math). Krapf Bus donated a nearly new handicap accessible bus for this project. The Innovation Lab is the result of a fundraising drive by the Downingtown Community Education Foundation (DCEF), created in partnership with the Downingtown Area School District. Click here to read more about it. (from The Daily Local News, 12/6/18)

Excellence in Alternative Education

A group of Warren County School District teachers have been recognized for their excellence by everyone from their students to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The result of a recent audit of the district’s alternative education program was “phenomenal,” according to Superintendent Amy Stewart. “Our alternative ed program is one that we have to have audits in periodically,” Stewart said. “The report that they received from the auditor was absolutely stellar.” “We have no critical areas,” Alternative Education Principal Amy Stimmell said. “These folks don’t get a lot of kudos,” Stewart said. “The comments in the report were absolutely amazing.” Click here to read more about it. (from The Times Observer, 12/10/18)

Health Careers

Exposing students to careers in health care at Laurel Highlands High School isn’t limited to the textbook, the teacher or even the classroom. They’re bringing in the experts. An elective course offered at the school — Introduction to Health Careers — brings various health professions directly to the students to help them consider career paths after graduation. “As a school, any type of experience we give them to explore careers is an advantage,” said Principal John Diamond. “We feel it’s good to offer these opportunities now rather than the student get into those careers and realize they don’t like it.” Click here to read more about it. (from The Herald-Standard, 11/25/18)
Don’t miss out on a learning-rich series of professional development opportunities in PASA’s new membership year. Whether you are a new superintendent, someone aspiring to higher levels of school system leadership, or a school administrator who is looking to build your knowledge base and grow your leadership skills – PASA has a program for YOU!

Don’t miss these professional learning opportunities developed with YOUR needs in mind!

**FREE WEBINAR - The Empowered Superintendent: Digital Transformation**
- co-hosted by PASA and CoSN

This free webinar, co-hosted by PASA and the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) and scheduled for Monday, December 17 at 1:00 p.m., is designed especially for superintendents and those on the leadership team leading digital transformation. The webinar will review a robust set of resources (including the Empowered Superintendent program) that can support you in the development of a powerful leadership team ready for digital transformation! Register for this free learning opportunity using this form.

**New Superintendents’ Academy Part 3: Professional & Community Leadership**

New to the superintendency – or know someone who is? The New Superintendents’ Academy is a “must” for those new to the role or getting ready to make that move. Join your colleagues from across the commonwealth within a network of school leaders, learn from experienced superintendents, and grow your knowledge base and leadership skills.

In Session 3, scheduled for Jan. 8-9 in the PASA office, you will gain a rich understanding of the importance of effective and ongoing communication, collaboration and empowerment of others inside and outside of the organization in the pursuit of excellence in student learning. New superintendents will learn strategies that engage all stakeholders. (NOTE: You do NOT have to take Academy sessions in order. Jump in!)

[25 PIL credits available per two-day session]
See more at [https://www.pasa-net.org/workshopnsa](https://www.pasa-net.org/workshopnsa).

**Beginning January 10…**


Take a short time out of your day - and take advantage of these four one-hour informational PASA webinars focused on the importance of instructional leadership to spark innovation in schools! Provided to school administrators online, this webinar series features both information and opportunity for Q & A.

**SCHEDULE:**

- **January 10** – The Path to Contemporary Content Creators
- **February 21** – Bridging the Gap: Developing an Online/Blended STEM Education Program
- **March 21** – Leadership Study: How a School Community Changed School Start Times To Better Meet the Needs of Their Students
- **April 25** – The Career Pathway Model: The Future of Education Is Now

**REGISTER TODAY!**

Register for one, two or more webinars. Discount for the series. 
PASA Members: $39 per webinar or $120 for the series.
Non-members: $49 per webinar, $170 for the series.

**PAYMENT IS DUE IN ADVANCE OF EACH WEBINAR.**

Connection instructions will be sent to paid participants only.

See the PASA website for more details on each webinar and links to registration at [www.pasa-net.org/webinars](http://www.pasa-net.org/webinars).
SAVE THE DATE!

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

DR. JOE SANFELIPPO, Superintendent of the Fall Creek SD (Wisconsin). His book, Hacking Leadership: 10 Ways Great Leaders Inspire Learning That Teachers, Students and Parents Love will be featured at the summit and will be required reading for all PIL participants.

JESSICA CABEEN, principal of Ellis Middle School in Austin, Minnesota. Jessica was awarded the NAESP/VINCI Digital Leader of Early Learning Award in 2016, and in 2017 was named the Minnesota National Distinguished Principal.

Request for Proposals

PASA and the PA Principals Association are seeking proposals for the small group sessions on Monday, August 5, at the 2019 PA Education Leadership Summit. Click here for the form (writable: save after completion). Deadline: Jan. 1.

CLOUD COMPUTING

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) and its state affiliate chapter, Pennsylvania Association for Educational Communications and Technology, are honored to support the work of current and aspiring superintendents and district leadership teams in leading all aspects of digital learning transformations and district leadership teams in leading all aspects of digital learning transformations. Last month CoSN shared information on cybersecurity with PASA members.

This month we focus on the topic of “cloud computing.”

Today many school districts, as well as other large and small organizations, are migrating to cloud-based services. The reasons are many and varied, including cost reductions, security, flexibility, easier access, and simplified network management, to name just a few.

Although moving to the cloud may offer great benefits, it also requires new skills and analysis to determine what, when and how to successfully make that move. To learn more, check out CoSN’s one-page review.

CoSN has partnered with edWeb to provide a monthly webinar series on topics essential for leading digital transformations, including cloud computing. School superintendents serve as panelists on each webinar and share their stories and expertise. Every webinar is recorded for viewing by those who are not able to join the live broadcast. Check it out online at: https://www.cosn.org/advancement/webinars.

If your school or district would like more information about joining CoSN or getting more involved with CoSN and/or PAECT, please contact Brian Calvary, CAE, CoSN Director of Membership and Chapters, at bcalvary@cosn.org.

Still time to sign up!

FREE WEBINAR ON DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION CO-HOSTED BY PASA AND COSN

PASA and CoSN will host a free webinar on Monday, December 17 at 1:00 p.m., designed especially for superintendents and those on the leadership team leading digital transformation. The webinar will review a robust set of resources (including the Empowered Superintendent program) that can support you in the development of a powerful leadership team ready for digital transformation!

Register for this free learning opportunity using this form.
2018 was a surprisingly substantive federal education policy year, especially when we consider it was a highly partisan, bruising mid-term election year. We would have predicted a pretty low volume of consequential education policy and a continuing resolution for our slice of the funding pie (LHHS), and on both accounts, we would have been wrong. So, what did we get instead? Here’s a quick laundry list of things that happened in 2018:

**Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Reauthorization:** Congress was able to finish reauthorization of the CTE bill, which had been stalled in the Senate since the previous Congress due to differences over how to reign in the regulatory authority of the Secretary. The President applied political pressure starting in March 2018, and the bill was over the finish line by fall 2018. The bill had bipartisan support in both the House and Senate, though the better House bill was passed over in favor of the Senate language for final passage. While the final reauthorization does represent small improvements in the underlying statute, AASA was disappointed to see the missed opportunity for additional improvements in current law. Moving into the 116th Congress, the big focus on Perkins will be related to funding, to ensure that the requirements under the revised law are not cost prohibitive to school participation.

**Supreme Court:** There were two Supreme Court cases with education impacts that AASA followed this year. *Janus* was the case that centered on whether or not public employees (including teachers) represented by a union but not belonging to that union can be required to pay a fee to cover the union’s costs to negotiate a contract that applies to all employees. The court answered ‘no’ in a 5-4 decision that overturns an earlier ruling, dating back to 1977, that allowed the unions to charge such fees, which are often known as “fair share” or “agency” fees. The second case—Wayfair—relates to applying sales tax to internet-based sales. The court overturned precedent here. States previously had not been able to apply sales tax to internet sales if the store/entity did not have a brick and mortar presence in said state. In light of this decision, states stand to claim upwards of hundreds of millions of dollars in previously unclaimable sales tax revenue, with potential impacts for state education funding.

**IRS State and Local Tax Deduction Regulations:** In November, the IRS heard arguments from school superintendents and voucher proponents about the possibility of the IRS closing down a tax shelter in 12 states that allows voucher supporters to profit from their donations to voucher tax credit programs. Superintendents from across the country submitted comments to the IRS in October urging them to not carve-out voucher programs from this larger tax regulation impacting state tax credits. While we were outnumbered at the IRS hearing, we had the stronger tax arguments. The IRS ruling is expected in January or February.

**Public Charge Proposal:** A Trump proposal provided an opportunity for educators to weigh in on a proposed immigration regulation that could jeopardize the ability of your immigrant students to access to healthcare, food and housing. Specifically, the public charge regulation would amend a policy that has been on the books for decades and is intended to ensure that immigrants who have entered the U.S. legally are not granted green cards or lawful permanent resident cards if they are “likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence.”

**Federal FY 2019 started October 1. In recent years—spanning more than a decade—Congress has failed to complete its funding work on time and has needed to implement a continuing resolution (CR) for parts or all of the budget to avoid a federal shutdown. LHHS was always one of the funding pieces left to the end, often used to absorb cuts to pay for increases elsewhere. Different political pressures aligned for 2019 (which will be in schools for the 2019-20 school year) and resulted in LHHS being funded on time.

**From Washington:** The federal government is currently funded through a combination of final appropriations bills and a handful of bills under a Continuing Resolution. In terms of Labor Health Human Services Education & Other (LHHS), it is not new news, but it is highly atypical: Congress completed its funding work for the LHHS slice of the federal funding pie ahead of schedule. LHHS is the appropriations bill that funds the U.S. Department of Education and provides the bulk of federal education dollars to K-12 schools. Federal FY 2019 started October 1. In recent years—spanning more than a decade—Congress has failed to complete its funding work on time and has needed to implement a continuing resolution (CR) for parts or all of the budget to avoid a federal shutdown. LHHS was always one of the funding pieces left to the end, often used to absorb cuts to pay for increases elsewhere. Different political pressures aligned for 2019 (which will be in schools for the 2019-20 school year) and resulted in LHHS being funded on time.

Full details are on the blog, but the overall allocation to the Department of Education is $71.5 billion, an increase of $581 million. The final bill rejects the proposal to consolidate the U.S. DOE with the Department of Labor, as well as the Trump/DeVos privatization agenda. The bill does NOT include language to prohibit the use of federal education dollars to arm school personnel. Sever programs received an increase, and several were level-funded. (See the full chart courtesy of Committee for Education Funding.)

**Farm Bill:** The House and Senate have reached a compromise on a Farm Bill conference report. As a recap, the House Farm Bill included two elements that AASA opposed: stricter work requirements for SNAP that could lead to millions of students losing access to meals at home, and changes to categorical eligibility, which automatically enrolls 265,000 students in school meals. The compromise bill has not been formally released, but Congressional leaders say the nutrition elements closely track with the Senate bill, which only included administrative updates.

**From Washington:** Agriculture Secretary Purdue announced a final decision that makes permanent the interim rule (and related flexibilities) as it relates to whole grains, flavored milk and sodium target. These are changes that AASA supports.

**SO, WHAT’S NEXT?**

Full analysis of the elections is available here. What to expect in terms of education policy? A lot, though we have to remember to distinguish activity from productivity. That said, we have seen the missed opportunity for additional improvements in current

*Continued on the next page*
some of the strongest policy come from a split Congress and we remain optimistic.

A Democratic House will step up oversight of the administration in general. Specific to education, you can expect invitations for DeVos to account to the committee, as well as increased ESSA implementation oversight. We could see a Democratic House come together with the Senate to move a permanent solution for DACA (which remains overwhelmingly bipartisan), though there are no guarantees the president would sign it.

School safety will remain a lightning rod, and you can expect the House committee to be especially loud if DeVos includes information related to using federal dollars to arm school personnel in the Federal School Safety Commission report (expected in December). Potentially also tied into the report is the DeVos final decision/action on the school discipline guidance, which would again draw the ire of Democrats. The committee has indicated its strong interest in moving an infrastructure bill that includes education, an idea that gets bipartisan traction in the Senate and could receive the support of the President, who has long expressed interest in an infrastructure package (albeit it one without support for schools). We already know both the House and Senate will re-up their efforts at legislation addressing/prohibiting seclusion and restraint in schools.

Over on the Senate side, while we don’t expect a shake-up in the education committee membership, there is a different type of pressure: current chairman Lamar Alexander enters his final term at the helm, due to term limits. This is his swan-song Congress, and there are a lot of eyes on whether or not he can work with Senator Murray on a Higher Education Act bill. They have a long, proven record of bipartisan work, but HEA has thus far proven elusive. Alexander is term-limited, meaning this will be his last term as chairman, and he will be looking to go out on a high note. That could be HEA, but the recent details of the DeVos Title IX regs further complicates the process and politics of HEA.

Any major bill will need to be wrapped by the end of 2019 (due to the 2020 presidential campaign), and if it gets to be April/May and it’s not all but certain that HEA will wrap, you can expect the Alexander team to pivot to another policy to get that “win,” and we have heard that FERPA is on that list.

So watch for an interesting 2019!
PASA Website Career Center

Have an administrative position you need to fill? Or are you considering moving forward in your professional career?

As a courtesy to school administrators, public school employers, and those seeking positions in school administration, PASA provides on its website the “PASA Career Center,” a listing of school administrator job openings, both in Pennsylvania and in the Mid-Atlantic region. Vacancies and available positions for public schools are posted at no charge upon request and review.

To request a vacancy announcement posting on this web site, send a message to the Webmaster. Please include your phone number with your e-mail request. Information needed includes: position, entity, contact name/address, description of the position, application deadline and application process. Additional position information may be included, depending on length.

(PASA reserves the right not to publish an open position or to modify submitted information.)

Please report member news to PASA at pasa@pasa-net.org. Announcements of professional vacancies across Pennsylvania and in neighboring states are posted on the PASA Web site at www.pasa-net.org (Click on the “Leadership Development” button and look for “Career Center.”)